



# **ARROYO POLICIES: LAND USE ELEMENT**

Riverside County General Plan Advisory Committee

July 29, 2009



## Project Design

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*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*

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- RCIP Vision

The RCIP Vision states that,

*"Development standards are consistently high, offset in cost by the absence of unpredictable time delays and conflict in the development review process."*

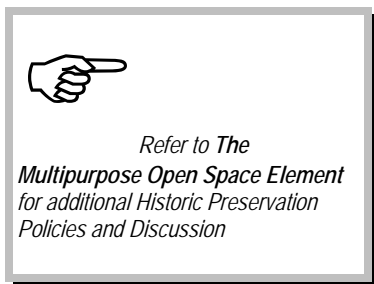
This level of policies is intended to address the importance of detail at the parcel and project level in achieving the vision for Riverside County. The individual project is the immediate manifestation of the desires to incorporate quality and innovative design techniques that help enhance the character of the County and contribute to the distinctiveness of the community.

### Policies:

- LU 4.1 Require that new developments be located and designed to visually enhance, not degrade the character of the surrounding area through consideration of the following concepts: (AI 1, 3, 6, 14, 23, 24, 41, 62)
- a. Compliance with the design standards of the appropriate area plan land use category.
  - b. Require that structures be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the County's zoning, building, and other pertinent codes and regulations.
  - c. Require that an appropriate landscape plan be submitted and implemented for development projects subject to discretionary review.
  - d. Require that new development utilize drought tolerant landscaping and incorporate adequate drought-conscious irrigation systems.
  - e. Pursue energy efficiency through street configuration, building orientation, and landscaping to capitalize on shading and facilitate solar energy, as provided for in Title 24 of the California Administrative Code.
  - f. Incorporate water conservation techniques, such as groundwater recharge basins, use of porous pavement, drought tolerant landscaping, and water recycling, as appropriate.
  - g. Encourage innovative and creative design concepts.
  - h. Encourage the provision of public art.
  - i. Include consistent and well-designed signage that is integrated with the building's architectural character.
  - j. Provide safe and convenient vehicular access and reciprocal access between adjacent commercial uses.
  - k. Locate site entries and storage bays to minimize conflicts with adjacent residential neighborhoods.
  - l. Mitigate noise, odor, lighting, and other impacts on surrounding properties.
  - m. Provide and maintain landscaping in open spaces and parking lots.
  - n. Include extensive landscaping.



- o. Preserve natural features, such as unique natural terrain, **arroyos, canyons, and other** drainage ways, and native vegetation, wherever possible, particularly where they provide continuity with more extensive regional systems.
- p. Require that new development be designed to provide adequate space for pedestrian connectivity and access, recreational trails, vehicular access and parking, supporting functions, open space, and other pertinent elements.
- q. Design parking lots and structures to be functionally and visually integrated and connected.
- r. Site buildings access points along sidewalks, pedestrian areas, and bicycle routes, and include amenities that encourage pedestrian activity.
- s. Establish safe and frequent pedestrian crossings.
- t. Create a human-scale ground floor environment that includes public open areas that separate pedestrian space from auto traffic or where mixed, it does so with special regard to pedestrian safety.
- u. *Open space, including hillsides, arroyos, riparian areas, and other natural features are amenities that add community identity, beauty, recreational opportunities, and monetary value to adjacent developed areas. Also, managing wild land fire hazards is an important consideration in the design of development proposals located adjacent to natural open space. Wherever feasible, proposed developments shall be designed so that where open space areas adjoin them, the developments front toward the open space, with access taken from single-loaded edge streets. Common area landscaping, trails, parks, and other cleared and/or landscaped features – in addition to the fronting streets themselves, should be placed along the streets located between the developments and nearby open space. This design concept will enhance project amenities, and result in productive uses in fire hazard buffer areas.*



- LU 4.2 Require property owners to maintain structures and landscaping to a high standard of design, health, and safety through the following: (AI 5)
- a. Provide proactive code enforcement activities.
  - b. Promote programs and work with local service organizations and educational institutions to inform residential, commercial, and industrial property owners and tenants about property maintenance methods.
  - c. Promote and support community and neighborhood based efforts for the maintenance, upkeep, and renovation of structures and sites.

LU 4.3 Create programs to ensure historic preservation. (AI 1)

LU 4.4 Permit historically significant buildings to vary from building and zoning codes in order to maintain the historical character of the County; providing that the variations do not endanger human life and buildings comply with the State Historic ~~at~~ **Building** Code. (AI 1)

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*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.*

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- RCIP Vision



## Land Use Compatibility

One of the primary purposes of land use planning is to minimize the impacts certain uses have on adjacent areas. This has been traditionally accomplished by providing separation between sensitive uses and uses whose by-products may include noise, excessive traffic, odors, dust, or vibrations. For instance, a number of uses, including agriculture, industrial, commercial, landfills, mining operations, and transportation facilities, can have potentially adverse effects upon residential neighborhoods, sensitive habitat areas and schools. However, in order to achieve a more compact development pattern, improved accessibility between places of employment and residence, and improved access to transit as described in the RCIP Vision, a strict reliance on physical separations is not practical. Instead, the County must require construction techniques and enforce use regulations (e.g., restrictions on hours of operations) to help mitigate these impacts and achieve these aspects of the Vision.

Compatibility is also associated with character. That is, the character of an area is often viewed in terms of the relationships between, and treatment of, the built and

natural environment. The design of structures and their relationship to the surrounding natural and/or urban character plays a key role in creating the character or identity of a place.

The intent of these policies is to provide guidance regarding compatibility, including reducing negative impacts on adjacent uses and the sensitive siting and design of uses.

### Policies:

LU 6.1 Require land uses to develop in accordance with the General Plan and area plans to ensure compatibility and minimize impacts. (AI 1, 3)

LU 6.2 Direct public, educational, religious, and utility uses established to serve the surrounding community toward those areas designated for Community Development and Rural Community uses on the applicable Area Plan land use maps. These uses may be found consistent with any of the Community Development, Rural Community, or Rural foundation designations, including the Rural Village Overlay, as well as the Open Space – Rural and Agriculture designations, under the following conditions: (AI 1,3)

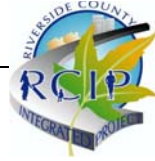
- a. The facility is compatible in scale and design with surrounding land uses, and does not generate excessive noise, traffic, light, fumes, or odors that might have a negative impact on adjacent neighborhoods.
- b. The location of the proposed use will not jeopardize public health, safety, and welfare, or the facility is necessary to ensure the continual public safety and welfare.

LU 6.3 Consider the positive characteristics and unique features of the project site and surrounding community during the design and development process. (AI 3)

LU 6.4 Retain and enhance the integrity of existing residential, employment, agricultural, and open space areas by protecting them from



*It is the intent of the General Plan that new and encroaching uses shall provide a mitigation or buffer between existing uses where potential adverse impacts could occur.*



encroachment of land uses that would result in impacts from noise, noxious fumes, glare, shadowing, and traffic. (AI 3)

LU 6.5 Require buffering to the extent possible between urban uses and adjacent rural/equestrian oriented land uses. (AI 3)

LU 6.6 Require buffering between urban uses and adjacent rural/equestrian oriented land uses. (AI 3)

LU 6.7 Buffer and/or maintain a natural edge for proposed development directly adjacent to national forests. (AI 3)

*LU 6.8 Provide functional buffers between development and watercourses, including their associated habitat.*

*LU 6.9 In hazardous fire areas, where proposed development would adjoin open space, provide for a minimum 100' wide fuel clearance/modification zone, or more if required by the Fire Department, between any structures and the outer edge of any watercourse and associated habitat buffer area.*



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

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-RCIP Vision

### Open Space, Habitat & Natural Resource Preservation


Riverside County is known for its extraordinary environmental setting, which provides recreational, ecological, and scenic value. This open space, found in remote regions of the County as well as within Community Development areas, is one of the primary defining aspects of the County’s livability and character. In some instances, it is this open space that provides the separations between communities, helping to enhance the distinctiveness of communities in the County. The RCIP Vision states:

*“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.”*


Poorly planned growth and development would threaten to eliminate or degrade this essential feature of the County. The Multipurpose Open Space Element addresses this issue in great detail. The policies below relate directly to preserving and enhancing open space through land use related methods. They include restrictions on development of open space, focusing urban growth, providing recreational and open space opportunities within the built environment, and achieving a balance between urban uses and open space/habitat.

#### Policies:

- LU 8.1 Provide for permanent preservation of open space lands that contain important natural resources, hazards, water features, watercourses, *including arroyos and canyons*, and scenic and recreational values. (AI 10)
- LU 8.2 Require that development protect environmental resources by compliance with the Multipurpose Open Space Element of the General Plan and Federal and State regulations such as CEQA, NEPA, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act. (AI 3, 10)
- LU 8.3 Incorporate open space, community greenbelt separators, and recreational amenities into Community Development areas in order to enhance recreational opportunities and community aesthetics, and improve the quality of life. (AI 9, 28)
- LU 8.4 Allow development clustering and/or density transfers in order to preserve open space, natural resources, and/or biologically sensitive resources. *Wherever possible, development on parcels containing 100-year floodplains and blue line streams and other higher-order watercourses and areas of steep slopes adjacent to them shall be clustered so as to keep development out of the watercourse and adjacent steep slope areas, and to be compatible with other nearby land uses.* (AI 1, 9)
- LU 8.5 In conjunction with the CEQA review process, evaluate the potential for residential projects not located within existing parks and recreation districts or County Service Areas (CSAs) that provide for neighborhood and community park development and maintenance to



For related policies on this topic, see the **Multipurpose Open Space Element** of the General Plan and the description of the Open Space Foundation Component in this Element.



*Watercourses include the courses of streams, rivers, creeks, whether permanent or seasonal and whether natural or channelized.*

# County of Riverside General Plan

*DRAFT-Land Use Element, July 1, 2009*



be annexed to such districts or CSAs, and require such annexation where appropriate and feasible. (AI 3)



**Table LU 4 Land Use Designations Summary**

Foundation Component	Area Plan Land Use Designation	Building Intensity Range (du/ac or FAR) <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>	Notes
Agriculture	Agriculture (AG)	10 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural land including row crops, groves, nurseries, dairies, poultry farms, processing plants, and other related uses.</li> <li>One single-family residence allowed per 10 acres except as otherwise specified by a policy or an overlay.</li> </ul>
Rural	Rural Residential (RR)	5 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family residences with a minimum lot size of 5 acres.</li> <li>Allows limited animal keeping and agricultural uses, recreational uses, compatible resource development (not including the commercial extraction of mineral resources) and associated uses and governmental uses.</li> </ul>
	Rural Mountainous (RM)	10 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of 10 acres.</li> <li>Areas of at least 10 acres where a minimum of 70% of the area has slopes of 25% or greater.</li> <li>Allows limited animal keeping, agriculture, recreational uses, compatible resource development (which may include the commercial extraction of mineral resources with approval of a SMP) and associated uses and governmental uses.</li> </ul>
	Rural Desert (RD)	10 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of 10 acres.</li> <li>Allows limited animal keeping, agriculture, recreational, 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 commercial extraction of mineral resources with approval of SMP), and governmental and utility uses.</li> </ul>
Rural Community	Estate Density Residential (RC-EDR)	2 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 2 to 5 acres.</li> <li>Limited agriculture, intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.</li> </ul>
	Very Low Density Residential (RC-VLDR)	1 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 1 to 2 acres.</li> <li>Limited agriculture, intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.</li> </ul>
	Low Density Residential (RC-LDR)	½ ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of ½ to 1 acre.</li> <li>Limited agriculture, intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.</li> </ul>
Open Space	Conservation (C)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The protection of open space for natural hazard protection, <i>cultural or historical</i> and natural and scenic resource preservation. Existing agriculture is permitted.</li> </ul>
	Conservation Habitat (CH)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to public and private lands conserved and managed in accordance with adopted Multi Species Habitat and other Conservation Plans.</li> </ul>
	Water (W)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes bodies of water and natural or artificial drainage corridors.</li> <li>Extraction of mineral resources subject to SMP may be permissible provided that flooding hazards are addressed and long term habitat and riparian values are maintained.</li> </ul>
	Recreation (R)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational uses including parks, trails, athletic fields, and golf courses.</li> <li>Neighborhood parks are permitted within residential land uses.</li> </ul>
	Rural (RUR)	20 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One single-family residence allowed per 20 acres.</li> <li>Extraction of mineral resources subject to SMP may be permissible provided that scenic resources and views are protected.</li> </ul>
	Mineral Resources (MR)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mineral extraction and processing facilities.</li> <li>Areas held in reserve for future mineral extraction and processing.</li> </ul>
Community Development	Estate Density Residential (EDR)	2 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 2 to 5 acres.</li> <li>Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.</li> </ul>
	Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)	1 ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 1 to 2 acres.</li> <li>Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.</li> </ul>
	Low Density Residential (LDR)	½ ac min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached residences on large parcels of ½ to 1 acre.</li> <li>Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.</li> </ul>
	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	2 - 5 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family detached and attached residences with a density range of 2 to 5 dwelling units per acre.</li> <li>Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.</li> <li>Lot sizes range from 5,500 to 20,000 sq. ft., typical 7,200 sq. ft. lots allowed.</li> </ul>
	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	5 - 8 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family attached and detached residences with a density range of 5 to 8 dwelling units per acre.</li> <li>Lot sizes range from 4,000 to 6,500 sq. ft.</li> </ul>
	High Density Residential (HDR)	8 - 14 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family attached and detached residences, including townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard homes, patio homes, townhouses, and zero lot line homes.</li> </ul>
	Very High Density Residential (VHDR)	14 - 20 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family attached residences and multi-family dwellings.</li> </ul>



# County of Riverside General Plan

*DRAFT- Land Use Element, July 1, 2009*

**Table LU 4 Land Use Designations Summary**

Foundation Component	Area Plan Land Use Designation	Building Intensity Range (du/ac or FAR) <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>	Notes
<b>Community Development</b>	Highest Density Residential (HHDR)	20+ du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-family dwellings, includes apartments and condominium.</li> <li>Multi-storied (3+) structures are allowed.</li> </ul>
	Commercial Retail (CR)	0.20 - 0.35 FAR	Local and regional serving retail and service uses. The amount of land designated for Commercial Retail exceeds that amount anticipated to be necessary to serve the County's population at build out. Once build out of Commercial Retail reaches the 40% level within any Area Plan, additional studies will be required before CR development beyond the 40 % will be permitted.
	Commercial Tourist (CT)	0.20 - 0.35 FAR	Tourist related commercial including hotels, golf courses, and recreation/amusement activities.
	Commercial Office (CO)	0.35 - 1.0 FAR	Variety of office related uses including financial, legal, insurance and other office services.
	Light Industrial (LI)	0.25 - 0.60 FAR	Industrial and related uses including warehousing/distribution, assembly and light manufacturing, repair facilities, and supporting retail uses .
	Heavy Industrial (HI)	0.15 - 0.50 FAR	More intense industrial activities that generate significant impacts such as excessive noise, dust, and other nuisances.
	Business Park (BP)	0.25 - 0.60 FAR	Employee intensive uses, including research & development, technology centers, corporate offices, "clean" industry and supporting retail uses.
	Public Facilities (PF)	≤ 0.60 FAR	Civic uses such as County administrative buildings and schools.
	Community Center (CC)	5 - 40 du/ac 0.10 - 0.3 FAR	Includes combination of small-lot single family residences, multi-family residences, commercial retail, office, business park uses, civic uses, transit facilities, and recreational open space within a unified planned development area. This also includes Community Centers in adopted specific plans.
	Mixed Use Planning Area		This designation is applied to areas outside of Community Centers. The intent of the designation is not to identify a particular mixture or intensity of land uses, but to designate areas where a mixture of residential, commercial, office, entertainment, educational, and/or recreational uses, or other uses is planned.

**Overlays and Policy Areas**

Overlays and Policy Areas are not considered a Foundation Component. Overlays and Policy Areas address local conditions and can be applied in any Foundation Component. The specific details and development characteristics of each Policy Area and Overlay are contained in the appropriate Area Plan

Community Development Overlay (CDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows Community Development land use designations to be applied through General Plan Amendments within specified areas within Rural, Rural Community, Agriculture, or Open Space Foundation Component areas. Specific policies related to each Community Development Overlay are contained in the appropriate Area Plan.</li> </ul>
Community Center Overlay (CCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for either a Community Center or the underlying designated land use to be developed.</li> </ul>
Rural Village Overlay (RVO) and Rural Village Overlay Study Area (RVOSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rural Village Overlay allows a concentration of residential and local-serving commercial uses within areas of rural character.</li> <li>The Rural Village Overlay allows the uses and maximum densities/intensities of the Medium Density Residential and Medium High Density Residential and Commercial Retail land use designations.</li> <li>In some rural village areas, identified as Rural Village Overlay Study Areas, the final boundaries will be determined at a later date during the consistency zoning program. (The consistency zoning program is the process of bringing current zoning into consistency with the adopted general plan.)</li> </ul>
Watercourse Overlay (WCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Watercourse Overlay designates watercourses, including natural or controlled stream channels and flood control channels. <i>This designation has no associated density or intensity for development purposes. Watercourse overlay policies pertain to watercourses alone, but other related policies may also pertain to both watercourses and some aspects of their surrounding physical contexts, which include may include floodplains, arroyos or canyons, and watersheds.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Historic District Overlay (HDO)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This overlay allows for specific protections, land uses, the application of the Historic Building Code, and consideration for contributing elements to the District.</i></li> </ul>
Specific Community Development Designation Overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permits flexibility in land uses designations to account for local conditions. Consult the applicable Area Plan text for details.</li> </ul>
Policy Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Areas are specific geographic districts that contain unique characteristics that merit detailed attention and focused policies. These policies may impact the underlying land use designations. At the Area Plan level, Policy Areas accommodate several locally specific designations, such as the Limonite Policy Area (Jurupa Area Plan), or the Scott Road Policy Area (Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan). Consult the applicable Area Plan text for details.</li> </ul>

NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> FAR = Floor Area Ratio, which is the measurement of the amount of non-residential building square footage in relation to the size of the lot. Du/ac = dwelling units per acre, which is the measurement of the amount of residential units in a given acre.

<sup>2</sup> The building intensity range noted is exclusive, that is the range noted provides a minimum and maximum building intensity.

<sup>3</sup> Clustering is encouraged in all residential designations. The allowable density of a particular land use designation may be clustered in one portion of the site in smaller lots, as long as the ratio of dwelling units/area remains within the allowable density range associated with the designation. The rest of the site would then be preserved as open space or a use compatible with open space (e.g., agriculture, pasture or wildlife habitat). Within the Rural Foundation Component and Rural Designation of the Open Space Foundation Component, the allowable density may be clustered as long as no lot is smaller than ½ acre. This ½ acre minimum lot size also applies to the Rural Community Development Foundation Component. However, for sites adjacent to Community Development Foundation Component areas, 10,000 square foot minimum lots are allowed. The clustered areas would be a mix of 10,000 and ½ acre lots. In such cases, larger lots or open space would be required near the project boundary with Rural Community and Rural Foundation Component areas.



pressures near and within significant agricultural regions. Many existing agricultural areas have been or are in danger of being encroached upon by uses that are negatively impacted by some agricultural operations, such as residences and schools. As agricultural lands become less productive or are encroached upon, there is a danger of these uses becoming less economically viable, becoming subdivided, or converting to other uses. The acknowledgment of pressures upon agricultural areas and the desire to continue this use is evident in the following statement from the RCIP Vision:

*"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."*

The intent of the General Plan Agriculture Foundation Component and associated policies is to identify and preserve areas where agricultural uses are the long term desirable use, as stated in the General Plan Principles; *"Provide for the continued and even expanded production of agricultural products by conserving areas appropriate for agriculture and related infrastructure and supporting services."* In addition, the intent of these policies is to minimize the conflicts between agricultural and urban/suburban uses.

## **Agriculture Area Plan Designation**

As shown on the Land Use Designation Key (Figure LU-5), the Agriculture Foundation Component consists of one area plan land use designation of the same name.

**Agriculture (AG)** - The Agriculture land use designation has been established to help conserve productive agricultural lands within the County. These include row crops, nurseries, citrus groves and vineyards, dairies, ranches, poultry and hog farms, and other agricultural related uses. Areas designated for Agriculture generally lack an infrastructure that is supportive of urban development.

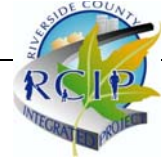
Residential density is permitted at one dwelling unit per parcel provided that the parcel is 10 acres in size or larger. An additional dwelling unit may be allowed for each additional 10 acres being farmed for use by the owner, operator or employees, up to five total dwelling units per parcel. Additional dwellings for farm worker housing may be permitted as described below.



*Please see the  
Multipurpose Open Space Element  
for additional policies regarding  
agricultural uses.*




*It is the expressed intent of this  
General Plan that new uses  
encroaching upon existing agricultural  
operations shall provide some type of  
buffering to mitigate any compatibility  
issues.*




**Policies:**

The following policies apply to properties designated as Agriculture on the General Plan and area plan land use maps.



*Agricultural uses that exist on land designated for other land uses, such as residential, are allowed to continue as set forth in policy LU 1.1. It is upon a change from agriculture to another use or new development that the underlying land use designation would apply.*



*Farm worker housing includes mobile home or travel trailer park for rental by agricultural workers wherein not less than 80% of the trailer sites are restricted to rental by migrant agricultural workers, as defined by County Ordinance No. 348, for a period of time not to exceed nine months in any twelve month period. The remainder of the sites are restricted to rental by permanent agricultural workers, and occupancy by the owner or operator of the trailer park.*

LU ~~16.1~~ 17.1\* Encourage retaining agriculturally designated lands where agricultural activity can be sustained at an operational scale, where it accommodates lifestyle choice, and in locations where impacts to and from potentially incompatible uses, such as residential uses, are minimized, through incentives such as tax credits.

LU ~~16.2~~ 17.2\* Protect agricultural uses, including those with industrial characteristics (dairies, poultry, hog farms, etc.) by discouraging inappropriate land division in the immediate proximity and allowing only uses and intensities that are compatible with agricultural uses. (AI 3)

LU ~~16.3~~ 17.3\* Permit farm worker housing as an interim land use under the following circumstances: (AI 31)

- The area in which the proposal is located appears to be predominantly agricultural in nature and does not appear it will change in the near future.
- The proposal is an interim use (5 to 10 years) and will not substantially affect the existing character of the area.
- Adequate infrastructure exists in the area to ensure safe, sound, and decent housing for farm workers.
- The proposal will not create any significant land use incompatibilities.
- The proposal will not jeopardize public health, safety, and welfare.

LU ~~16.4~~ 17.4\* Encourage conservation of productive agricultural lands. Preserve prime agricultural lands for high-value crop production.

LU ~~16.5~~ 17.5\* Continue to participate in the California Land Conservation Act (the Williamson Act) of 1965.

LU ~~16.6~~ 17.6\* Require consideration of State agricultural land classification specifications when a 2 ½-year Agriculture Foundation amendment to the General Plan is reviewed that would result in a shift from an agricultural to a non-agricultural use. (AI 8)

LU ~~16.7~~ 17.7\* Adhere to Riverside County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

~~LU 16.8 17.8\* Support and participate in ongoing public education programs by organizations such as the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, and industry organizations to help the public better understand the importance of the agricultural industry.~~

*LU 17.8 Support and participate in educational and incentives programs in coordination with the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, the University of California Cooperative Extension Service, and the*



*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 ~~17.1~~ 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 ~~17.2~~ 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 ~~17.3~~ 18.3 Ensure that development does not adversely impact the open space and rural character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)

LU ~~17.4~~ 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 ~~17.5~~ 18.5 Encourage parcel consolidation. (AI 29)

LU ~~17.6~~ 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 Restrict septic systems to within graded pads and provide for buffering setbacks of at least 100 feet from the outer edge of watercourses.**

*LU 18.8 Rural incidental commercial uses ~~in the outlying rural areas of the county~~ that meets the special needs of rural communities 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 as it is in effect today (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~~ shall be compatible with the surrounding uses, protect view sheds and blend in with the rural nature of the area.*



Natural open space areas within REMAP

Open Space Area Plan Land Use Designations

As shown on the Land Use Designation Key (Figure LU-5), the Open Space General Plan designation consists of six area plan land use designations: Open Space-Conservation, Open Space-Conservation Habitat, Open Space-Water, Open Space-Recreation, Open Space-Rural, and Open Space-Mineral Resources.

Open Space-Conservation (OS-C) - The Open Space-Conservation land use designation is applied to land designated for preservation of non-MSHCP habitat lands, protection from natural hazards, preservation of cultural and historic resources, and preservation of scenic and other natural resources. Ancillary structures or uses may be permitted provided that they further the intent of this designation and do not substantially alter the character of the area. Actual building or structure size, siting, and design will be determined on a case by case basis.

Open Space-Conservation Habitat (OS-CH) - The Open Space-Conservation Habitat land use designation applies to public and private lands conserved and managed in accordance with adopted MSHCP's. Ancillary structures or uses may be permitted for the purpose of preserving or enjoying open space. Actual building or structure size, siting, and design will be determined on a case by case basis.

Open Space-Water (OS-W) - Open Space-Water designated areas include bodies of water and major floodplains and natural drainage corridors. Ancillary structures or uses may be permitted for flood control or recreational purposes. The extraction of mineral resources subject to an approved surface mining permit may be permissible, provided that the proposed project can be undertaken in a manner that does not result in increased flooding hazards and that is consistent with maintenance of long-term habitat and riparian values.

Policies:

The following policies apply to properties designated either as Open Space-Conservation, Open Space-Conservation Habitat, or Open Space-Water on the area plan land use maps.

LU ~~18.1~~ 20.1\* Require that structures be designed to maintain the environmental character in which they are located. (AI 3)

LU ~~18.2~~ 20.2\* Cooperate with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and any other appropriate agencies in establishing programs for the voluntary protection, and where feasible, voluntary restoration of significant environmental habitats. (AI 10)

[\*GPA 960, BOS RSLN #, dd/mm/yy]

Open Space-Recreation (OS-R) - The Open Space-Recreation land use designation allows for active and passive recreational uses such as parks, trails, camp grounds, athletic fields, golf courses, and off-road vehicle parks. Ancillary structures may be permitted for recreational opportunities. Actual building or structure size, siting, and design will be determined on a case by case basis.

Hand icon pointing right. For additional policies related to these land uses, please see the Multipurpose Open Space Element.



Diamond Valley Lake



Neighborhood Park



## **Policies:**

The following policies apply to those properties designated as Open Space-Recreation on the area plan land use maps:

LU ~~19.421.1~~\* The County shall develop and maintain a regional park system that provides recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Riverside County.

LU ~~19.421.2~~\* Provide for a balanced distribution of recreational amenities in Open Space, Rural, and Community Development General Plan land uses.

LU ~~19.421.3~~\* Require that park facilities be accessible to the community, regardless of age, physical limitation or income level.

LU ~~19.421.4~~\* Encourage that structures be designed to maintain the environmental character in which they are located. (AI 3)

LU ~~19.521.5~~\* Require that new development meet the parkland requirements as established in the Quimby Act and County enabling ordinances. (AI 3)

*LU 21.6 Restrict the placement of new golf courses to locations outside the boundaries of arroyos, watercourses, and wetlands, and their protective buffers. Provide for buffers wide enough to adequately separate golfers, golf play, potential irrigation leaks, and invasive turf-grasses from sensitive riparian and wetland habitats.*

[\*GPA 960, BOS RSLN #, dd/mm/yy]



*Golf course*

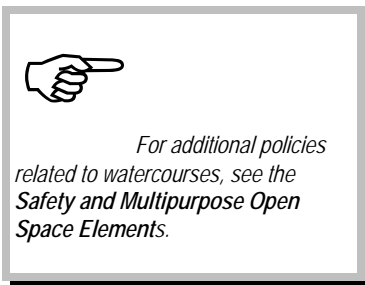


### Watercourse Overlay

The Watercourse Overlay designates watercourses, including natural or controlled stream channels and flood control channels. The purpose is to designate the existence of a watercourse on the Area plan land use maps and ensure that any special policies associated with open space, flood control, or habitat protection are considered. *To ensure that watercourse-related policies are adequately addressed, it is usually necessary to review and possibly modify the design and environmental effects associated with land uses proposed for location within any floodplains, arroyos or canyons, and watersheds in which the watercourses are located.*

#### Policies:

The following policies apply to properties that contain the Watercourse Overlay on the area plan land use maps.



~~LU 29.431.1~~\* Require that proposed projects on properties containing the Watercourse Overlay be reviewed for compliance with habitat, endangered species, flood control, and applicable area plan-specific design standards *that relate to both watercourses and any floodplains, arroyos or canyons, and watersheds that contain them-* (AI 25, 60)

*LU 31.2 The Watercourse Overlay shall be applied to all watercourses and their buffering setbacks*

*LU 31.3. Require that all watercourse protection measures be applied to projects within the Watercourse Overlay land use designation.*

- a. Restrict use of septic systems to no closer than 100 feet from the outer edge of a watercourse, and be in full compliance with the Uniform Plumbing Code. (see OS 5.3)*
- b. Restrict placement of new sewage pump stations, utilities, power lines, live stock, grazing, fencing, golf courses, nurseries, invasive, and non-native species to outside of the Watercourse Overlay designation.*
- c. Work with the Agricultural Commissioner on incentives and educational programs that promote the benefits of keeping the Watercourse Overlay designation free of livestock, crops, and grazing.*

*LU 31.4 A combination of USGS "Blueline" stream data, and a review of the presence of wetland vegetation, and stream bed and bank structure, slopes, soil characteristics, and erosion potential shall be used to determine locations of the Watercourse Overlay. Details of the soils, slope, types of vegetation, and presence of riparian or riverine habitat will be used to set the width dimension of buffer areas associated with Watercourse Overlays. When wetland delineations have been made, any areas within the Federal or State Jurisdictional waters shall be included within the boundaries of Watercourse Overlay areas. Significant watercourses and riparian areas can be identified using a combination of the USGS Blueline stream data, topographic maps, aerial photographs, and site visits. When it becomes available, the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) prepared by the USGS should*

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*DRAFT-Land Use Element, July 1, 2009*



*also be used to determine the presence and length of Watercourse Overlay areas..*

[\*GPA 960, BOS RSLN #, dd/mm/yy]



# **ARROYO POLICIES: OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

Riverside County General Plan Advisory Committee

July 29, 2009



## Conservation

Policies within the Conservation section of this element seek to guide decision-making related to renewable and non-renewable County resources. These types of resources require conservation—a conscious effort to consume less of scarce resources so that their stock can be sustained for the future. Conservation of natural resources applies to water, agricultural resources, forests, vegetation, mineral, and energy resources. By conserving resources we prevent degradation of the environment through pollution or loss of productive capacity within our environment.

### RENEWABLE RESOURCES

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Population growth and development continually require the use of natural resources, including those that are renewable. Following are Vision Statements that represent the guiding principles established by Riverside County to conserve and protect renewable resources for economic, cultural, and aesthetic purposes.

*"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."*

*"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."*

Additionally, the Vision addresses the need to protect Riverside County's environmental sustainability for future generations:

*"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."*

### Water Resources

Riverside County incorporates four major watershed areas in which river systems, numerous lakes and reservoirs, and natural drainage areas are located. Water resources are mapped in Figure OS-1. The County's supply of water is limited by its arid climate, agricultural practices, projected population growth and its associated demand and development, and the dependence on low quality imported water. Further, the availability of imported surface water has been reduced due to changing regulations, despite an ever-increasing water demand.

In some areas within Riverside County, contamination from natural or manufactured sources has reduced groundwater quality such that its use requires treatment. Management of the amount of water available (local and imported)



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and its quality, is an important response to the gap between supply and demand in Riverside County.

Policies in this section seek to protect and enhance the water resources in the county. These policies address broad water planning issues, and the relationship of land use decisions to water issues.



*An Arroyo is another term for a water-carved gully, channel, or canyon commonly used in the City of Riverside and adjacent unincorporated area under County jurisdiction, and occasionally elsewhere in the County. Arroyos typically contain watercourses, and are located in hilly or mountainous terrain in arid and semi-arid regions.*

*In 2004, the Board of Supervisors and the Riverside City Council appointed a joint County-City Arroyo-Watershed Advisory Committee (CCAC) to study the impacts of development and other human activities on the arroyos and watersheds that overlap the County and the City, and make recommendations for policies, technical tools such as mapping, and other measures that would be effective in reducing such impacts. The CCAC presented its recommendations to the City Council and the Board of Supervisors in December 5, 2006. On June 5, 2007, the Board of Supervisors endorsed the recommendations, with some revisions, and directed that they be incorporated, as policies, into the General Plan.*

*The policies that reflect the County-City Arroyo-Watershed Committee recommendations are included in the Land Use Element (particularly Policies LU 4.1o, LU 4.1u, LU 6.8, LU 6.9, LU 8.1, LU 8.4, LU 16.8.1, LU 17.7, LU 19.6, LU 29.1, LU 29.2, LU 29.3, and LU 29.4, and the policy for the Watercourse Overlay land use designation shown on Page LU-43), the Circulation Element (particularly Policies C 20.3.1 and C 20.3.2), the Multipurpose Open Space Element (particularly Policies OS 3.3, OS 3.4, OS 3.5, OS 3.6, OS 4.5, OS 4.6, OS 4.7, OS 4.8, OS 4.9, OS 5.3, OS 5.4, OS 5.8, OS 5.9, OS 5.10, OS 16.11, OS 16.12, OS 18.3, and OS 18.4), and the Safety Element (particularly Policy S 1.3). All of these policies are intended to be applied countywide, unless otherwise noted in a specific policy.*



### Water Conservation

In order to ~~help~~ bridge the projected gap between water supply and demand in Riverside County in 2020, water conservation must be a priority. *Historical landscaping practices, incongruous with the dry California environment, account for the majority of the region’s daily water consumption regimen. Approximately 60% of a residential site’s water consumption is used to irrigate outdoor landscaping while approximately 50% of commercial water use is similarly utilized. Inefficient landscape practices account for the majority of the region’s water-waste.* Following are water conservation policies that seek to manage existing supplies, by promoting the efficient use of water to the maximum extent possible, ~~so that they can be maintained for future use.~~

#### Policies:

*OS 2.1 Implement a water-efficient landscape ordinance and corresponding policies that promote the use of water-efficient plants and irrigation technologies, minimizes the use of turf, and reduces water-waste without sacrificing landscape quality. (AI 3, 57, 57B, 58, 62)*

~~OS 2.4~~ **2.2** Encourage the installation of water-conserving systems such as dry wells and graywater systems, where feasible, especially in new developments. The installation of cisterns or infiltrators shall also be encouraged to capture rainwater from roofs for irrigation in the dry season and flood control during heavy storms. (AI 57, 62)

~~OS 2.2~~ **2.3** Where feasible, decrease stormwater runoff by reducing pavement in development areas, and by incorporating “Low Impact Development” and other Best Management practice design practices measures such as permeable parking bays and porous parking lots with bermed storage areas for rainwater detention; use of less pavement, and multi-functional open drainage systems in lieu of more conventional curb-and-gutter systems such as a curb and swale system, concave street medians that capture water, and cul-de-sac circles that provide a concave, landscaped circle to capture water. (AI 57, 62)

~~OS 2.3~~ **2.4** *Seek opportunities to coordinate water-efficiency policies and programs with water service providers. (AI 4, 57C, 58) Encourage native, drought resistant landscape planting. (AI 3, 57, 62)*

~~OS 2.4~~ **2.5** Support and engage in educational outreach programs with other agencies, *the public, homebuilders, landscape installers, and nurseries* that promote water conservation and wide-spread use of water-efficient ~~saving~~ technologies. (AI 58)

~~OS 2.5~~ **2.6** Encourage continued agricultural water conservation and recommend the following practices where appropriate and feasible: lining canals, recovering tail water at the end of irrigated fields, and appropriate scheduling of water deliveries. (AI 57)



A watershed is the entire region drained by a waterway that drains into a lake or reservoir. It is the total area above a given point on a stream that contributes water to the flow at that point, and the topographic dividing line from which surface streams flow in two different directions. Clearly, watersheds are not just water. A single watershed may include combinations of forests, glaciers, deserts, and/or grasslands.



*The Watershed Approach*  
According to the U.S. EPA, effective watershed management results in a focus on priority problems; community building wherein stakeholder partners collaborate to seek local solutions; cost savings for regulators, and predictability for those regulated.

### **Water Quality**

Water quality problems that have occurred in Riverside County have related to inadequate subsurface sewage disposal, waste disposal management of the Santa Ana River, agriculturally-related problems such as citricultural runoff in the western County and increasing salinity of the desert groundwater basins, sediment buildup of water bodies from construction-related erosion, lake water quality problems, *loss of permeability*, and *non-point source* pollution due to urban stormwater system runoff. Regional Water Quality Control Boards for Regions 7, 8, and 9 provide state-level water quality policy for the County. Further, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination system mandates Best Management Practices in order to effectively minimize the adverse effects of pollution and protect water quality. The following policies are intended to provide local guidance for the protection and maintenance of water quality in Riverside County.

**Policies:**



*Low Impact Development or LID is a comprehensive land planning and engineering design approach to land development, redevelopment, and development retrofits that aims to maintain the pre-development hydrologic regime of urban and developing watersheds. LID works with nature to manage stormwater and urban runoff as close to its source as possible. A wide variety of design measures can be applied to implement LID that improve permeability, water quality, water use efficiency, and aesthetic quality according to the needs of a site or project vision. LID has been adapted to a range of land uses from high density ultra-urban settings to low density rural development.*

- OS 3.1 Encourage innovative and creative techniques for wastewater treatment, including the use of local water treatment plants.
- OS 3.2 Encourage wastewater treatment innovations in rural areas.
- OS 3.3 Minimize pollutant discharge into storm drainage systems ~~and~~ natural drainages and aquifers *through site-appropriate “low Impact Development and other Best Management Practice design measures that protect and enhance permeability, reduce storm water flows, eliminate dry weather urban runoff, and provide bio-filtration. (AI 3)*
- OS 3.4 Work with special districts that provide sewage treatment services to locate their new sewage pumping stations away from watercourses.*
- OS 3.5 Encourage multiple purpose design for water quality protection and permeability that integrates water runoff management within planned infrastructure and facilities such as parks, street medians and public landscaped areas, parking lots, streets, etc.*
- OS 3.6 Encourage sensitive design and placement of necessary storm water detention basins, recharge basins, water quality basins, or similar larger scale water capture devices that consider the context. Facilities should capture and/or treat water before entering a watercourse, and should never be placed in a water course.*




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*Water banking is a key factor for meeting future water supply needs in southern California. Historically, groundwater extractions have exceeded natural recharge in this region, resulting in declining water levels and water quality. Using groundwater basins for water banking during wet periods will help alleviate southern California's water supply problems.*



*Also see the Flood and Inundation Hazard Abatement section of the Safety Element.*



*Floodplains are comprised of the floodway and the floodway fringe. They are the low, flat, periodically flooded lands adjacent to rivers, lakes and oceans inundated by 100-year flood.*

*The floodway is the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the 100-year flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot.*

*The floodway fringe is that portion of the floodplain between the floodway and the limits of the existing 100-year floodplain.*

**Groundwater Recharge**

Groundwater resources in the County are defined by their quality as well as quantity. Most groundwater basins within Riverside County store local and imported water for later use to meet seasonal and drought-year demands. Under these groundwater recharge programs, groundwater is artificially replenished in wet years with surplus imported water. Water is then extracted during drought years or during emergency situations. Groundwater recharge that may also involve the recharge of reclaimed water, enhances the region's ability to meet water demand during years of short supply, and increases overall local supply reliability. *Groundwater recharge is also impacted by reduced natural percolation capacity due to impervious, urban surfaces and pollution from specific intensive industrial and agricultural uses.* In order to facilitate *high quality* groundwater recharge, the following policies may apply:

**Policies:**

- OS 4.1 Support efforts to create additional water storage where needed, in cooperation with federal, state, and local water authorities. Additionally, support and/or engage in water banking in conjunction with these agencies where appropriate, as needed. (AI 56, 57)
- OS 4.2 Participate in the development, implementation, and maintenance of a program to recharge the aquifers underlying the County. The program shall make use of flood and other waters to offset existing and future groundwater pumping, except where:
  - a. groundwater quality would be reduced;
  - b. available groundwater aquifers are full; or
  - c. rising water tables threaten the stability of existing structures. (AI 56, 57)
- OS 4.3 Ensure that adequate aquifer water recharge areas are preserved and protected. (AI 3, 56, 57)
- OS 4.4 Incorporate natural drainage systems into developments where appropriate and feasible. (AI 3)
- OS 4.5 Encourage multi-purpose project designs that protect water resources and enhance neighborhood resources and aesthetics. Street alignments placed between the house and the watercourse, with a park strip and a walking trail between the street and the watercourse, provides a scenic area for the public and a firebreak between homes and native vegetation that protects permeability, water quality, and the health of the watercourse and adjacent upland habitat.*
- OS 4.6 Retain storm water at or near the site of generation for percolation into the groundwater to conserve it for future uses and to mitigate adjacent flooding, through site-appropriate "Low Impact Development" or other Best Management Practice measure that creates opportunities for enhancing permeability, reducing storm water runoff, eliminating dry-weather urban runoff, and treating urban runoff pollutants. (AI (AI 57)*



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- OS 4.7 Encourage storm water management and urban runoff reduction as an enhanced aesthetic and experience design element. Many design practices exist to accomplish this depending on site conditions, planned use, cost-benefit, and development interest including (1) incorporation of permeable paving for parking surfaces, driveways, sidewalks and other surfaces requiring hard materials; (2) narrower streets and less pavement; (3) street parkways with vegetated bio-swales; (4) multi-functional open drainage systems in lieu of more conventional curb-and-gutter systems such as a curb and swale system, concave street medians that capture water, and cul-de-sac circles that provide a concave, landscaped circle to capture water; and (5) home lots and public area design that incorporates water capture, biofiltration, and other measures.*
- OS 4.8 Use natural approaches to managing streams, to the maximum extent possible, where groundwater recharge is likely to occur. (AI 57)
- OS 4.9 Offer incentives to landowners whose property is prohibited from development due to its retention as a natural ground water recharge area. These incentives shall be provided to encourage the preservation of natural water courses without creating undue hardship on the owner of properties, and might include density transfer mechanisms. (AI 9)
- OS 4.8 Exclude any area within the Watercourse Overlay designation from the acreage used to calculate allowable project density or intensity on a site.*
- OS 4.9 Prohibit increases in zoning that allow more intense modifications of development sites for watercourses and areas within 100 feet of the outside boundary of the riparian vegetation, the top of the bank, or the 100 year floodplain, whichever is greater.*



**Floodplain and Riparian Area Management**

Floodplains are subject to geomorphic (land-shaping) and hydrologic (water flow) processes. The watercourse and its floodway are usually the focus of construction and control; while fertile, flat and “reclaimed” floodplain lands are usually the focal points for other activities such as agriculture, commerce, and residential development. These areas form a complex physical and biological system that not only supports a variety of natural resources, but also provides natural flood and erosion control. In addition, the floodplain represents a natural filtering system, with water percolating back into the ground and replenishing groundwater. When a watercourse is divorced from its floodplain with levees and other flood control facilities, then natural, built-in benefits are either lost, altered, or significantly reduced.

★  
*The County of Riverside has adopted the USGS “blue line stream” overlay as its major form of mapping the watercourses in Riverside County (see figure OS-1, the Land Use Element, and Area Plan Maps). Though this overlay is not necessarily the most accurate description of a water course or of the actual running water within the County, it is a general indicator of existing or potential moving water resources, floodways and floodplains.*

The conventional assumption that flooding can be completely eliminated has meant not only an unrealistic reliance on manufactured flood protection, but also the development of a flood control system that squeezes rivers into artificially narrow channels, adds steeply sloped levees (devoid of riparian vegetation), and eliminates historic floodplains, all in the name of reclamation, flood protection and urban growth. Unfortunately, this highlights the fact that floods have been viewed for far too long as everything except part of the natural life cycle of rivers and floodplains. Flooding is part of the dynamic nature of healthy rivers and ecosystems. High flows and flood waters are needed to cleanse the channels of accumulated debris, build stream banks, import gravels for aquatic life, thin riparian forests and create riparian habitat. The open space of floodplains adjacent to rivers and streams helps store and slowly release floodwaters, thus reducing flood flow and peaks and their subsequent impacts during small and frequent flood events.

  
*Also see the Flood and Inundation Hazard Abatement section of the Safety Element.*

Further, riparian habitat within floodplains is of great value to resident and migratory animal species, as it provides corridors and linkages to and from the biotic regions of the County. The numerous essential habitat elements provided by the remaining riparian corridors of Riverside County make them a significant contributor to wildlife habitat throughout the County. The intent of the County is to sustain “living” riparian habitats to the maximum extent possible.

The following set of policies address floodways, the floodplain fringe, and riparian areas in the County.

**Policies:**

- OS 5.1 Substantially alter floodways or implement other channelization only as a “last resort,” and limit the alteration to:
  - a. that necessary for the protection of public health and safety only after all other options are exhausted;
  - b. essential public service projects where no other feasible construction method or alternative project location exists; or
  - c. projects where the primary function is improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. (AI 25, 59, 60)
- OS 5.2 If substantial modification to a floodway is proposed, design it to reduce adverse environmental effects to the maximum extent feasible, considering the following factors:



Development is defined as the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any structure that would require a discretionary permit from the County; any mining, excavation, landfill or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land that would require a discretionary permit from the County. Development does not include non-motorized trails, agriculture or other uses for which a discretionary permit is not required. For purposes of this definition, the term, discretionary permit, shall have the same meaning as that set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act and Guidelines.

Watercourse is defined as any natural stream, river, creek, waterway, gully, ravine or wash in which water flows in a definite direction or course, either continuously or intermittently, and has a definite channel, bed and banks. A watercourse also includes any vegetation along the banks as well as any adjacent areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions including swamps, marshes, and bogs.

- a. stream scour;
  - b. erosion protection and sedimentation;
  - c. wildlife habitat and linkages;
  - d. groundwater recharge capability;
  - e. adjacent property; and
  - f. design (a natural effect, examples could include soft riparian bottoms and gentle bank slopes, wide and shallow floodways, minimization of visible use of concrete, and landscaping with native plants to the maximum extent possible).
- A site specific hydrologic study may be required. (AI 25, 59, 60)

- OS 5.3 Based upon site, specific study, all development shall be set back from the floodway boundary a distance adequate to address the following issues:
  - a. public safety;
  - b. erosion;
  - c. riparian or wetland buffer;
  - d. wildlife movement corridor or linkage; ~~and~~
  - e. slopes; *and*
  - f. *type of watercourse* (AI 59, 60)

*Develop a model for determining minimum setbacks of 50 feet to 500 feet.*
- OS 5.4 Consider designating floodway setbacks for greenways, trails, and recreation opportunities on a case-by-case basis. (AI 25, 59, 60)
- OS 5.5 New development *and redevelopment* shall preserve and enhance existing native riparian habitat and prevent obstruction of natural watercourses. *Prohibit fencing across watercourses and their banks and styles of fences that constrict flows.* Incentives shall be utilized to the maximum extent possible. (AI 25, 60)
- OS 5.6 Identify and, to the maximum extent possible, conserve remaining upland habitat areas adjacent to wetland and riparian areas that are critical to the feeding, hibernation, or nesting of wildlife species associated with these wetland and riparian areas. (AI 60, 61)
- OS 5.7 Where land is prohibited from development due to its retention as natural floodways, floodplains and water courses, incentives should be available to the owner of the land including density transfer and other mechanisms as may be adopted. These incentives will be provided for the purpose of encouraging the preservation of natural water courses without creating undue hardship on the owner of properties following these policies. (AI 60)
- OS 5.8 *Locate nurseries, sewage pumping stations, and utilities outside watercourses and floodplains. Locate power lines, telephone lines, and other utilities outside watercourses and zones of riparian vegetation.*
- OS 5.9 *Develop an educational outreach program for the agricultural community through the Agricultural Commissioner's office, Farm Bureau, and University Agricultural Extension regarding the many benefits of locating crops outside watercourses and floodplains.*



*Best Management Practices or BMPs for stormwater management are site-specific measures with quantifiable goals to address increases in runoff volume and rate, and increases in pollutant concentrations in runoff due to increasing urbanization and imperviousness of watersheds. Best Management Practices or BMPs for stormwater management are site-specific measures Stormwater BMPs range from engineered measures, technological solutions, and Low Impact Development to measures like education and training. BMPs cover all aspects of planning, design, construction, post-construction, and on-going maintenance and management of projects.*

*OS 5.10 Figure OS-1 shows USGS Blueline Stream data. The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) prepared by the USGS is a more refined dataset than the Blueline Stream data, that shows different types of watercourses. The County will undertake a program to update its watercourse mapping to reflect the NHD, and include the addition of ephemeral watercourses that meet the criteria for State jurisdictional wetlands.*



## ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

The County's multipurpose open space system will be created and maintained using several different techniques, all related to preservation of significant environmental resources. By preserving multi-species habitat; by creating and maintaining active and passive parks, recreation areas and trail systems; by conserving natural and scenic resources; and avoiding natural hazard areas; a complete system of open space will be achieved that ensures the County's "remarkable environmental setting" remains intact for future generations of citizens to enjoy. This section identifies policies for the preservation of environmentally sensitive land within the County of Riverside, including, but not limited to, the land to be preserved through the MSHCPs.



*Also refer to the Open Space, Habitat and Natural Resource Protection policies in the Land Use Element and the policies in the Safety Element that seek to preserve environmentally sensitive lands subject to natural hazards.*

### Policies:

- OS 18.1 Preserve multi-species habitat resources in the County of Riverside through the enforcement of the provisions of applicable MSHCP's, ~~if adopted.~~ (AI 10)
- OS 18.2 Provide incentives to landowners that will encourage the protection of significant resources in the County beyond the preservation and/or conservation required to mitigate project impacts. (AI 9)
- OS 18.3 Prohibit the planting or introduction of invasive, non-native species to watercourses, their banks, riparian areas, or buffering setbacks.*
- OS 18.4 Develop standards for the management of private conservation easements and conservation lots in fee title. For areas with watercourses, apply special standards a – f (below) for their protection, and apply standards g-j (below) generally:*
- a. For conservation lands with watercourses, conform easement boundaries to setback conditions that will preserve natural flows and changes in the natural boundaries of a watercourse and its protective riparian habitat.*
  - b. Use only "open" fencing that permits the movement of wildlife, and limit fencing to locations outside of setbacks to watercourses (no fencing is permitted to cross the banks or channel of a watercourse, unless no other option is available).*
  - c. Allow fuel modification only to the outside of buffering vegetation (riparian vegetation and vegetation on slopes that buffer the watercourse from erosion and storm water pollution).*
  - d. No planting of non-native invasive species is permitted.*
  - e. No lighting of watercourse area is permitted.*
  - f. Prohibit the use of pesticides and herbicides known to harm aquatic species and sensitive amphibians.*



- g. Ensure that lands under control of Homeowner's Associations employ an experienced non-profit conservation group or agency to manage/maintain the land.*
- h. Prohibit use of recreational off-road vehicles.*
- i. Prohibit grazing and alterations of vegetation except for fuel and weed management under close supervision of qualified natural lands manager.*
- j. For private conservation lands, especially those within criteria cells of MSHCP areas, ensure that easement and fee title agreements provide funding methods sufficient to manage the land in perpetuity.*



# **ARROYO POLICIES: SAFETY ELEMENT**

Riverside County General Plan Advisory Committee

July 29, 2009



## Issues and Policies

The following issues and policies are organized under the headings of “General” - those that apply to all natural hazards and “Hazard Specific” - those that only apply to a specific hazard type (i.e., flood or seismic).

Those policies that are “General” are subcategorized by types of policies: code conformance, special development regulations, or hazard reduction. Following the general policies are those that are categorized by specific hazard types. Additional safety policies that only apply to a specific geographical area of the County may be found in any of the General Plan’s 19 area plans.

In addition to this Safety Element, land use and development in Riverside County are regulated by the other elements and area plans of the General Plan, County Building and Grading Ordinances, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and specific resolutions adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

## GENERAL ISSUES & POLICIES

### Code Conformance & Development Regulations

The County Department of Building and Safety provides technical expertise in reviewing and enforcing the County Building and Fire Codes. These codes establish site-specific investigation requirements, construction standards, and inspection procedures to ensure that development does not pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the public. Every three years, the County’s Building and Fire Codes are adapted from the Uniform Building and Fire Codes. They contain baseline minimum standards to guard against unsafe development. As discussed in the Technical Background Report, project variables may modify the implementation of a particular standard.

At a minimum, it is imperative to enforce the most recently adopted regulatory codes for new development and significant redevelopment, including the County’s Land Use Ordinance and Land Division Ordinance, which support the Building and Fire Codes. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) adds another level of safety review, requiring that environmental constraints be considered prior to approval of significant projects. Additional guidelines and standards are introduced through the Safety Element. Table S-1, Multi-Hazard Safety Actions, identifies the relationship between these various regulatory and planning tools and the hazards that they address.



*The General Plan policy*

*and implementation item reference system:*

*Identifies which element contains the Policy, in this case the Land Use Element, and the sequential number.*

**LU 1.3:**

**Neighborhood**  
Commercial uses should be located near residential uses.

**{AI 1 and AI 4}**

*Reference to the relevant Action Items contained in the implementation Program*



Special development regulations can reinforce and augment existing code standards by raising the level of hazard-conscious project design and mitigation engineering. Examples include additional geologic/geotechnical investigation and additional reinforcement of foundations in areas of potential ground failure. While foundation investigations are required by the County's Building Code, it is important to emphasize expected levels of investigation and protection. Furthermore, some requirements that may only apply to critical facilities, such as detailed seismic analyses, could be expanded to include other structures and lifelines. Where engineering methods cannot mitigate the hazards, avoidance of the hazard is appropriate, such as where ground rupture along active or potentially active fault traces are identified during project investigation. Special minimum setbacks away from active faults, which are already required for critical facilities, can also be defined for other structures and lifelines.

*Through Ordinance 457 and Board of Supervisors Policy F-6, Riverside County prohibits grading without permits, levies penalties for illegal grading, and requires the restoration of illegally graded land to prevent off-site drainage and slope erosion. The penalties for illegal grading include fines and 5-year abeyances on the issuance of building permits and land use approvals involving subject properties. Larger fines may be levied for illegal grading where it can be shown that violations have occurred in regard to federal and state laws that permit the larger fines.*

### **Policies:**

- S 1.1 Mitigate hazard impacts through adoption and strict enforcement of current building codes, which will be amended as necessary when local deficiencies are identified.
- S 1.2 Enforce state laws aimed at identification, inventory, and retrofit of existing vulnerable structures.
- S 1.3 Riverside County will continue to enforce penalties against grading without permits, and the restoration of land thus damaged. The County will continue to educate the public about the benefits of grading with permits and the penalties for grading without them. If the penalties are later determined to not be effective, the County will explore whether the levying of greater penalties would be more effective in deterring illegal grading and ensuring the proper restoration of damaged lands.*



# **ARROYO POLICIES: CIRCULATION ELEMENT**

Riverside County General Plan Advisory Committee

July 29, 2009



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The County's transportation system must be planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner that retains a high level of environmental quality. Transportation system improvements should be implemented to minimize disturbance of the natural environment and other sensitive environmental features covered under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) guidelines.

“

*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.*

”

- RCIP Vision

### Policies:

- C 20.1 Ensure preservation of trees identified as superior examples of native vegetation within road rights-of-way through development proposals review process.
- C 20.2 Provide all roadways located within identified flood areas with adequate flood control measures.
- C 20.3 Locate roadways outside identified flood plains whenever possible.
- C 20.4 New crossings of watercourses by local roads shall occur at the minimum frequency necessary to provide for adequate neighborhood and community circulation and fire protection. Wherever feasible, new crossings shall occur using bridging systems that pass over entire watercourses and associated floodplains and riparian vegetation in single spans. Dip or culvert crossings shall be avoided, but, where their use is unavoidable, they shall be designed to minimize impacts on watercourses.*
- C 20.5 In order to protect the watershed, water supply, groundwater recharge, and wildlife values of watercourses, the County will avoid siting utility infrastructure and associated grading, fire clearance, and other disturbances within or adjacent to watercourses, if there are feasible alternatives available, and discourage special districts and other governmental jurisdictions outside of the County's authority, from doing so. Where such watershed utility siting locations cannot be avoided, the impacts on watercourses shall be minimized.*
- C 20.4 Control dust and mitigate other environmental impacts during all stages of roadway construction.
- C 20.5 Protect all streets and highways located within identified blow sand areas from blowsand hazards to the extent practicable.
- C 20.6 Protect County residents from transportation generated noise hazards. Increased setbacks, walls, landscaped berms, other sound absorbing barriers, or a combination thereof shall be provided along freeways, expressways, and four-lane highways in order to protect adjacent noise-sensitive land uses from traffic-generated noise impacts. Additionally, noise generators such as commercial, manufacturing, and/or industrial activities shall use these techniques to mitigate exterior noise levels to no more than 60 decibels. (AI 107)



- C 20.7 Incorporate specific requirements of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan into transportation plans and development proposals.
- C 20.8 Avoid, where practicable, disturbance of existing communities and biotic resource areas when identifying alignments for new roadways, or for improvements to existing roadways and other transportation system improvements.
- C 20.9 Implement the Circulation Plan in a manner consistent with federal, state, and local environmental quality standards and regulations.
- C 20.10 Review and monitor proposals for expansion of pipelines for the transport of suitable products and materials, and require mitigation of environmental impacts. In particular, require mitigation of the potential for hazardous chemical or gas leakage and explosion.
- C 20.11 Incorporate specific requirements of the General Plan Air Quality Element into transportation plans and development proposals where applicable. (AI 110)
- C 20.12 Encourage the use of alternative non-motorized transportation and the use of non-polluting vehicles. (AI 118)
- C 20.13 Implement National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Best Management Practices relating to construction of roadways to control runoff contamination from affecting the groundwater supply.