



RIVERSIDE COUNTY

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Project Description:

General Plan Amendment No. 230007 is an amendment to the Administration and Land Use Elements and all 19 Area Plans within the Riverside County General Plan, to update procedures related to the Foundation Component application cycle process. Administration and Land Use Element changes include elimination of the eight-year Foundation Component application cycle, elimination of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), modification of all General Plan Amendment types and creation of new General Plan Amendment findings. Modifications to the 19 Area Plans include removal of the eight-year Foundation Component application cycle references. **Change of Zone No. 2300028** is an amendment to Ordinance No. 348 (Land Use), which makes the same processing changes as described under General Plan Amendment No. 230007 – Project Planner: John Hildebrand, email at jhildebr@rivco.org

Summary of Changes:

The Riverside County General Plan Land Uses are organized into five (5) separate groups, called Foundations and include Agriculture, Rural, Rural Community, Open Space, and Community Development. Within each Foundation are the traditional General Plan Land Use types, which are organized in the following way:

Foundation Component	Land Use Designation
Agriculture:	Agriculture (AG)
Rural:	Rural Residential (RR) (5 acre minimum)
	Rural Mountainous (RM) (10 acre minimum)
	Rural Desert (RD) (10 acre minimum)
Rural Community:	Estate Density Residential (EDR) (2 acre minimum)
	Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) (1 acre minimum)
	Low Density Residential (LDR) (1/2 acre minimum)
Open Space:	Conservation (C)
	Conservation Habitat (CH)
	Recreation (R)
	Rural (RUR)
	Water (W)
	Mineral Resources (MR)
Community Development:	Estate Density Residential (EDR) (2 acre minimum)
	Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) (1 acre minimum)
	Low Density Residential (LDR) (1/2 acre minimum)
	Medium Density Residential (MDR) (2-5 units per acre)
	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR) (5-8 units per acre)

High Density Residential (HDR) (8-14 units per acre)
Very High Density Residential (VHDR) (14-20 units per acre)
Highest Density Residential (HDR) (20-plus units per acre)
Commercial Retail (CR)
Commercial Tourist (CT)
Commercial Office (CO)
Community Center (CC)
Light Industrial (LI)
Heavy Industrial (HI)
Business Park (BP)
Public Facilities (PF)
Mixed Use Area (MUA)

The Administration Element of the Riverside County General Plan sets forth the rules and procedures governing General Plan Amendments and includes special rules related to Land Use Amendments. The existing process allows for a General Plan Land Use Amendment within the same Foundation, to occur at any time. However, changing a Land Use from one Foundation to a different Foundation is subject to an eight-year Foundation cycle, requiring it to first be “initiated” by the Board of Supervisors, and includes the following general steps:

- 1) Provide noticing and establish an application submittal period, which is generally open for 60-days and is conducted once every eight-years.
- 2) Form a General Plan Advisory Committee (“GPAC”), whose purpose is to review and comment on all Foundation applications. The Committee is comprised of members of the public, ranging from environmental groups to developers.
- 3) Prepare all Foundation applications for a Planning Commission hearing.
- 4) Prepare all Foundation applications for a Board of Supervisors hearing.
- 5) Should the Board of Supervisors give initiation support for the proposed Foundation change, the applicant then has the right to move forward, and the Foundation change request becomes a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and is then subject to the traditional review and public hearing process.

The County conducted two General Plan Foundation cycles in 2008 and 2016, under these rules, with a subsequent cycle to open in 2024. For reference, the County received 156 Foundation change requests in 2008 and 32 Foundation change requests in 2016. Given the nature of development trends today, coupled with Southern California Association of Governments (“SCAG”) Regional Housing Needs Assessment (“RHNA”), which obligates Riverside County to construct 40,647 new residential dwelling units during this 6th cycle housing element amendment period, and the continuous new State

legislation related to by-right housing construction, this process should be amended. The existing General Plan Amendment procedures are not sufficiently flexible to quickly respond to State mandates, the projected growth of the region, and housing production in general. Furthermore, the process is lengthy, inefficient, and at a much higher cost than other surrounding Counties due to the multiple procedural steps. As a result, the proposed changes to the General Plan Amendment and Foundation change processes are as follows:

1. **Timing** – any General Plan amendment, whether it's a Land Use change within the same Foundation or into a different Foundation, may be submitted at any time for consideration and initiation, eliminating the eight-year cycle application period. The structure of the five (5) Foundations and subsequent Land Uses are to remain intact.
2. **Processing** – Eliminate the General Plan Advisory Committee ("GPAC") formation and review process. A change from one Foundation into another Foundation would first be considered at Planning Commission, then Board of Supervisors. A Non-Foundation General Plan Amendment and changes to any other Element or Area Plan, would not be subject to this initiation process.
3. **General Plan Amendment Types** – Consolidate and repurpose the multiple and somewhat confusing existing General Plan Amendment types, which include:
 - a. **Technical Amendment** – Involves changes in the General Plan of a technical nature, including technical corrections discovered in the process of implementing the General Plan. Some Entitlement Amendments may occur under this category if they are required to correct a documentable error in the General Plan.
 - b. **Entitlement / Policy Amendment** – Involves changes in land use designations or policies that involve land located entirely within a General Plan Foundation Component but that do not change the boundaries of that component provided.
 - c. **Foundation Amendment** – Involves changes in the Riverside County Vision, the General Plan Planning Principles, and a Land Use Designation change from one Foundation to a different Foundation.
 - d. **Extraordinary Amendment** – This type of amendment does not operate on a cycle. It may be initiated at any time, but it must also have an extraordinary justification. This type of event is properly considered an exception to normal General Plan considerations because of its serious cause and potentially serious impacts on the General Plan.
 - e. **Agriculture Amendment** – Involves amendments to property designated in the General Plan as Agriculture.

The new, proposed General Plan Amendment types are as follows:

- a. **General Plan Land Use Amendment (Non-Foundation Change)** – Involves changes in land use designations located entirely within the same General Plan Foundation Component.
 - b. **General Plan Land Use Amendment (Foundation Change)** – Involves changes in land use designations from one Foundation Component to a different Foundation Component.
 - c. **General Plan Amendment** – Involves text amendments, Area Plan amendments, or amendments to another Element.
4. **Eligibility** – The original purpose of the Foundation change initiation process was to prevent spot land use changes, speculation, and ensure conservation by slowing sprawl and development into areas not suitable for more intensive uses. As a replacement for the eight-year application period, a higher standard for consideration of Foundation changes is proposed to be implemented. As part of the Foundation change application process, the property owner / developer will need to appropriately describe how the proposed change will meet the following eligibility requirements, necessary for initiation consideration:
- a. There are other existing or under review developments within close proximity, that are similar to or compatible with the proposed Foundation Component amendment site; and,
 - b. There are adequate primary and secondary access locations (when required) to the Foundation Component amendment site or access locations will be constructed as part of the implementing project, to ensure public health, safety, and welfare; and,
 - c. There are sufficient utilities to adequately serve the proposed Foundation Component amendment site or utilities will be constructed as part of the implementing project; and,
 - d. Identify the fire hazard severity zone the proposed Foundation Component amendment site is located within and how the property will be protected from a fire event; and,
 - e. Identify if the proposed Foundation Component amendment site is located within a Western Riverside County Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) criteria cell or a Coachella Valley Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) conservation area and describe any constraints related to the conservation areas. Discuss how the proposed Foundation Component Amendment will not have a negative impact to the County's Habitat Conservation Plans or other natural resources; and,
 - f. An Agriculture Foundation Component Amendment may be allowed for up to 7% of all land designated as Agriculture to change to another Foundation Component during each 2½ year Agriculture Foundation Amendment Cycle and convert to another land use consistent with the amended Foundation and land use designation. The 7% conversion can occur at any time within the 2½ year Agriculture Foundation Amendment Cycle.

To further ensure feasibility of a proposed Foundation change, an implementing project such as a Tentative Subdivision Map, Conditional Use Permit, or Plot Plan, will be required to be submitted within six (6) months of the General Plan Foundation change initiation.

5. Findings – For consideration to approve a General Plan Amendment, each Amendment type has its own unique set of Findings, described in the Administration Element. The existing findings have become difficult to make and are outdated, reflecting a development framework of 20-years ago. The following proposed new findings represent a more common and industry standard set of General Plan Amendment findings and directly correspond to the three (3) new Amendment types:

a. General Plan Land Use Amendment (Non-Foundation Change) Findings:

- 1) The potential impacts of the proposed General Plan Land Use amendment have been assessed and have been determined to not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; and,
- 2) The proposed General Plan Land Use amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and applicable Area Plan; and,
- 3) The proposed General Plan Land Use amendment is compatible with the surrounding land uses; and,
- 4) The proposed General Plan Land Use amendment is suitable for the location, access, visual character, and topography of the subject property.

b. General Plan Land Use Amendment (Foundation Change) Findings:

- 1) The potential impacts of the proposed Foundation Component and General Plan Land Use amendments have been assessed and have been determined to not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; and,
- 2) The proposed Foundation Component and General Plan Land Use amendments are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and applicable Area Plan; and,
- 3) The proposed Foundation Component and General Plan Land Use amendments are compatible with the surrounding land uses; and,
- 4) The proposed Foundation Component and General Plan Land Use amendments are suitable for the location, access, visual character, and topography of the subject property; and,

*Restate how the proposed Foundation Component and General Plan Land Use amendments meet each of the eligibility requirements.

c. General Plan Amendment Findings:

- 1) The potential impacts of the proposed General Plan amendment have been assessed and have been determined to not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; and,
- 2) The proposed General Plan amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and applicable Area Plan; and,
- 3) The proposed General Plan amendment will not result in a conflict with the County's Land Use Ordinance.

The integrity of the Foundation categories and subsequent Land Use Designations are not proposed to be changed and the General Plan Land Use organizational framework will remain the same. However, the procedure for General Plan Amendments and the types of Amendments have been updated to reflect today's development environment and California State legislative mandates. As a result, changes to the General Plan Administration and Land Use Elements, along with all 19 Area Plans and Ordinance No. 348 (Land Use) are being updated accordingly.