



## 2. LAND USE ELEMENT

As the backbone of the General Plan, this element sets forth the distribution, location, and intensity of land uses throughout the City. It represents the land use “road map” for Palm Springs—guiding it into the future with goals, policies, and actions.

### LAND USE PLAN

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One of the most visible components of the General Plan is the Land Use Plan, which depicts where and how development should occur and provides descriptions of each of the City’s land use designations through text and a land use diagram. State law requires that general plans identify land use designations and the development intensities that are associated with them for the 87,600 acres of land that are located within the City and Sphere of Influence. In addition, state law also requires that the locations and distribution of the land uses be identified through text and mapping. The locations of each land use can be found on the Land Use Plan (Figures 2-2 and 2-3). The text in this element provides the land use goals, policies, and actions that are necessary to achieve the vision.

In general, the majority of the City’s existing land uses were retained in place in the new plan, and focused changes occurred in areas that were either underutilized or areas that required specialized land use guidance or refinement. Focused land use changes also occurred in areas where change is either imminent and needs guidance or where change is desired and needs stimulation and guidance. The revitalization of Downtown and hillsides were also issues of high interest and, as a result, customized policy guidance was developed for these issues.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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### POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The permanent population of Palm Springs, according to the 2000 census, was 42,807, a growth of 6.2 percent since 1990. At the height of tourist season, the combined permanent and seasonal population in Palm Springs is estimated to be approximately 74,000. Based upon Table 2-1, *Land Use Plan*, the City has a potential to generate a maximum of approximately 51,300 dwelling units within the City and Sphere of Influence boundaries. Using an average household size of 2.08 persons for single-family units and a household size of 1.78 for multi-family units, the City's maximum population could reach approximately 94,950.

At the time of this update, almost 70 percent of available jobs within Palm Springs are categorized within three employment sectors: retail and entertainment, health care and other services, and government and local services. In contrast, manufacturing and transportation represent only 9 percent of jobs within the City. Employment is projected to increase from approximately 32,500 jobs in 2000 to 55,800 jobs by the year 2030. At an average annual rate of 1.8 percent, this is relatively faster than population and household growth. As a result of the faster employment growth, the jobs-housing ratio in the City (the number of jobs per household in the year 2000 was 1.6) is expected to increase to 1.8 in 2030.<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that, since the City has limited areas for future development, opportunities to address the jobs-housing balance are somewhat limited. Additional strategies that address housing needs and opportunities within Palm Springs can be found in the Housing Element.

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<sup>1</sup> Projections based upon SCAG Regional Transportation Plan, 2004.

## GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

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Land use categories are provided to define the type, density, and intensity of development in any particular area of the City. It is not the intent of the General Plan that all the developments within the City be uniform in type, for a mixture of dwelling types is not only possible, but desirable. The mixture could include single-family detached units, townhouses, and some higher density units that may be condominiums or apartments. The critical issue related to development is the relationship between the different intensities of residential use and the open spaces and amenities that should be provided near those areas. It is, for example, important that higher density residential be located near parks and convenience shopping areas where the residents can enjoy neighborhood facilities.

The following section describes in further detail each one of the land uses identified on the Land Use Plan (Figures 2-2 and 2-3) and the standards associated with each.

Each of the land use designations is implemented by a correlating set of zoning designations described in the City's Zoning Ordinance. It should be noted that there need not be an equal number of land use designations and zoning classifications. In many instances, multiple zoning classifications may be consistent with a single General Plan land use designation.

Each of the residential land use designations includes a range of allowable densities. The maximum density signifies the maximum number of dwelling units per gross acre that are allowed in each residential area. For example, the Very Low Density Residential designation allows a range of 2.1–4.0 dwelling units per gross acre.

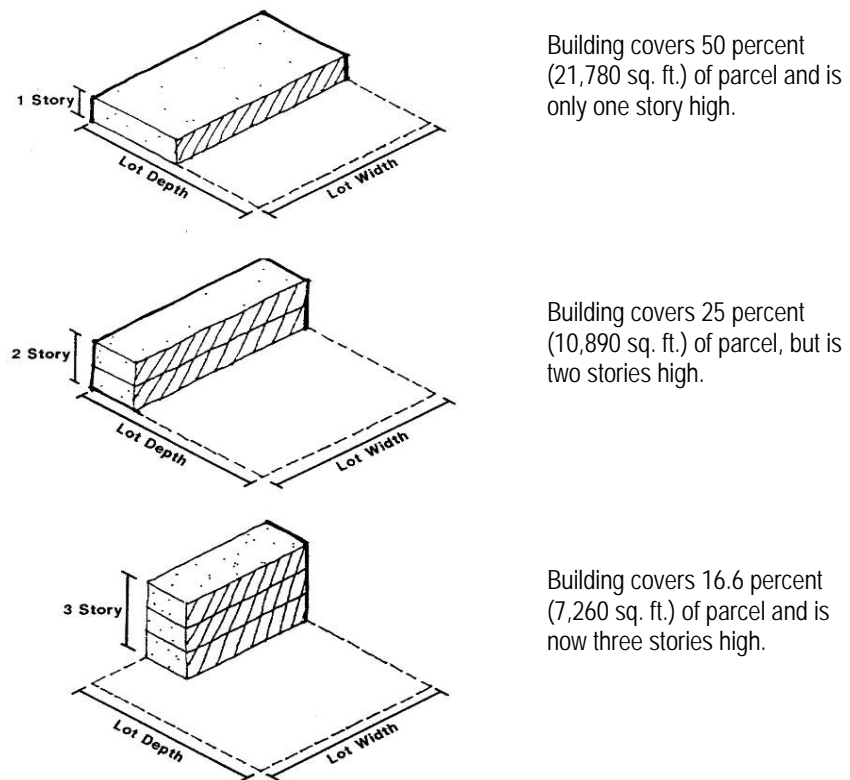
The lower threshold figure for each of these categories represents a minimum amount of development anticipated, provided that all other required conditions can be met, and the higher figure represents a potential maximum that could be located in each area if the proposed development demonstrates qualities above the minimum development standards to achieve a higher density. The purpose of this concept is to ensure that the City continues to achieve the high-quality development for which it is known. Criteria used to determine the applicability of the higher densities can be found in the New Housing Opportunities section of this element.

Building intensities for nonresidential uses are measured by floor area ratio (FAR). FAR is the ratio of the total net floor area of a building to the total lot area and describes the intensity of the use on a site. FAR calculations do not

include areas within parking structures or outdoor open storage areas. Figure 2-1 illustrates the FAR calculation concept.

Actual density (residential uses) and FAR (nonresidential uses) ranges are determined on a parcel-specific basis. Density and FAR are based on adjusted gross acreage, which takes out acres associated with right-of-way.

Site considerations, such as topography or location, and City policies and regulations, such as development standards in the Zoning Code, may place additional requirements on a property that could prevent the site from achieving the maximum density or intensity established within this General Plan.



Floor Area Ratio Example (FAR = 0.50): On a one-acre parcel (43,560 sq. ft.), a maximum FAR of 0.50 equates to a total building area of 21,780 sq. ft., in either a 1-, 2-, or 3-story configuration (43,560 sq. ft. multiplied by 0.50 equals 21,780 sq. ft.). Note how coverage (building footprint) varies significantly as the building height changes to yield an identical FAR.

**Figure 2-1 Sample Floor Area Ratio**

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

**Estate Residential (0–2.0 dwelling units per acre).** The Estate Residential designation provides for the development of large-lot, single-family residences that are custom in design. This designation is predominantly located in areas adjacent to the City’s hillsides, reflecting the natural and environmental constraints that must be addressed there. Minimum lot sizes are generally 20,000 square feet in this designation; guest ranches are permitted on parcel areas of five acres, with a minimum lot area of 4,000 square feet per guest ranch unit.

**Very Low Density Residential (2.1–4.0 dwelling units per acre).** The Very Low Density residential is the most prevalent land use designation within the City, representing typical single-family detached residential development. Lot sizes in this land use designation generally range from 16,500 to 8,500 square feet.

**Low Density Residential (4.1–6.0 dwelling units per acre).** Similar to the Very Low Density Residential designation, the Low Density Residential designation also represents “typical” single-family detached residential development. This designation accommodates typical lot sizes ranging from 10,000 to 8,000 square feet.

**Medium Density Residential (6.1–15.0 dwelling units per acre).** This residential land use category accommodates a range of residential housing types, including single-family attached, single-family detached, patio homes, duplexes, townhomes, multiple-family, and mobilehome projects.

**High Density Residential (15.1–30 dwelling units per acre).** Typical development in this category would include duplexes, townhomes, and apartments. Hotels and motels are also permitted up to 43 rooms per net acre (up to 86 rooms per net acre permitted on Indian Land) as long as they are consistent with the design and character of the surrounding neighborhoods and do not create significant design, parking, or traffic impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhood.



*Estate Residential*



*Medium Density Residential*

## COMMERCIAL

**Tourist Resort Commercial (0.35 FAR for stand-alone commercial uses; 43 hotel rooms per net acre; 86 rooms per net acre on Indian Land).**

This land use designation provides for large-scale resort hotels and timeshares including a broad range of convenience, fitness, spa, retail, and entertainment uses principally serving resort clientele. Commercial recreation and entertainment facilities, such as convention centers, museums, indoor and outdoor theatres, and water parks are included in this designation, but should be designed to be compatible with neighboring development. Tourist Resort Commercial facilities are most appropriate in the Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Drive corridors. It is intended that the primary use in any Tourist Resort Commercial area shall be hotel/tourist-related uses; if residential uses are proposed within the Tourist Commercial Designation (timeshares, condominiums, etc.) they shall be a secondary use ancillary to the proposed hotel uses and shall not exceed a maximum of 30 dwelling units per acre. Permanent residential uses and commercial activities are allowed subject to approval of a planned development district.



*Tourist Resort Commercial*

**Small Hotel Resort Commercial (15 hotel rooms per net acre; 10 dwelling units per acre).** This designation applies to areas with smaller-scale, boutique type hotels that are typically found in the Warm Sands and Tennis Club neighborhoods. It is intended that the tourist resort character of these neighborhoods be preserved; as a result, new residential uses or conversion of small hotels to residential uses are permitted as long as they comply with the conversion requirements outlined within the City's Zoning Code. Stand-alone retail and commercial uses are not permitted in this land use designation. Ancillary commercial uses such as a gift shop associated with a small hotel use are allowed.

**Neighborhood/Community Commercial (0.35 FAR).** Areas designated as Neighborhood/Community Commercial provide an opportunity for convenience commercial uses that serve adjacent residential neighborhoods. The commercial opportunities created under this designation are intended to be an integrated element of the neighborhood, providing to nearby residents services such as dry cleaners, grocery stores, bakeries, bank and post office branches, bookstores, drugstores, and smaller-scale restaurants. Harmonious relationships between these commercial uses and adjacent residential uses shall be achieved through compatibility of site design, building scale, pathways and circulation design, and architectural treatment of structures.

**Regional Commercial (0.50 FAR).** Regional Commercial areas are intended to provide for large-scale commercial uses that serve an area larger than the City boundaries. Allowable uses include department stores, theatres, and restaurants. Uses such as automobile dealerships that have a regional draw are



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also included in this land use designation. These uses are generally located in areas that will benefit from a higher level of exposure to residents located outside of the City, such as properties located on Ramon Road adjacent to the City limits and selected properties adjacent to the I-10.

## MIXED USE

**Central Business District (1.0 FAR; 21–30 dwelling units per acre).** Bounded approximately by Ramon Road, Calle Encilia, Alejo Road and Belardo Road, the Central Business District designation allows for a mix of commercial, residential, and office uses at a higher concentration, density, and intensity than in other areas of the City. The CBD serves as the main activity center and cultural core of the community and, as such, theatres, museums, retail, and other entertainment venues are encouraged here. Uses such as grocery stores, hardware stores, and convenience or pharmacy stores that provide services to the Downtown’s residential population are also encouraged. The Central Business District is subdivided into zones or areas that provide for diversity in development standards and land use intensities. These subareas are defined in Appendix A, *Downtown Urban Design Plan*. Examples include the gateways into Downtown, Downtown Central Core, and the Downtown Outer Core. The Downtown Central Core (roughly bounded by Amado Road, Tahquitz Canyon Way, Museum Drive, and Indian Canyon Drive) and the Gateway areas (at roughly the north and south ends of the CBD) may be developed with a maximum FAR of 3.5. If projects in these areas provide substantial public spaces or plazas, an FAR of up to 4.0 may be developed upon approval of a Planned Development District or Specific Plan. The Downtown Central Core may also accommodate up to 70 dwelling units per acre for residential or hotel uses if a Planned Development District or Specific Plan is prepared and approved.

**Mixed-use/Multi-use (Maximum of 15 dwelling units per acre for residential uses and a maximum 0.50 FAR for nonresidential uses).** Specific uses intended in these areas include community-serving retail commercial, professional offices, service businesses, restaurants, daycare centers, public and quasi-public uses. Residential development at a maximum density of 15 units per acre is permitted; planned development districts may allow residential densities up to 30 du/acre and also ensure that all proposed uses are properly integrated and allow the implementation of development standards that are customized to each site.



*Central Business District*

Additional information related to the location and desired mix of uses in each mixed-use/multi-use area can be found on page 2-30 of this element.

## SPECIAL POLICY AREAS

Special Policy Area designations have been applied in two areas of the City: the Chino Cone and Palm Hills. Due to the environmental and visual importance of these two areas, projects proposed within either Special Policy Area must be of superior design, demonstrate integration with existing natural features and land forms, be sensitive to biological resources of the site, and create a more desirable living environment than could be achieved through conventional subdivision design and requirements.

Development densities in the Chino Cone are one dwelling unit per forty acres (1 du/40 ac). Development applications in excess of this density may be considered with the submittal of a Specific Plan and its associated environmental documentation, which would by action, establish a general plan amendment. In all cases, development within the Chino Cone Special Policy Area must be consistent with the Environmentally Sensitive Development Areas Specific Plan Ordinance (ESA-SP) in the Palm Springs Zoning Code.

The Palm Hills Special Policy Area allows residential and resort development at a maximum of 1 dwelling unit/hotel unit per acre, not to exceed a total of 1,200 units. Any development proposed in the Palm Hills area will require the preparation of a Specific Plan and a related environmental impact report.

## EMPLOYMENT CENTERS (OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL)

**Office (0.35 FAR).** This land use designation allows for the development of office uses such as executive, administrative and clerical offices, medical offices, and small office centers. Retail uses in this district should be limited to uses directly related to office operations such as restaurants, office supply stores, and pharmacies associated with a medical building. Hotels may be permitted when appropriately integrated into a business or corporate park.

**Industrial (0.50 FAR).** Industrial uses typically include research and development parks, light manufacturing, laboratories, and industrial services. Retail commercial uses and offices shall be allowed as ancillary uses to the industrial use to encourage projects that are self-sustaining. Industrial development is not a primary use within the City, and any industrial use proposed should not detract from the City's desire to be a premier resort community. Industrial uses adjacent to the airport are also included in this designation, such as, but not limited to: aircraft sales, service, repair and maintenance, washing, painting, storage, tie-down, hangaring, fueling, flight and ground schools, rental and charter flights, car rental facilities and all other uses that are customarily incidental to the operation of an airport and airport-related businesses and activities. New and expanded industrial uses



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within the City will expand the City's job base and are therefore important to the City's overall economic vitality and balance of land use.

**Airport.** Uses that are reasonably necessary for the proper operation of the Palm Springs International Airport. The Palm Springs Airport Master Plan and Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Study shall serve as the primary regulatory documents for airport facilities and related uses.

**Regional Business Center (Industrial – 0.50 FAR, Office – 0.35 FAR, Commercial – 0.50 FAR).** Generally located at the Indian Canyon Drive and Gene Autry Trail interchanges north of the Southern Pacific Railroad and adjacent to I-10, the Regional Business Center area is intended to accommodate a wide variety of business activities in a multi-use environment. The RBC will provide job opportunities for the residents of Palm Springs and the whole of the Coachella Valley. Commercial, office, and industrial uses that can be supported by their proximity to the freeway are encouraged in this area. Uses in this area are intended to provide large-scale development opportunities that serve an area larger than the City proper. Commercial uses can include retail establishments, hotels, automobile dealerships, and other uses that serve a regional population. Business parks and industrial uses are also envisioned under this land use designation. It is envisioned that, over time as market forces demand, additional areas north of the railroad, south of I-10 from Hwy. 111 to Gene Autry Trail may also convert to RBC uses, provided that the appropriate environmental analyses have been conducted and the appropriate infrastructure is provided.

## INSTITUTIONAL (SCHOOLS/PUBLIC USES/UTILITIES)

**Public/Quasi-public (0.35 FAR).** This designation includes government offices and corporation yards, hospitals, City-owned museums, cemeteries, and libraries. The public/quasi-public uses identified on the Land Use Map predominantly reflect existing uses that are located throughout the City to effectively serve the community. Public/quasi-public uses comprise a relatively small component of the City's total land area.

**Public/Utilities.** Multiple utilities and service providers operate within the City of Palm Springs. This land use designation applies to facilities such as water storage tanks and electrical substations.

**School.** The School designation applies to existing public schools and larger private schools at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Facilities that conduct courses at the collegiate level are also included in this designation. The Land Use Plan identifies existing school facilities and areas that provide future higher education land use opportunities.

The School land use designation may also include developed open space for playfields, recreational and physical education activities as well as open space that is part of the development of an educational based campus.

## OPEN SPACE

**Open Space–Conservation (1 dwelling unit per 20 acres).** Conservation areas are mainly designated for gently sloping areas of scenic beauty (such as hillsides) and natural landforms (such as alluvial fans) that should be preserved to maintain the City’s unique character. This designation is typically applied in areas that have slope ranges of 10 to 30 percent. Residential uses are permitted as an incidental use in this area, at a maximum density of one unit per 20 acres. The Conservation designation is predominantly applied to the vast, nonmountainous open space areas south of I-10 and north of the Whitewater Wash.

**Toe of Slope:** The base or bottom of a slope at the point where the ground surface abruptly changes to a significantly flatter grade.

**Mountain (1 dwelling unit per 40 acres).** Mountain areas are generally defined as the sloping areas located above the *toe of the slope*. Mountain areas generally consist of steep slopes; any areas in parcels in excess of a 30 percent slope may not be used for development or for purposes of calculating density except for purposes of density transfer where (a) a portion of the subject parcel also lies within an area designated for residential use or is otherwise suitable for residential development, and all the extra units allowed can be appropriately placed in these areas and (b) the area not used for residential development is dedicated for open space purposes to the City of Palm Springs or other appropriate accepting agency approved by the City. Off-site density transfer may also be allowed if it can be demonstrated that the additional density can be absorbed by the host site. Density transfers shall be subject to the approval of a planned development district. This designation is very similar to the Open Space–Conservation designation with one exception—residential densities within this area will be applied at one dwelling unit per each 40 acres.



**Desert (1 dwelling unit per 10 acres).** This designation is intended to identify areas to be retained to protect natural, scenic, and wildlife resources unique to Palm Springs and to identify areas where minimal development is desired to protect people and property from environmental hazards such as blowsand associated with the undeveloped desert floor areas. Residential development in this area is permitted as long as it does not exceed 1 unit per 10 acres and is incidental to the overall desert use. Cluster development is encouraged to respond to the environmental sensitivity of the area. Other permitted uses in this land use designation include recreational facilities and public facilities that comply with the intent of the goals and policies identified in the General Plan. Where mineral deposits are present or are found within areas designated for Desert land

# LAND USE ELEMENT

use, mineral extraction is permitted, provided that appropriate buffers are established to minimize conflicts between residential and mining uses and the appropriate environmental analysis has been conducted.

**Open Space–Parks/Recreation.** This designation is used for regional, local, and neighborhood parks, community centers, public and private golf courses, and any recreational facility operated by a public or quasi-public agency. These areas are intended for “active” recreational uses.

**Open Space–Water.** Areas designated as Open Space–Water are reserved for flood control or drainage facilities only. Properties under this designation fall within the 100-year flood zone as established by the adoption of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood maps and are subject to sporadic flooding and other hazards in the event of a 100-year flood. No habitable structures are permitted within these areas.



*Open Space Water*

## OVERLAY AREAS

**Watercourse Zone Overlay.** The Watercourse Zone Overlay is intended to reflect land uses located within a watercourse area that have either been developed under the provisions of a hold-harmless agreement with the City, releasing it from any liability for damage incurred in flood waters, or it is a property that is no longer classified as a fringe area of a 100-year flood. The overlay represents the path of the watercourse, but allows for the underlying uses to coexist within the flood designation.

**Wind Energy Overlay.** Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) are permitted in areas designated with the overlay classification. These areas are predominantly located within areas designated as Desert, Industrial, or Open Space–Water on the General Plan Land Use map. Industrial and clean energy uses in these areas may occupy up to 15 percent of the total acreage located within the industrial and regional business center land uses. The Wind Energy Overlay can be found on Figure 2-3.



*Wind Energy Overlay*

**Table 2-1  
Residential Buildout Estimates  
Proposed General Plan**

| Land Use Designation                         | Estimated Density (units/acre) | Acres <sup>1</sup> | Dwelling Units   | Persons per <sup>2</sup> Household | Population <sup>3</sup> | Hotel Rooms              |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>                           |                                |                    |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| Estate Residential (0–2 du/ac)               | 1.5                            | 1,731              | 2,571            | 2.08                               | 4,892                   |                          |
| Very Low (2.1–4.0 du/ac)                     | 3.5                            | 2,654              | 9,411            | 2.08                               | 18,608                  |                          |
| Low (4.1–6.0 du/ac)                          | 5.25                           | 1,031              | 5,414            | 2.08                               | 10,696                  |                          |
| Medium (6.1–15 du/ac)                        | 10.0                           | 1,437              | 14,652           | 2.08/1.78 <sup>4</sup>             | 26,739                  |                          |
| High (15.1–30 du/ac)                         | 20.0                           | 582                | 12,192           | 1.78                               | 20,742                  | 3,047 <sup>5</sup>       |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                              |                                | <i>7,435</i>       | <i>44,240</i>    |                                    | <i>81,677</i>           | <i>3,047</i>             |
| <b>Mixed Use</b>                             |                                |                    |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| Mixed/Multi-Use                              | 12.0                           | 330                | 1,648            | 2.08/1.78                          | 2,987                   |                          |
| Central Business District (CBD) <sup>7</sup> | varies                         | 126                | 1,396            | 1.78                               | 2,361                   |                          |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                              |                                | <i>456</i>         | <i>3,044</i>     |                                    | <i>5,348</i>            |                          |
| <b>Open Space</b>                            |                                |                    |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| Mountain (1 du/40.0 ac)                      | 0.025                          | 52,113             | 742 <sup>6</sup> | 2.08                               | 1,466                   |                          |
| Conservation (1 du/20.0 ac)                  | 0.05                           | 1,284              | 64               | 2.08                               | 127                     |                          |
| Desert (1 du/10.0 ac)                        | 0.10                           | 4,305              | 402              | 2.08                               | 588                     |                          |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                              |                                | <i>57,702</i>      | <i>1,208</i>     |                                    | <i>2,181</i>            |                          |
| <b>Other</b>                                 |                                |                    |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| Special Policy Areas <sup>8</sup>            | varies                         | 4,231              | 2,577            | 2.08                               | 5,093                   | 923                      |
| Small Hotel                                  | 10.0                           | 67                 | 337              | 1.78                               | 650                     | 501                      |
| Right-of-Way Acreage                         |                                | 2,839              |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| Railroad                                     |                                | 311                |                  |                                    |                         |                          |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                              |                                | <i>7,448</i>       | <i>2,914</i>     |                                    | <i>5,743</i>            | <i>1,424</i>             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 |                                | <b>73,041</b>      | <b>51,406</b>    |                                    | <b>94,949</b>           | <b>4,471<sup>9</sup></b> |

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> The acreages include properties located within the Sphere of Influence and do not include streets.
- <sup>2</sup> Single-family persons per household (2.08) taken from the California Department of Finance (2004) estimates. Multifamily persons per household (1.78) based upon 1993 General Plan estimates.
- <sup>3</sup> A 5 percent vacancy rate is assumed for population.
- <sup>4</sup> It is assumed that half of the units in the Medium Density Land Use designation will be single-family and half of the units will be multifamily.
- <sup>5</sup> The High Density Land Use designation allows hotels up to 43 rooms per acre; 30 rooms per acre were assumed for areas outside of Section 14.
- <sup>6</sup> This number accounts for areas that are not developable due to the presence of slopes steeper than 30 percent.
- <sup>7</sup> Portions of the CBD fall within the Section 14 Specific Plan and were calculated to correspond with the number of units permitted by the Specific Plan. Additionally, the number of units projected in the CBD considered the varying heights and intensities permitted at the gateways into Downtown and within the Downtown core.
- <sup>8</sup> Special Policy Areas are applied to the Chino Cone and Palm Hills areas. The density, number of units, and types of uses vary in each area.
- <sup>9</sup> Overall, the General Plan land uses will accommodate 12,976 total hotel rooms (total of hotel rooms allowed in residential and nonresidential land uses).

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Table 2-2  
Nonresidential Land Buildout Estimates  
Proposed General Plan

| Land Use Designation                   | Estimated Intensity (FAR) <sup>1</sup> | Acres <sup>2</sup> | Square Footage    | Hotel Rooms              |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Commercial</b>                      |  |                    |                   |                          |
| Regional Commercial                    | 0.28                                   | 165                | 2,006,574         |                          |
| Neighborhood Community Commercial      | 0.25                                   | 186                | 2,023,086         |                          |
| Tourist Resort Commercial              | 0.28                                   | 507                | 4,352,025         | 7,406                    |
| <b>Mixed Use</b>                       |  |                    |                   |                          |
| Mixed Use/Multi-Use                    | Varies                                 | 330                | 2,138,873         | 300                      |
| Central Business District <sup>3</sup> | Varies                                 | 126                | 1,888,389         | 799                      |
| <b>Employment Centers</b>              |  |                    |                   |                          |
| Regional Business Center <sup>4</sup>  | Varies                                 | 622                | 6,259,568         |                          |
| Office                                 | 0.25                                   | 77                 | 834,415           |                          |
| Industrial                             | 0.23                                   | 2,432              | 10,991,261        |                          |
| Airport                                | 0.05                                   | 652                | 1,419,377         |                          |
| <b>Institutional</b>                   |  |                    |                   |                          |
| Public/Quasi-Public                    | 0.35                                   | 117                | 1,637,935         |                          |
| School                                 | n/a                                    | 233                |                   |                          |
| Public Utilities                       | n/a                                    | 113                |                   |                          |
| <b>Open Space</b>                      |  |                    |                   |                          |
| Open Space – Parks & Recreation        | N/A                                    | 1,517              |                   |                          |
| Open Space – Water                     | N/A                                    | 7,938              |                   |                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           |  | <b>15,015</b>      | <b>33,551,503</b> | <b>8,505<sup>5</sup></b> |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> FAR = Floor Area Ratio.

<sup>2</sup> The acreages include properties located within the Sphere of Influence and do not include streets.

<sup>3</sup> The Central Business District contains a mix of both commercial and office uses.

<sup>4</sup> The Regional Business Center uses are a mix of commercial (25 percent), office (15 percent), and industrial (60 percent) uses. The maximum amount of development on any property within the RBC may be affected by the Wind Energy Overlay, which only allows 15 percent of the acreage of a property to be developed with uses other than wind energy facilities.

<sup>5</sup> Overall, the General Plan land uses will accommodate 12,976 total hotel rooms (total of hotel rooms allowed in residential and nonresidential land uses).

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# LAND USE ELEMENT

Figure 2-2 General Land Use Plan

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# LAND USE ELEMENT

Figure 2-3 General Plan Land Use Detail

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## GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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For the General Plan to be a successful and useable guide for the City of Palm Springs, it must contain clearly written goals, policies, and implementing actions. It is expressly intended that this General Plan support the City's goals with meaningful and achievable direction identified within each action item incorporated in the Land Use Element. It is important to note that additional land use direction is provided within the other General Plan Elements, the zoning code, and redevelopment plans.

### BALANCE OF LAND USES

Because it is both a resort city and a year-round residence for so many people, the balance of land uses in Palm Springs is particularly delicate. The City strives to achieve a balancing act of land uses that accommodate visitor-serving uses while preserving and enhancing the quality of life of its residents. It seeks to maintain retail development for both populations, a wide range of housing options, and job-generating industrial and office uses. The key is to optimize the themed, charming, eccentric village ambience that will appropriately express the fantasy of Palm Springs as the playground of the rich and famous. But it must, at the same time, be appealing to mid-market tastes and profoundly affect the life of the ordinary citizen. It must reflect an array of sophisticated venues of both intimate and popular entertainment.

Achieving a balance of land uses also means establishing land uses that provide a strong fiscal foundation for the City. In terms of an economic base, Palm Springs is primarily a resort city, whose future depends on climate, access, recreational opportunities, and retail opportunities. For practical purposes, the majority of businesses in the City provide retail services to the tourist population, with a growing number of businesses catering to the year-round population. Where long strips of disjointed commercial uses exist along major thoroughfares, the City should consider allowing midblock/corridor residential uses to satisfy housing demand and provide a growing market for retail uses.

The City has a limited amount of industrial uses, the majority of which are located along I-10 or adjacent to the airport. These job centers are characterized by low-intensity industrial development consisting primarily of administrative, wholesaling, light manufacturing, and industrial uses typically permitted within business park environments. Larger parcels of industrial uses are encouraged to implement comprehensive plans that incorporate architectural guidelines, convenient access, and on-site recreational space.

#### Bridge Policies

It should be noted that the 1993 General Plan contained a series of policies and policy direction at a level of detail that is normally reserved for development standards found in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

As a part of this General Plan Update process, the City Council directed staff to streamline the document to make it more manageable.

As a result, there are several policies from the 1993 General Plan that need to be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. These "bridge policies" have been included in Appendix E of the General Plan, and will remain in effect until the Zoning Ordinance has been revised to include them, at which time they will also be removed from this General Plan document.

In essence, these policies are intended to be temporary placeholders until they can be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

Portions of the City north of I-10 contain wind energy facilities, commercial uses, light and medium intensity industrial uses, and a modern natural-gas-fueled power plant. Wind turbine generators create significant amounts of clean renewable energy, which benefits Palm Springs and the entire Coachella Valley. This land, together with adjacent county land, is generally considered to be one of the two best locations for renewable energy in the world. These facilities are located away from the City center and also serve as an attraction for visitors, who visit the wind energy facilities in large numbers.

Wind energy facilities also co-exist with industrial uses adjacent to I-10 and are an excellent example of how the integration of compatible uses can provide multiple benefits, such as energy resources and job-generating uses. Additional opportunities to expand wind, solar, and other renewable resources, as well as co-generation and clean natural-gas-fueled generating resources are encouraged by the City. In addition, new advances in wind energy facilities should be examined to determine if additional opportunities exist to allow commercial and industrial development to co-exist with wind energy facilities to an even greater degree than they do now.

Providing accessible open space, recreation, and cultural and educational opportunities is also extremely important for the City's future. Residents and businesses could benefit from the presence of a college campus or satellite university to provide new learning and training opportunities that are currently offered elsewhere. To assist in developing an educated and skilled workforce for the businesses in Palm Springs, the addition of a large-scale learning facility would be an asset to the economic and educational welfare of the community, the Land Use Plan designates for school use a large parcel of land just east of Highway 111 and south of the Whitewater Wash.

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Conservation Element addresses in further detail the amount and location of public, private, active, and passive parkland available within the City and areas where additional parkland is recommended.

## **GOAL LU1:**

Establish a balanced pattern of land uses that complements the pattern and character of existing uses, offers opportunities for the intensification of key targeted sites, minimizes adverse environmental impacts, and has positive economic results.

### **Policies**

LU1.1 Ensure that development meets or exceeds requirements and standards specified within each land use designation.



# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU1.2 Encourage the exchange of public and private lands and the consolidation of parcels to create buildable sites and to achieve greater efficiency of land use.
- LU1.3 Ensure that new land use projects are built with adequate utility and municipal infrastructure capacity to support them.
- LU1.4 Encourage the expansion of existing facilities or the introduction of new uses that are considered to be of significant importance and contribute exceptional benefits to the City.
- LU1.5 Allow for flexible development standards provided that the potential benefits and merit of projects can be balanced with potential impacts.
- LU1.6 Encourage and support projects of exceptional design and architectural quality, societal benefit (historic or environmental sustainability), or revenue generation through incentives in the review process.
- LU1.7 Require new construction to mitigate impacts on the City's housing, schools, public open space, childcare facilities, and other public needs.
- LU1.8 Allow density transfers within planned developments in exchange for the provision of enhanced amenities and permanent open space.
- LU1.9 All development shall be sensitive to natural features, including washes, hillsides, and views of the mountains and surrounding desert areas.
- LU1.10 Encourage, where appropriate, high density projects to maximize the use of land.
- LU1.11 Sensitively integrate into the community required land uses such as transportation corridors, flood control systems, utility corridors, and recreational corridors.
- LU1.12 Ensure that land uses maintain and expand parks, recreational trails, bikeways, and pedestrian corridors and linkages throughout the City and between Palm Springs and adjacent municipalities.

Additional policies related to bikeways and trails can be found in the Circulation and Recreation, Open Space and Conservation Elements.

### Actions

- LU1.1 Develop standards that provide appropriate transitions between commercial, industrial, and residential uses.
- LU1.2 Phase development into undeveloped areas according to the following criteria:
- a) Availability of services (streets, water, sewer, and emergency services);
  - b) Logical extension of services;
  - c) Contiguity with existing development; and/or
  - d) Conformance with an approved specific plan or planned development district.
- LU1.3 Develop specific plans for areas that need additional design or land use guidance.

### GOAL LU2:

Maintain the City's unique "modern urban village" atmosphere and preserve the rich historical, architectural, recreational, and environmental quality while pursuing community and business development goals.

### Policies

- LU2.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of using overlay zones as a technique of preserving the character of selected areas of the City.
- LU2.2 Projects that propose to convert open space areas that are designated "Open Space – Parks/Recreation" to developable areas (for residential, commercial, etc.) must either offer in-kind replacement of such open space elsewhere in the City, make payment of in-lieu fees, or replace the converted open space through the use of *density transfer*.
- LU2.3 Encourage the exchange of public and private lands to eliminate unusable parcels and to permit the orderly development and conservation of areas appropriate for each site.
- LU2.4 Encourage the renovation or replacement of deteriorating structures through the full use of code enforcement and redevelopment powers.
- LU2.5 Encourage lot consolidation and mixed-use development to reduce fragmentation of parcels and to facilitate infill development.

**Density Transfer:** A mechanism that allows the relocation of potential development from an area where proposed land uses or environmental impacts are considered undesirable to another site chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond its original designation. In Palm Springs, this tool could be used to intensify residential and commercial uses in the Central City and to minimize development in sensitive areas such as the mountains and hillsides.

A density transfer is also known as a "transfer of development rights," or TDR.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

## Actions

- LU2.1 Develop limited-density bonus provisions for enhancements such as outstanding design submissions, affordable housing, environmental sustainability, or successful revitalization and incorporate them into the Zoning Ordinance. Additional criteria that will be evaluated when determining a project's ability to be considered for the density bonus provision will include:
- Lot consolidation
  - Adaptive reuse of historic structures
  - Compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) standards, and the development of sustainable "green buildings"

## GOAL LU3:

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**Attract and retain high-quality industrial and business park development.**

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## Policies

- LU3.1 Encourage well-planned research and development areas and business parks that contain coordinated design guidelines and enhanced amenities.
- LU3.2 Promote opportunities for expansion and revitalization of industrial uses within the City.
- LU3.3 Ensure operation of industrial uses is unobtrusive to surrounding areas and prohibit the development of manufacturing uses that operate in a manner or use materials that may impose a danger on adjacent uses or are harmful to the environment.
- LU3.4 Allow for the development of assembly, service commercial, research, and office facilities as a secondary use in industrial areas.
- LU3.5 Promote the development of small-scale manufacturing uses that support hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related uses.
- LU3.6 Encourage the development of small-scale manufacturing uses that support the designer home furnishing shops, galleries, and other design-related uses.
- LU3.7 Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and other business promotion groups within the City to attract new industrial businesses to Palm Springs.

- LU3.8 Discourage outdoor storage, except that finished products may be stored in non-street-frontage yards. Storage areas should be surrounded by landscaped, decorative walls and stored materials shall not exceed the wall height.
- LU3.9 Provide areas that allow a combination of alternative energy development and industrial uses provided that:
- a) In industrial and RBC uses permitted in the Wind Energy Overlay, the land dedicated to industrial development shall not exceed 15 percent of the total gross land area.
  - b) Industrial development that exceeds the 15 percent limit will require an amendment to the General Plan, as well as environmental reports including a project-specific traffic analysis and mitigation measures of all significant impacts caused by such development.
  - c) The City should monitor industrial developments in each TAZ (Traffic Analysis Zone) area within the wind energy overlay to identify when the overall 15 percent limit has been reached.
- LU3.10 Require conditional use permits and monitor compliance with development and use regulations so that WECS do the following:
- a) Maintain appropriate setbacks from I-10, Highway 111, Indian Canyon, and other designated local view sheds consistent with the WECS ordinance; and
  - b) Do not site or expand commercial wind energy conversion systems in areas south of Highway 111 in Palm Springs.

### **Actions**

- 3.1 Establish a corporate/business center along Gene Autry Trail with the Palm Springs International Airport as the nucleus.
- 3.2 Develop standards that ensure adequate buffering between industrial and commercial uses and surrounding residential uses.

## GOAL LU4:

Attract and retain high-quality, sustainable commercial development.

### Policies

- LU4.1 Ensure that sufficient land is designated for commercial use in appropriate areas to support the current and future needs of the community and surrounding areas in a manner that responds to changing market conditions.
- LU4.2 Develop commercial facilities as integrated, attractive centers, with adequate parking, provision for pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods when feasible, organized traffic movement for motorists, and safety and convenience for pedestrians.
- LU4.3 Concentrate retail areas into commercial activity nodes to discourage the development of a “strip” commercial uses, which is characterized by long expanses of commercial building frontage devoid of building separations to provide visual relief. Such nodes shall be separated from one another by permanent open space, parks, major landscaped areas, or residential land uses.
- LU4.4 Encourage the reuse of obsolete commercial properties and discourage the proliferation of strip commercial centers through rezoning, parcel consolidation, or incorporation of midblock residential development in selected areas.
- LU4.5 Allow for the integration of small-scale commercial uses into planned developments to provide a distinct identity to the residential area and to increase the convenience of neighborhood commercial facilities for the particular development only.
- LU4.6 Foster development of commercial centers and small-scale commercial retail in residential areas that encourage walkable connections between retail and residential uses

## GOAL LU5:

Provide lifelong learning opportunities for the residents of Palm Springs.

### Policies

- LU5.1 Allow for and encourage the development of land uses that provide educational opportunities for the City’s residents.

LU5.2 Work closely with the Palm Springs Unified School District to encourage the joint use of facilities as centers for recreation and cultural activities for the City’s residents.

**Actions**

LU5.1 Appoint a liaison to work with the Palm Springs Unified School District to identify and coordinate future school locations and reuse of such facilities.

LU5.2 Allow for the development of new public educational facilities in areas designated for residential or parks and recreational use.

LU5.3 Pursue opportunities to establish higher education or college facilities in Palm Springs.

**NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

Since Palm Springs is a predominantly built-out city, it will become challenging to find areas that can accommodate new housing for future residents. The projections associated with the Land Use Element reflect that the City’s population will increase to 94,742 at buildout, which is an increase of 48,305 residents from the current population of 46,437 (as determined by the State of California Department of Finance).

The City offers a variety of housing options—from exclusive estate homes to more moderately priced single-family homes to multifamily apartments and condominiums. As the City continues to grow, it will be important to ensure a variety of future residential development is available to the senior population, first-time homebuyers, and the City’s labor force.

As housing demand increases and available land becomes more limited, it is anticipated that there will be an increasing trend toward higher-density residential development. Careful planning for the integration of these uses into the fabric of the City’s existing neighborhoods or as infill along the City’s existing commercial corridors will help to fulfill housing needs and maintain the eclectic urban village character found in Palm Springs.

Projects desiring to develop at the higher end of the density range of any residential land use designation will be judged according to their ability to meet the following criteria:

1. Quality architecture, which is designed to respond to the harsh desert climate and includes appropriate detailing, materials, and architectural elements.



# LAND USE ELEMENT

2. The relationship of the housing project to its neighborhood, or the creation of a distinctive character and environment for the neighborhood where none currently exists.
3. Inclusion of open space in excess of the minimum requirements, including integration of natural areas, viewsheds and other amenities. Design of the open space shall give it a distinctive character created through special landscape elements such as fountains, reflective pools, decorative paving, courtyards, and entry elements.
4. Creation of larger building sites through lot consolidation where small, substandard, or irregular lots currently exist.
5. Minimizing the prominence of parking and garages as viewed from the street.
6. Development or provisions for social/cultural amenities (on- or off-site) such as parks, recreation centers, schools, and daycare centers.
7. Preservation of unique or desirable natural and manmade resources.

The level of density increase granted will depend on the extent to which higher standards are provided.

## GOAL LU6:

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**Ensure that housing needs of people with varying incomes, household sizes, and lifestyles can be met within the City.**

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### Policies

- LU6.1 Facilitate new residential development on vacant or underutilized properties that have been designated as mixed/multi-use areas on the Land Use Plan.
- LU6.2 Encourage new residential infill development.
- LU6.3 Convert underutilized commercial centers into new housing opportunity sites.

### Actions

- LU6.1 Provide incentives to encourage developers to produce housing at all socioeconomic levels.

The Housing Element contains the majority of goals, policies, and action items related to the provision of housing in Palm Springs. The Land Use Element goals and policies identified below are intended to complement those policy directions.

## RESORT DESTINATION IMAGE



*There are over 6,500 hotel rooms in Palm Springs—the largest collection in the Coachella Valley. The Spa Resort Casino caters to tourist and convention center clientele, furthering the image of the City as a destination resort.*

Palm Springs has always embraced its reputation as a world class resort, holding such titles as “America’s premier desert resort city,” and “America’s Resortport.” Minutes away from any location in town are bike paths, hiking and equestrian trails, parks, tennis courts, retail and entertainment venues and golf courses. The City is also home to the Palm Springs Art Museum, the Palm Springs Air Museum, and Knott’s Soak City Water Park, which are geared toward family recreation and entertainment.

Year-round special events blend sophistication and relaxation in a style that is typically Palm Springs. Locals and visitors enjoy many of the City’s unique events such as the Concourse d’Elegance, the Palm Springs International Film Festival, and Villagefest, the City’s weekly outdoor marketplace.

The City currently is host to over two million visitors annually. Palm Springs maintains the largest number of hotel rooms in the Coachella Valley: 6,500 of the total 15,865 rooms (source: Economic Conditions and Trends Report, 2005). These accommodations range from small, three-room boutique or bed-and-breakfast-style inns located in residential neighborhoods to multistory resort hotels designed to accommodate larger corporate events.

In addition, the Convention Center serves as a major center of business and tourist activity within the City. Providing approximately 211,400 square feet of conference facilities, the Convention Center generates large numbers of conference attendees who support nearby hotel and convention-related businesses and who often extend their stays to take advantage of the recreational activities that Palm Springs has to offer. The City should constantly assess how it can continue to draw increasing numbers of visitors and provide them with a special experience that keeps them returning year after year.

Maintaining its status as a premier resort destination is a primary priority for the City. The General Plan land use patterns reflect a concentration of tourist commercial uses predominantly comprised of commercial and hotel uses along Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Drive. The small-scale boutique hotels that are found among the residential neighborhoods in the Warm Sands and Tennis Club areas also contribute to the City’s charm and its appeal to resort visitors. Development within these areas must be carefully designed and planned to ensure that it continues to reflect the City’s vision of being a “world class desert community.”

## GOAL LU7:

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Maintain and enhance the City's status and image as a premier resort destination and cultural center in the Coachella Valley.

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### Policies

- LU7.1 Encourage a diversity of high-quality commercial uses, attractive to both the resident and the visitor, including retail, entertainment, cultural, and food sales, in appropriate areas of the City.
- LU7.2 Ensure that visitor-serving uses such as hotels, restaurants, and entertainment uses that generate high levels of activity are developed in close proximity to the Palm Springs Convention Center.
- LU7.3 Continue to host special events that draw local residents and visitors.
- LU7.4 Pursue and attract high-quality retail uses to the City, and specifically to Downtown.
- LU7.5 Maximize the preservation of mobile home parks as a source of safe and affordable housing stock in the City.
- LU7.6 Retain small hotel uses as a part of the unique character of Palm Springs.
- LU7.7 Consider financial and other incentives to assure the economic viability of small hotels and mobile home parks.
- LU7.8 Provide and maintain a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and venues and encourage the development of eco-tourism.
- LU7.9 Strongly discourage the conversion of small hotels to permanent housing units. Require that any proposed conversion of hotels to for-sale residential units analyze the fiscal impact of the conversion and loss of transient occupancy tax (TOT) compared to potential property tax revenue of the conversion.

### Actions

- LU7.1 Maintain strong working relationships with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and to ensure that new development in Section 14 contributes to and enhances the City's goal of a destination resort.

- LU7.2 Schedule annual strategic-planning meetings with the Bureau of Tourism to market the City and its resort amenities to visitors.
- LU7.4 Amend the CBD designation in the Zoning Ordinance to allow supermarkets and other personal service uses that would be used by residents living in the downtown area.
- LU7.5 Amend the Zoning Code to include provisions that regulate the conversion of small hotels to residential uses. Code requirements may include minimum unit sizes or other provisions to ensure the preservation of the character of the surrounding residential areas.
- LU7.6 Evaluate and propose an incentive program for preserving small hotels.
- LU7.7 Study timeshare condo hotels (“fractional ownership hotels”) and create a Zoning Ordinance provision to define and provide guidelines for this emerging type of residential product.

## MIXED/MULTI-USE AREAS

The introduction of mixed- and multi-use development, if properly implemented, can add vitality, sociability, and land use efficiency to a City. The mixed/multi-use areas identified on the Land Use Plan are intended to function differently than the typical patterns of segregated uses in that the distribution of uses is generally more concentrated, and uses are also generally mixed either vertically or horizontally within any given property.

Mixed use projects often contain retail or office uses on the ground floor with commercial, office, or residential uses on the floors above. Multi-use projects, which lend themselves more to stand-alone horizontal development with adjacent differing uses, are better suited to larger parcels. They are most successful when unified by common design themes and tied together by a series of plazas and pedestrian promenades. The mix of uses should promote civic activity, define neighborhood character, and provide places for people to meet and socialize, enhancing the area’s overall quality of life. These areas are intended to provide services and distinct gathering places and activity centers for surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. Introduction of mixed- and multi-use development should be targeted for vacant and underperforming sites or areas where the City wants to create a stronger concentration of activity. The scale, size, and mixture of uses in these areas will vary based upon the character of the surrounding areas.

As most of the mixed-use areas identified on the Land Use Plan are proposed along prominent corridors, the introduction of residential uses should be carefully designed to enhance the functionality and aesthetic appearance of

the corridor while creating a livable, high-quality housing opportunity. Midblock corridor residential designs are encouraged in projects that apply a multi-use approach to infill.

Site planning and landscape design in mixed-use areas should incorporate pedestrian-oriented amenities, including walkway connections, outdoor seating areas, and/or food courts. Integrated interior and exterior spaces are also encouraged. Designs should incorporate shade trees, shade structures, small fountains, misters, and similar techniques that make outdoor areas comfortable year-round. More detailed policy guidance related to corridor residential development can be found in the Community Design Element.

The application of mixed/multi-use strategies are most appropriate for:

- ◆ Vacant parcels within existing development that are suitable for such development;
- ◆ Existing development that can be redesigned to become more contemporary and functional in its use of the land;
- ◆ Existing development that can be intensified or rehabilitated to become more productive;
- ◆ Existing uses that can be removed, replaced, and redeveloped; or
- ◆ A combination for these strategies where properties are characterized by a mix of suitable conditions.

Several of these conditions are found along Palm Canyon Drive and in the northern part of the City. While much of the City is already built out, these areas provide the City with opportunities to facilitate the redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized properties and development of vacant lands. This General Plan specifies seven areas where the mixed/multi-use designation will apply. Following are descriptions of those areas, and the mix of uses that is envisioned for each.

## **Indian Canyon Drive and San Rafael Drive**

The northwest corner of Indian Canyon Drive and San Rafael Drive is characterized by a collection of small industrial businesses, multifamily residential uses and several vacant parcels. This area provides a prime opportunity to introduce a mixed-use area that contains uses that would be complementary to and supported by a higher education campus, which is proposed a block north of this area.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 55–65 percent industrial, 15–25 percent residential, 15–25 percent commercial

### **Artist Colony**

The north end of Palm Canyon Drive is characterized by a series of underutilized and vacant commercial centers that, at first glance, provide a deteriorating image of the City as visitors travel toward Downtown. Overall, the northern end of the City lacks distinct gathering places, with residents and businesses relying mainly upon Downtown to serve this need. The Artist Colony provides a prime opportunity to introduce housing along the Palm Canyon Drive corridor and to provide much needed neighborhood-serving commercial uses and gathering spaces.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 40–60 percent residential, 15–25 percent office, 20–35 percent commercial

### **Uptown**

Immediately north of the Downtown, the Uptown mixed/multi-use area is located along North Palm Canyon Drive and North Indian Canyon Drive, north of Alejo, south of Via Escuela. A collection of art galleries and boutiques are located here, along with medical and professional office uses. A more vibrant retail/commercial area serving the needs of the adjacent desirable residential neighborhoods of Las Palmas, Vista Las Palmas, Movie Colony, and Ruth Hardy Park are needed in this area.

A concentrated mix of uses here could stimulate activity and create a sense of place by connecting new residential uses with the nearby medical offices, including the Desert Resort Regional Medical Center, and specialty shopping in the Heritage District. The primary purpose of a mixed-use center in the Uptown area is to generate a synergy between complementary uses that can ultimately result in a gathering place for residents and businesses in the northern end of the City.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 30–40 percent residential, 30–40 percent commercial, 20–30 percent office

### **Vista Chino and Sunrise Way**

This corner is surrounded by an established single-family neighborhood to the north and west, and neighborhood commercial uses to the east and south. Smaller-scale, neighborhood-serving, commercial development integrated with a unique residential opportunity is envisioned for this site, providing a gathering place within walking distance for the residents living in the adjacent neighborhoods. The character and scale of this mixed-use area is smaller than those along Palm Canyon Drive; building design should maintain a lower profile consistent with the heights of the adjacent uses.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 60–70 percent residential, 30–40 percent commercial



## **Palm Canyon Drive and Sunny Dunes Road**

The Sunny Dunes and Palm Canyon Drive mixed/multi-use area currently contains scattered commercial uses and large vacant parcels. Different from the mixed/multi-use areas identified above, the Palm Canyon Drive and Sunny Dunes Road area is envisioned as a mixed-use area creating an office, retail, and residential node just south of Downtown. This mix of uses will complement the hotel uses along East Palm Canyon Drive by providing a concentrated commercial and office base in close proximity to visitor accommodations.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 30–50 percent commercial, 30–50 percent office; 15–20 percent residential

## **Smoke Tree**

The Smoke Tree mixed-use area is located along East Palm Canyon Drive, between Sunrise Way and the city limits. Smoke Tree is ideally located to serve the needs of surrounding residential neighborhoods, and is characterized by its intimate scale, pedestrian orientation, and vibrant human activity. The purpose of this area is to create a unique mixed-use center characterized by pedestrian-oriented retail shops, restaurants, hotel facilities, and multifamily residential uses.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 30–60 percent residential uses, 20–40 percent resort commercial, 20–40 percent neighborhood commercial

## **Palm Springs Mall**

Located along one of the City's most visible corridors, the Palm Springs Mall presents an opportunity to inject new vitality along Tahquitz Canyon Way, which serves as the City's most important east-west corridor linking Downtown and the Airport. As a mixed/multi-use area comprised of residential, office, and commercial uses, it is envisioned that this node will provide an opportunity for more efficient use of an underutilized commercial site that can complement the civic and office uses currently existing along the corridor.

*Preferred mix of uses:* 25–35 percent residential, 25–35 percent office, 40–50 percent commercial

## GOAL LU8:

Strategically introduce mixed- and multi-use infill projects in underutilized areas to create neighborhood activity centers serving the day-to-day needs of nearby residents, employees, and visitors.

### Policies

- LU8.1 Encourage new mixed/multi-use developments in areas that are currently vacant or underutilized.
- LU8.2 Encourage flexibility of design in development by allowing both a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses.
- LU8.3 Encourage and accommodate the development of specialty uses such as boutiques, art galleries, bookstores, restaurants, interior decorators, hardware stores and other similar uses that cater to the residents in close proximity to mixed/multi-use areas.
- LU8.4 Allow designated mixed/multi-use areas to contain buildings that are taller than the surrounding neighborhood.
- LU8.5 Provide pedestrian links from the commercial, office, and retail uses within mixed/multi-use areas to minimize vehicular traffic.
- LU8.6 Allow for and encourage the development of facilities and gathering places that provide for the social and health needs (daycare centers, social-service providers, medical facilities, etc.) of the residents within mixed/multi-use areas.
- LU8.7 On-site parking is encouraged to be accessed from side streets or public alleys to minimize traffic impacts on major streets and to avoid interruption in the street-front design of commercial centers.
- LU8.8 Cluster development where appropriate to create centers of activity or to preserve natural features.
- LU8.9 Allow for *boulevard residential* uses as long as the proposed residential uses are consistent with the midblock corridor residential goals and policies found in the Community Design Element.

**Boulevard Residential:**

Residential units proposed along major corridors such as Palm Canyon Drive.

### Actions

- LU8.1 Require Planned Developments for new mixed/multi-use projects proposing a mix of residential and commercial uses.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU8.2 Continually monitor the preferred mix of uses within mixed/multi-use areas, and encourage new uses that will provide new services that complement existing uses.
- LU8.3 Update the zoning ordinance to identify specific standards for building height and other development issues in mixed/multi-use designations.

## MOUNTAINS AND HILLSIDES

The remarkable landforms created by the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains are a defining characteristic for Palm Springs as well as one of the City's most coveted resources. Wrapping around the developed areas of City to the west and south, the steep topography of the mountains provides the City with a dramatic visual backdrop and scenic views that are unparalleled in the Coachella Valley. Over the years, Palm Springs residents have reaffirmed that the hillsides are an irreplaceable asset to their community; development projects proposed in the hillsides have either been overturned through a vote of the residents or have required additional, more detailed environmental analyses. Efforts to establish a future direction in these areas is further complicated by the need to coordinate with multiple property owners and agencies such as the Agua Caliente Tribe and the Bureau of Land Management.

As available land in the central city becomes scarce, it will become increasingly important to establish guidance for the protection and thoughtful development of these areas. The intent is to ensure that proposed development is carefully designed to respect the hillsides and their sensitive biological resources. Residential uses are extremely limited in these areas, 1 unit per 40 acres, and they must be of high quality and sited in ways that conserve the City's valuable natural landforms.

The importance of the mountainous areas was further emphasized by the City Council, which established the Citizens' Task Force for Mountain and Foothill Preservation and Planning to evaluate the City's land use policies for mountainous areas and provide recommendations that would protect the scenic values of Palm Springs. As part of its effort, the Task Force established the following Guiding Principles that serve as a basis for decision making in the mountainous areas of Palm Springs:

- ◆ The unique natural environment of Palm Springs with its rugged mountains and sweeping desert sands creates stunning vistas with a sense of space and distance and is Palm Springs' most important asset.



*Hillsides are some of the most recognizable features in Palm Springs.*

- ◆ This natural environment has historically drawn people to live here and made Palm Springs a world class resort destination, and the protection of this natural environment is vital to the well-being of its residents and to sustaining its tourism-based economy.
- ◆ All land uses must respect the scenic values of the desert and mountain terrain and protect this historical heritage.
- ◆ The mountain region is an extraordinarily rich, though fragile, natural environment which sustains a brilliant variety of wildlife and plant species, some of which species are threatened or endangered and the City's land use policies must address ecosystem interactions and protect and conserve sensitive habitat.
- ◆ Development must be harmonious with, adapted to and respectful of the natural features with minimal disturbance of terrain and vegetation, use of natural and sympathetic materials, and be located in a manner sensitive to terrain, including wildlife habitat, watercourses, and steep slopes.
- ◆ Open space is a limited and valuable resource which is a part of the City's historic heritage and the City should identify sensitive open space areas for conservation and should acquire and preserve such areas.
- ◆ The City should continue its policies for open space acquisition and designation by which approximately 3,000 acres have been acquired (as of 2006), including mitigation of developer impacts through land dedication, density transfer and payment of in-lieu fees, acceptance of gifts of land, obtaining federal and state grants for conservation, working with regional conservation agencies, and developing other funding sources.

## **GOAL LU9:**

**Preserve the City's unique mountain resources for future generations.**

### **Policies**

- LU9.1 Design and landscape hillside development and development adjacent to natural areas to preserve natural features and habitat and to protect structures from natural disasters, such as wildfires and floods.
- LU9.2 Preserve the frontal slopes of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains above the toe of the slope including Chino Cone and Snow Creek.
- LU9.3 Preserve the unique topographic and geologic features of the City.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU9.4 Windfarm development on hillsides visible from scenic highways and corridors or on slopes of 15 percent or greater should demonstrate no significant adverse aesthetic impacts or provide adequate mitigation prior to approval.
- LU9.5 Encourage public acquisition and placement into public trust of environmentally sensitive hillside areas.
- LU9.6 Prohibit motorized vehicles within mountainous areas, except on City-approved roads.
- LU9.7 Encourage the use of mountains for recreational purposes so as not to degrade habitat areas; existing trails will be maintained and new trail links can be developed.
- LU9.8 Use only native plant species in areas adjacent to naturalized open space and mountainous areas to prevent invasive and non-native plant species from propagating in these areas. Exotic plant species such as fountain grass, Tamarisk, Mexican Fan Palm, and exotic cactus species shall be prohibited adjacent to mountainous and natural open areas. If the MSHCP is adopted, its list of invasive and native species could be used.
- LU9.9 Continue active interjurisdictional and interagency planning for the conservation and preservation of the Santa Rosa Mountains in their natural state with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Coachella Mountains Conservancy.
- LU9.10 Encourage the acquisition of hillside parcels by public trusts or other conservation-oriented entities where such parcel acquisition contributes to city-wide open space conservation goals and plans.
- LU9.11 Promote recreational use through the development of a system of trails. Pursue easements or other mechanisms to ensure long-term viability and access to existing trails and trailheads.
- LU9.12 Protect the scenic beauty of the mountains from erosion caused by development.

## **Actions**

- LU9.1 Adopt the following performance criteria for mountain and hillside development review:
  - a) Evaluate and quantify impacts of development on habitat for review by the California Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service and other appropriate entities, in the event the

MSHCP or other habitat conservation plan is not adopted.

- b) Concentrate development in areas with natural slopes of 10 percent or less in steepness. Natural slopes in excess of 30 percent should remain undisturbed. Development proposals for areas of between 10 and 30 percent slope, or areas subject to erosion, shall be accompanied by detailed soils and geotechnical studies as well as visual simulation exhibits.
- c) Proposed development must be compatible, by virtue of design, height, materials and slope compatibility, with the natural surroundings and preserve existing contours in order to minimize disturbance of site geology. Areas graded for development should be renaturalized.
- d) Proposed hillside development should utilize low lighting levels to avoid glare; such lighting should be consistent with standards developed by Palomar Observatory to protect astronomical observation and research.
- e) The availability of and proximity to public services and utilities shall be established prior to occupancy. All public utilities should be placed underground while minimizing disturbance to natural topography due to open trenching.
- f) Due to the fire hazards of hillside areas with slopes of 10 percent or greater, access problems, lack of water, and excessively dry brush, adequate on-site fire protection measures shall be provided. These could include a fuel modification program, an on-site water storage system, the use of fire-retardant building materials or any other provision deemed necessary during project review.
- g) Subdivisions, including streets and lots, should be developed in a manner that will minimize the scarring of the hillsides and, where major cuts or fills are necessary, they should be repaired in such a manner that the final appearance of the total area is as natural as possible. Bridges are generally preferred to fill concepts.
- h) Hillside areas with naturally occurring steep slopes (30 percent or greater) should not be disturbed to provide vehicular access where an alternate is available. Access roads serving hillside development should not exceed 15 percent grade on any portion of the road.
- i) Alternative roadway designs are encouraged including split roadway and modified cross-sections.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU9.2 Work with public and private natural resource and conservation groups to explore opportunities to preserve the Santa Rosa Mountains, San Jacinto Mountains, Chino Cone and Snow Creek in their natural state.
- LU9.3 Require property owners to prepare revegetation plans as part of project submittal to renaturalize any disturbed or scarred native plant and habitat areas not proposed for development.
- LU9.4 Create an inventory of unique geological features that should be protected.
- LU9.5 Develop a list of prohibited and preferred plant species in hillside areas.
- LU9.6 Develop alternative engineering standards in the hillside areas relating to streets, lots, drainage, and utilities that allow for minimized grading.

## A THRIVING DOWNTOWN

Downtown Palm Springs enjoys a worldwide reputation as a pedestrian-oriented commercial center and the City's recognizable historic core. The Downtown truly serves as the functional, economic, and psychological heart of Palm Springs. It is a heavily visited area of town, has a collection of outstanding architecture and urban design features, and has a concentration of popular restaurants and stores. Community events such as Villagefest, cultural amenities such as the Village Green Heritage Center and the Palm Springs Desert Museum, and visitor-serving uses such as the Convention Center and Spa Resort Casino bring thousands of visitors Downtown. However, over the years the Downtown area has failed to reach its potential as a thriving community core and has struggled to compete with neighboring cities for new retail opportunities for its residents and visitors. Efforts to reenergize and revitalize this area will help to bring new activity and new life into the City's core.

It is envisioned that Downtown will become a high-intensity, mixed-use area characterized by residential, office, commercial, and entertainment uses. To stimulate vitality, the Downtown will contain activity areas with differing intensities, which are further defined by the scale and design of buildings in each area. The creation of a central public plaza that will serve as the primary gathering place for visitors and residents of Palm Springs is a key concept planned to reinvigorate the Downtown core.

Although not required by state law, the City has developed the Downtown Urban Design Plan to guide the future of development Downtown.



*The Palm Springs Experience: Many stores and restaurants in Downtown Palm Springs provide a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere for residents and visitors.*



**Downtown Vision**

(from the *Downtown Urban Design Plan*)

*A dynamic, vital, and economically successful area that retains the historic and cultural character of Palm Springs and yet meets the changing needs of residents and visitors alike.*

This vision can be realized with the introduction of mixed-use development concepts to replace more traditional horizontal clustering of land uses.



*The Plaza Theatre is home to the Fabulous Palm Springs Follies, a major entertainment attraction in the heart of Downtown.*

Performance criteria related to building height, orientation, and massing, as well as customized guidance for parking, architecture, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture in the Downtown area can be found in the *Downtown Urban Design Plan*. The goals and policies identified below serve as the foundation for future land use distribution and economic strategies proposed Downtown and are intended to complement the direction identified in the *Downtown Urban Design Plan*.

**GOAL LU10:**

**Maintain a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that serves as the economic, civic, historic, cultural, and recreational center of the City.**

**Policies**

- LU10.1 Support the development of a centrally located “village square” to serve as the key visual, social, and aesthetic component of the Downtown revitalization effort.
- LU10.2 Encourage development of housing and mixed-use land uses Downtown to increase activity in this area.
- LU10.3 Encourage development that promotes a flow between indoor and outdoor activities such as outdoor cafes, arcades, paseos, and courtyards.
- LU10.4 Accommodate a broad range of uses Downtown to meet the needs of both residents and visitors and to stimulate both daytime and evening activity.
- LU10.5 Facilitate and promote special events and community celebrations in the Downtown area to stimulate its role as a community focal point.
- LU10.6 Strengthen the unique sense of place currently present in Downtown by preserving and incorporating cultural and historic uses.
- LU10.7 Provide a logical transition between land uses and the built environment in Downtown and those proposed in the Section 14 Specific Plan.
- LU10.8 Maintain the Plaza Theatre for use as a multipurpose community performing arts center for film festivals, premieres, and live stage productions, while preserving its historical value.



# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU10.9 Require all new development in Downtown to be consistent with the design principles found in the Downtown Urban Design Plan that address streets and circulation, parking, public spaces and gathering places, landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, and building height, orientation, massing, and design.
- LU10.10 Encourage higher density housing at the perimeter of the downtown retail area.

## Actions

- LU10.1 Develop a phasing and funding program for the necessary streetscape and infrastructure improvements within Downtown.
- LU10.2 Amend the Central Business District (CBD) to include a wide range of uses (such as grocery, hardware, and convenience/drug stores) that provide services and amenities to the Downtown residential population.
- LU10.3 Establish specific criteria or incentives to determine if new projects within the CBD qualify to develop above a 3.5 FAR as identified in the land use designations. In no event shall development exceed an FAR of 4.0.

## PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Known as “America’s Resortport,” the Palm Springs International Airport serves as the primary air transportation access to the Coachella Valley communities in one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Located on over 930 acres of land on the eastern edge of the City, the airport not only serves as a major transportation and tourist hub, but is also an asset to the City’s economic development.

In 2003, approximately 1.25 million annual passengers flew into and out of the airport. Airline activity has increased at an average annual growth rate of 3.4 percent from 1994 to 2004. As the number of aircraft trips grows, it will become increasingly important to ensure that the surrounding land uses are compatible with airport activities and the City continues to build upon the economic potential and business relationships generated by the airport. High-quality industrial and business park uses should also be promoted in this area.



*The Palm Springs International Airport serves as a major transportation hub in the Coachella Valley.*

Additional discussion about hazards related to the airport can be found in the Safety Element.

### Foreign Trade Zone

There are two Foreign Trade Zones within the City of Palm Springs. Managed by the City of Palm Springs' Community & Economic Development Department, the boundaries of the FTZ include two areas, 917 acres at the Palm Springs International Airport, and 14 acres at the Palm Springs Rail Station.

Foreign Trade Zones benefit companies that import merchandise for domestic or foreign consumption. Under FTZ procedures, zones are considered to be outside U.S. Customs Territory. Merchandise may be admitted into zones and then stored, exhibited, assembled or used for manufacturing, and processing, all the while bypassing formal customs entry procedures and the payment of customs duties. Duties are eliminated if the merchandise is exported to other countries. Within Palm Springs, the FTZ address can be used by importers and exporters to ship and receive overseas products without being subject to formal customs entry procedures.

### Open Land

In the event that a light aircraft is forced to land away from an airport, the risks to the people on board can best be minimized by providing as much open land area as possible within the airport vicinity. Open land can include roads and automobile parking lots, and areas free of most structures and obstacles such as walls, large trees or poles, and overhead wires.

The *Palm Springs Airport Master Plan* was developed to evaluate future airport facilities needs, both existing and future, and to develop an airport development plan concept, which could include long-term land acquisition needs related to airport expansion. In addition, the *Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUC) was adopted in February 2005 and provides guidance related to the compatibility of land uses surrounding the airport. Since lands around the immediate vicinity of the airport are heavily urbanized, it will be important to address how these uses are affected by any future expansion of the airport.

## GOAL LU11:

**Promote the Palm Springs International Airport as the premier flight center of the Coachella Valley.**

### Policies

- LU11.1 Encourage land uses in the areas surrounding the airport that are economically supportive of, or related to, the airport activities and that are developed in a manner that minimizes negative impact in existing adjacent land uses.
- LU11.2 Discourage sensitive uses such as schools, hospitals, daycare facilities, or new residential development from locating in close proximity to the airport.
- LU11.3 Continue to modernize and maintain the Palm Springs Airport as a state-of-the-art facility.
- LU11.4 Ensure that proposed land uses and developments around the airport comply with the policies set forth in the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.
- LU11.5 Market the benefits for businesses to locate to the *Foreign Trade Zone*.

### Actions

- LU11.1 Identify areas of *open land* that will be preserved in the vicinity of the airport for possible future expansion, noise, and safety buffers.
- LU11.2 Require the disclosure of potential aircraft overflight as part of real estate transactions within the airport influence area.
- LU11.3 Limit the height and intensity of nonresidential structures located adjacent to the airport to minimize airport-related safety issues.

## I-10 CORRIDOR

As a major goods-moving corridor and passageway, the I-10 accommodates thousands of travelers a day and serves as a regionally significant east–west link to uses within Riverside County and beyond. Similar to neighboring cities that have frontage along I-10, the City of Palm Springs desires to maximize the development potential in this area and facilitate the development of complementary uses that will bring economic vitality to the corridor.

As the Land Use Plan was being developed, City Council directed Staff to evaluate the feasibility of designating the entire area north of the Union Pacific Railroad as mix of industrial, regional commercial, and office uses under a designation of Regional Business Center (RBC). Much of the land north of the railroad consists of desert or watercourse uses, with most of the industrial and commercial development focused around major interchanges. A large portion of this area is also located within the City's Sphere of Influence.

After reviewing roadway capacities, environmental and biological issues, and overall demand for commercial, office, and industrial square footage within the City, it was determined that the RBC designation should be focused around two specific areas: the interchange of I-10 and Indian Canyon Drive and the interchange of I-10 and Gene Autry Trail. These areas can accommodate the additional traffic that would be generated by the mix of uses proposed, and are located adjacent to already developing areas and to interchanges that will be undergoing improvements in the near future. In addition, both of these areas are located in the City proper and would not require annexation prior to development as RBC.

It is envisioned that, over time, market demand may support the phased conversion of additional lands north of the Union Pacific Railroad from Desert and OS-W land use designations to RBC. As opportunities arise to develop along the I-10 Corridor, the extension of the RBC designation along I-10 would be encouraged provided that a general plan amendment is processed, the appropriate environmental and traffic analyses have been completed, and suitable mitigation has been provided to accommodate the new development.

In addition to the implementation of a desirable mix of land uses adjacent to the freeway, the application of high-quality architecture is a critical component to the success of any development proposed along I-10. Due to the high level of visibility of the commercial and industrial uses adjacent to the freeway, it is important to ensure that these areas are developed in a way that makes a positive visual impression of Palm Springs. Views from freeways serve as windows into the communities beyond. As a result, cities have begun to recognize the importance of treating these significant corridors more as regional Main Streets than backyards—ensuring that buildings maintain a

high level of architectural quality and are representative of the desired image of the community and that unsightly storage areas, mechanical equipment, or loading areas are properly screened or sited to minimize their impact on the aesthetic appearance of the area. Such is the case with the I-10 Corridor area and the City of Palm Springs.

## **GOAL LU12:**

**Establish commercial, office, and industrial land uses along the I-10 Corridor that reflect the world class resort status of our city and provide a strong sense of entry and arrival into Palm Springs and the entire Coachella Valley.**

### **Policies**

- LU12.1 Promote the development of high-quality regional and freeway-serving land uses that generate a sense of place and arrival into the City at the interchanges of Gene Autry Drive and Indian Canyon Drive with I-10.
- LU12.2 Promote the development of regional business center and freeway commercial uses adjacent to the freeway while maintaining high standards of design and quality of improvements to strengthen the economic vitality of the City. Strip commercial uses are discouraged along the corridor, especially in those areas adjacent to frontage roads.
- LU12.3 Support the development of commercial, industrial, and office uses on properties located north of the Union Pacific Railroad that are not currently designated as RBC (excluding those areas designated as OS-W), provided that the appropriate environmental documentation is prepared and the appropriate roadway and utility infrastructure can be provided to support the proposed uses.
- LU12.4 Ensure that new development along the freeway corridor is compatible with the City’s policies related to scenic resources.
- LU12.5 Periodically reevaluate the concentration, type, and mix of commercial, office, and industrial development that is appropriate and sustainable adjacent to the freeway.
- LU12.6 Require that loading and outdoor storage areas for commercial and industrial uses be screened from public streets and freeway views.
- LU12.7 Promote the development of high-quality building design, including attractive fenestration, articulated façades, clearly

Additional policies addressing scenic resources and the I-10 Corridor can be found in the Community Design Element.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

defined entrances, varied colors and materials, varied building sizes and configurations, and varied roof heights during project review and approval.

## Actions

- LU12.1 Create design guidelines for development adjacent to the I-10 Corridor.
- LU12.2 Evaluate the potential of incorporating new provisions in the City's Zoning Code for freeway-adjacent uses.

## SPECIAL POLICY AREAS

The General Plan Land Use map identifies two areas of the City that warrant special policy direction—Palm Hills and the Chino Cone. These areas warrant custom policy guidance because the City has determined that the preservation of their unique hillside character is of utmost importance and should be carefully guided as development pressures in the hillsides of Palm Springs continue to increase. Following is a discussion of the issues surrounding each of the sites, and the policy direction that accompanies it. The actual locations of these areas can be found on the Land Use Plan, Figures 2-2 and 2-3.

### Chino Cone/Snow Creek

Chino Cone is recognized as an extraordinary natural resource and an area of great development interest. In 2005 and 2006, the City of Palm Springs formed a task force to establish a vision and direction for the area, which led to the adoption of the Environmentally Sensitive Development Area – Specific Plan (ESA-SP) Ordinance. As a new development code in the Zoning Ordinance the ESA-SP zone promotes sensitive development while preserving the natural environment in the Chino Cone area. The General Plan reflects the task force's vision with goals and policies that undergird the ESA-SP zone.

The General Plan goals and policies are intended to provide for the development of environmentally sensitive areas of the city in a manner that will preserve the open, rural character of these areas while allowing development of ranchettes and clustered single- and multiple family or resort projects. The Goals and policies of the Special Policy Areas, are to facilitate the preservation of open space through the creation and implementation of development review considerations that will ensure the evaluation of the suitability of the land for development in a manner that would preserve the character of the land. The ESA-SP generally includes the Chino Cone, North Palm Canyon

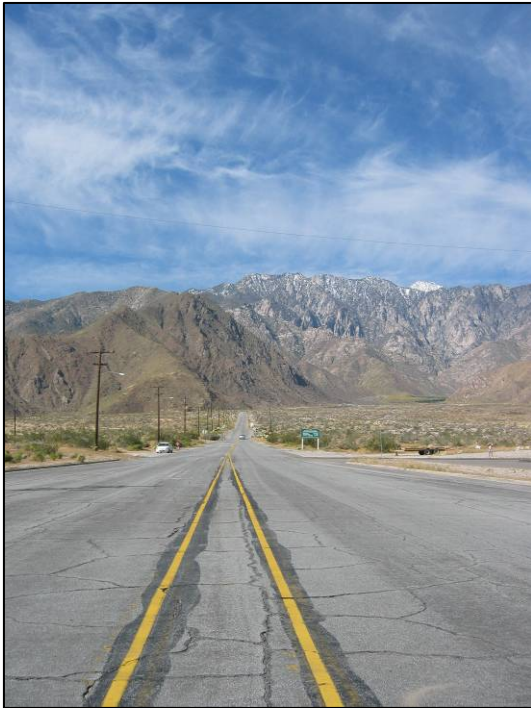


*Ship Rock is a prominent rock outcropping located in the Chino Cone. It is envisioned that any future development in this area will preserve and incorporate this feature.*



Drive north entry corridor, and other areas which the city council may designate from time to time by ordinance.

The ESA-SP zone is divided into planning areas as indicated in Figure 2-3. The General Plan establishes an underlying land use density for all areas within the Chino Cone Special Policy Area of 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres.



*Tramway Road serves as the major access point into Planning Area 4 of the Chino Cone Special Study Area.*

A specific plan, allowing only sensitive and appropriate uses, densities, distributions, and design standards, is required for each Planning Area for projects that exceed the base land use density. All development in each planning area is required to be consistent with the adopted specific plan. In Planning Areas 2, 3, 4, 5b, 6, 8, and 9, a variety of densities and uses including residential resort and commercial, in accordance with the ESA-SP are allowed with a Specific Plan. Specific Plans must show creative and environmentally sensitive development that respects the visual, topographical and unique features of the Chino Cone. Specific Plans for Planning Areas 1 and 7 are recognized as the lowest allowable densities for the Chino Cone Special Policy Area. Planning Area 5a Specific Plans may propose commercial and tourist-serving uses. Following is a brief description of each planning area and some associated characteristics.

#### *Planning Area 1 – Palm Springs Aerial Tramway*

This area is approximately 570 acres in size and includes the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway Valley Station and accessory facilities. The development in this planning area is envisioned as low density residential and only those commercial uses associated with the Tramway.

#### *Planning Area 2 – Shadowrock*

This area is approximately 360 acres and is envisioned with a possible mix of residential and resort uses. A Development Agreement outlines further possible uses and densities that may be considered under a Specific Plan. Should the Development Agreement become void, the underlying General Plan land use designation of Special Policy Area (1 dwelling unit per 40 acres) and the regulations of the ESA-SP would still apply. Portions of this planning area are in FEMA Flood Zone A (impacts possible due to 100-year rain) which would need to be taken into consideration with any development application in this area.



*The Chino Cone is an alluvial fan that can be easily seen upon entry into the City.*

# LAND USE ELEMENT

## *Planning Area 3 – Agua Caliente Band of Cabuilla Indians Lands*

The land within Planning Area 3 is within the reservation of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. The area encompasses roughly 380 acres. It is envisioned that a Tribal Specific Plan would be created for development densities and uses that exceed the residential 1 unit per 40 acres set forth for the Special Policy land use area. Portions of this planning area are also in FEMA Flood Zone A (impact possible with a 100-year rain).

## *Planning Area 4 – Tramway South*

This 119 acre area is characterized primarily by gently sloping rocky terrain. It is envisioned to be primarily a low density residential area.

## *Planning Area 5a – Visitors Center*

This is an area of approximately 8 acres that includes the architecturally significant Palm Springs Visitors Center and a gateway feature to the City. A Specific Plan for this area may include tourist-serving commercial activities, including retail goods and services primarily oriented to the traveler, including restaurants and entertainment, as well as other uses permitted with a Specific Plan as described in the ESA-SP.

## *Planning Area 5 – Visitors Center*

This 36 acre area is just west of Planning Area 5a. Portions of this area abut Highway 111. A Specific Plan for this area may include uses and densities as described in the ESA-SP. Visual screening of development from the adjacent Highway 111 as described elsewhere in the General Plan may be a consideration of development in this area.

## *Planning Area 6 – Chino Canyon Gateway*

The Chino Canyon Gateway comprises about 125 acres and portions of this planning area abut Highway 111. Consideration of view sheds and visual screening from Highway 111 may be a consideration of development in this area. Portions of this planning area are also in FEMA Flood Zone A (possible impacts during a 100-year rain).

## *Planning Area 7 – Chino Creek*

There are approximately 176 acres in this planning area, portions of which also abut Highway 111. Environmental analysis should include study of development impacts on the watercourse zones in this Planning Area. Visual impacts of development from Highway 111 should also be considered.

Additional regulations governing the development of the Chino Cone can be found in the City's Zoning Ordinance under the Environmentally Sensitive Area Specific Plan Zone.

### *Planning Area 8 – Highway 111 Corridor*

The 202 acres in this planning area comprise some of the first visual images for travelers entering Palm Springs along Highway 111. A unique rock outcropping known as Ship Rock is a natural landmark in this area. Development in this Planning Area should not minimize the prominence of this natural topographical feature and should address view sheds and visual impacts along the Highway 111 frontage.

### *Planning Area 9 – Snow Creek*

This Planning Area is north of the Chino Cone planning areas and encompasses roughly 1,195 acres. Large portions of this area are characterized as watercourse zones. Planning Area 9 is mostly situated within a cove formed by Snow Creek Canyon, providing residents with seclusion and scenic views. The historic Pacific Crest Trail skirts this planning area.

## **GOAL LU13:**

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**Sensitively integrate new development into the Chino Cone while preserving its distinguishing natural and scenic characteristics.**

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### **Policies**

- LU13.1 Require that any development in the Chino Cone be harmonious with and respectful of the area's natural features.
- LU13.2 Protect and conserve sensitive habitat areas through development restrictions and clustering of land uses.
- LU13.3 Continue to seek opportunities to acquire or designate open space for preservation. This could include land dedication, in-lieu fees, grants, density transfer, or other sources.
- LU13.4 Allow for rural street profiles with French drain or similar type of stormwater control features and code-compliant pedestrian accommodation to traditional street standards and design of curbs and gutters to establish a natural streetscape that visually blends into the surrounding terrain.
- LU13.5 Encourage low building profiles, natural colors, and minimal grading to blend into the natural topography of the area.
- LU13.6 Require any proposed development in this area to preserve Ship Rock and integrate this natural landmark into the project's design.



# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU13.7 Apply natural berming techniques to screen views of development within the Chino Cone from Highway 111.
- LU13.8 Allow cultural, educational, and tourism-based uses that will generate revenue and provide amenities in the Chino Cone Special Policy Area.

## **Actions**

- LU13.1 Require preparation of a Specific Plan and associated environmental analyses prior to the approval of any development within the Chino Cone that differ from the residential uses permitted by right (1 dwelling unit per 40 acres).
- LU13.2 Apply the use of density transfers between properties located within the Chino Cone and to properties elsewhere in the City to encourage the preservation of views and natural resources.
- LU13.3 Initiate discussions with the County to annex land north of Planning Area 8 in an effort to preserve the view corridors desired along Highway 111.
- LU13.4 Work with the Winter Park Authority to explore ways to reduce traffic on Tram Way including possible relocation of parking lots near the Visitor Center and the use of shuttles or other means of transport to the Lower Tramway Station.

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# LAND USE ELEMENT

Figure 2-4 Chino Cone Planning Areas

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## **Palm Hills**

In July of 1970, the Palm Springs annexed approximately 34 square miles of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains into the City. It was envisioned that the area would attract a development that preserved the environment while encouraging the establishment of resort, residential and accessory uses. The majority of the 34 square miles that comprised the original annexation area have been designated as Mountain—allowing up to 1 unit of residential development per 40 acres of land to preserve the integrity of the natural terrain and resources found in the mountains.

The remaining area, comprised of approximately 1,200 acres of mountainous terrain in the southern end of the City, has been designated as a Special Policy Area. These 1,200 acres constitute the contemporary boundaries for the Palm Hills area and warrant special policy guidance in the General Plan due to their exceptional location and the desire to minimize impacts of development in the Santa Rosa Mountains. The Palm Hills site is under five separate property owners: Palm Hills Land Corporation (approximately 906 acres), three Allottees (approximately 293 acres) and the Desert Water Agency (DWA), which owns approximately 5 acres that contain water tank facilities.

The City continues to recognize the future potential of developing the site with first-class resort and residential uses and is continuing to work with property owners to design a project that minimizes impacts to the aesthetic value of the hillsides and the sensitive natural resources. Residential and resort development in Palm Hills is envisioned as at a maximum of one dwelling unit or resort hotel unit per acre. In addition to residential uses, the Palm Hills Special Policy Area provides for the development of a large-scale mixed-use resort that may include guest ranches, hotels, or other resort residential uses along with incidental and accessory commercial uses for visitors and residents. Golf courses may also be considered in Palm Hills as a complementary use to residential or resort uses. The total number of rooms and residential units within Palm Hills shall not exceed a total of 1,200.

It should be noted that a 91-unit low density residential subdivision has been approved in the Palm Hills Policy Area. While currently undeveloped, the subdivision is legally recorded and can be developed with little or no additional review required by the City. These units could be developed as planned, incorporated into a more comprehensive master plan for the area, or redesigned as part of a comprehensive plan for Palm Hills.

In any case, a Specific Plan shall be prepared to develop a detailed density allocation formula that assigns units to individual properties within Palm Hills to be in compliance with the General Plan. The Specific Plan shall also ensure that the proposed units are fairly allocated to all properties that contain development potential. The City shall not be precluded from

considering the drainage, wildlife habitat, slope characteristics, and other goals and policies of the General Plan while reviewing plans for proposed development within Palm Hills.

The City of Palm Springs also recognizes the efforts of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, and other groups to preserve the Santa Rosa Mountains in their natural state. It is envisioned that limited, high-quality development can occur in the Palm Hills area and be consistent with the desire to conserve natural resources. The City will cooperate with these groups to facilitate conservation to the extent that conservation efforts are consistent with the goals and policies of this General Plan.

### **GOAL LU14:**

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**Create a first class resort and residential development in Palm Hills that preserves valued open space, hillsides, view corridors, and biological resources.**

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#### **Policies**

- LU14.1 Establish an innovative planning process to analyze and guide all aspects of future development in the Palm Hills area including biological resources, aesthetics, and infrastructure.
- LU14.2 Preserve the frontal slopes of the Santa Rosa Mountains that are visible from the desert floor as open space.
- LU14.3 Public lands that are not used as part of a development project may not be credited for density transfer purposes to an off-site development.
- LU14.4 Explore opportunities for the exchange of public and private lands to create proper development areas and viable habitat conservation areas.
- LU14.5 Maximum density is one unit per acre (residential or hotel); development on slopes above 30 percent is prohibited.
- LU14.6 Allow credits for density transfer where sensitive biological habitats, including hillsides, washes, canyons, etc. are protected and dedicated as permanent open space.

#### **Actions**

- LU14.1 Require the preparation of a Specific Plan for any development proposed in Palm Hills.

# LAND USE ELEMENT

- LU14.2 Establish a program for the permanent preservation of open space to mitigate wildlife habitat loss and to provide recreational amenities. Programs should complement the applicable conservation programs to the extent that they do not conflict with the General Plan and the MSHCP.
- LU14.3 Explore strategies to purchase the property for preservation, including but not limited to issuance of bonds, matching funds from conservation agencies, and partial acquisition of the site.

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