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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to provide a comprehensive plan of the general allocation and distribution of land uses throughout the City. The Element also serves as a statement of the standards and targets for population density and building intensity. The Land Use Element identifies areas planned for residential, commercial, and public uses. It is the broadest of the elements and is the basis for coherent land use policy development.

The process of developing the land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns, current and future available public services and facilities, an understanding of the physical environmental constraints, opportunities for development, and consideration of the City's Vision (see Introduction).

Seasonal Community

The Land Use Element and accompanying land use plan describe and designate the distribution of land uses by type, location, intensity and extent of use. Uses to be considered include: residential, commercial, open space, recreation, public buildings and facilities, and other categories of public and private land uses. The General Plan does not include provisions for industrial uses within the City of Rancho Mirage. Table II-1 provides a description of the City's General Plan land use designations and Table II-2 provides the statistical summary of these land uses. A summary and map of the City's Land Use Plan is also provided. Following the tables and map, overall land use goals, policies and programs are presented. In addition, a discussion of each major land use category is also presented followed by related goals, policies and programs.

It is important to note that the City of Rancho Mirage employs a "single-map" system of land uses. This means that the City's General Plan land use designations are the same as the City's Zoning designations. The density and intensity standards expressed in the General Plan are the same as those expressed in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Another important characteristic of land use in Rancho Mirage is the development of residential communities through Planned Residential Developments (PRD) and specific plans. The purpose of both is to promote development and amenities beyond those expected under conventional development. PRDs encourage well-conceived residential neighborhoods through creative and flexible planning. They allow for a mix of housing types that are unique in their physical characteristics and warrant special methods of residential development. PRDs also consolidate areas for structures and maximize common open space and recreation areas, while integrating access and private internal roadways. The portions of the City and Sphere of Influence targeted for specific plans are illustrated on Exhibit II-3.

**Table II-1
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan
Land Use Designations**

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
Residential	
(H-R) Hillside Reserve (0–1 du/640 ac)	This designation provides for limited single-family residential development on privately owned property within hillside areas. It serves as an intermediate land use designation between open space lands and more intense residential uses. It precludes premature or inappropriate expansion of urban development. Development in this designation is restricted by topography/slope, drainage, and biological and visual resources. Development is restricted to a specific area on each lot, with the balance preserved as open space.
(R-E) Residential Estates (0–1 du/ac)	This designation provides for single-family residential development on lots one acre and larger in size. This land use provides an intermediate density between more typical residential densities and open space lands. It provides lots sufficient in size for rural and estate development.
(R-L-2) Very Low Density Residential (0-2 du/ac)	This very low density designation provides for single-family residential development typically on individual lots of about one-half acre. Planned Residential Developments are also an appropriate form of development. These lands may serve to buffer more dense residential development from estate residential uses.
(R-L-3) Low Density Residential (0–3 du/ac)	This designation provides for moderately low density development and PRDs. It serves to transition between lower and more moderate (medium) residential densities.
(R-M) Medium Density Residential (0–4 du/ac)	Appropriate residential development under this designation includes single-family and PRDs. The intent of this designation is to encourage development of a wide variety of dwelling unit types in a planned environment.
(R-H) High Density Residential (4–9 du/ac)	This designation allows for smaller single-family attached products and multi-family dwellings. This designation is most suitable for planned communities and affordable and senior housing where smaller units and higher densities may be appropriate. Duplex and multiplex development is the most common and provides for PRDs comprised of a varying range of residential types including apartments. Mobile home parks or subdivisions with PRD type development may also be allowed with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.
(MHP) Mobile Home Park (0–9 du/ac)	This designation is applied to mobile home parks and encourages Planned Residential Developments (PRDs).
(S-OL) Senior Overlay	This designation is applied as an overlay to an underlying residential designation. It recognizes special circumstances or conditions that favorably support and are appropriate to senior housing including close proximity to commercial, medical and other seniors-oriented uses. Development of senior housing on these lands may qualify for density bonus assistance from the City Housing Authority and special design standards.

**Table II-1
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan
Land Use Designations**

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
Commercial	
(C-N) Neighborhood Commercial (0.30 FAR ¹)	This designation provides for neighborhood-scale shopping facilities conveniently located near residential areas. These developments are typically anchored by supermarkets and drugstores. A wide range of other uses including banks, barber/beauty salons, dry cleaners, restaurants, service businesses and other related activities are generally found in these planned centers. Typical sizes are 8 to 10 acres providing approximately 80,000 to 100,000 square feet of gross leasable floor area.
(C-G) General Commercial (0.35 FAR ¹)	This land use includes a wide variety of commercial centers, specialty retail shops, clothing and jewelry stores, and a variety of personal service businesses. Small department stores may also be appropriate under this designation. Development may range from freestanding retail buildings and restaurants to planned commercial centers. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands.
(C-C) Community Commercial (0.35 FAR ¹)	This designation provides for regional or community-scale shopping centers and malls. These centers may be anchored by several department stores or other large-scale anchors as well as a variety of retail outlets and restaurant and entertainment uses. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands. The community commercial center is intended to serve the entire community as well as the surrounding market area.
(O) Office (0.35 FAR ¹)	This designation permits a variety of professional offices including administrative, corporate, institutional, law, medical, financial, insurance, real estate, and government offices. Office uses may be combined with adjacent commercial uses. Less intense office uses may be compatible with medium and higher density residential developments.
(M-U) Mixed Use (0.35 FAR ¹)	The Mixed Use designation recognizes the potential for thoughtfully planned integration of commercial, office and residential uses. Projects developed within this designation require a specific plan. Specific plans for these areas typically include compatible design standards and must demonstrate shared internal circulation, and complementary and synergistic relationships amongst uses.
(Rs-H) Resort Hotel (0.25 FAR ¹)	This designation allows for the development of hotels and destination resorts with limited ancillary commercial uses, such as spas, recreational facilities, restaurants, lounges, and small retail shops that directly support the primary use.
(SC-OL) Special Corner Overlay	This designation is intended to be used in conjunction with any non-residential base designation at specified intersections. It provides for exceptionally designed commercial or office centers at key intersections in the City where aesthetics and land use compatibility are of primary importance.
(SP) Specific Plan Overlay	This designation is used in conjunction with other underlying land use designations and requires the development of a specific plan. It is also

**Table II-1
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan
Land Use Designations**

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
	<p>appropriate as a means of processing large scale Community Commercial and Mixed-Use development proposals.</p> <p>Specific plans provide detailed plans, concepts, and designs of large scale or complex projects indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses. They also identify the required level and availability of public facilities and services as well as the economic viability of proposed developments.</p>
Institutional Services and Facilities	
(P) Public/Quasi-Public (0.35 FAR ¹)	<p>This designation provides for governmental offices, cultural facilities, libraries, museums, schools, hospitals, floodways, police and fire stations, utility substations as well as other public or quasi-public administrative offices or meeting spaces.</p>
Open Space	<p>Open Space designations are assigned to those lands that constitute important or valuable natural resources. The designation is assigned to lands such as parks, natural open spaces, and habitat areas; golf courses, pool areas, and landscaped lands are defined as private open space.</p> <p>Open Space designations may also be used to define special resource areas or those that may pose threats or hazards to development. Lands important for their recreational, biological, or regional economic value may also be assigned an open space designation. Examples of resource lands and hazards include liquefaction hazard areas, detention and retention basins, trails, and large habitat areas for biological resources.</p>
(OS/PP) Public Parks	<p>This designation is assigned to active recreation open space areas that are accessible by the general public, and are generally owned and maintained by the City or other public entity.</p>
(OS/MR) Mountain Reserve	<p>This designation is assigned to public lands or property subject to conservation easements located within the Santa Rosa Mountains. Uses are limited to recreational activities: hiking, equestrian and non-motorized bike trails and facilities consistent with the need to protect sensitive biological resources. Vehicular access is not permitted.</p>
(OS/PV) Private Open Space	<p>This designation is assigned to golf courses, lakes and water features, tennis courts and other recreational facilities and landscaping occurring within Planned Residential Developments.</p>
(OS/FW) Floodways	<p>This designation is assigned to natural or manmade floodways/drainage channels.</p>
<p>¹ Floor area ratio (FAR) is defined as the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the area of the site, expressed in decimals of one or two places. For example, an FAR of 0.35 means that a project located on a one-acre site (43,560 square feet) could construct a building with up to 15,246 square feet (35% of 43,560).</p>	

**Table II-2
City of Rancho Mirage
Statistical Summary of Land Uses
(as of 2/10/06)**

Land Use Category		Buildout Total		Vacant Lands	
		Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
H-R	Hillside Reserve (1 du/640 ac)	343	2%	343	100%
R-E	Residential Estates (0–1 du/ac)	527	3%	252	48%
R-L-2	Very Low Density Residential (0–2 du/ac)	2,085	13%	953	45%
R-L-3	Low Density Residential (0–3 du/ac)	922	6%	17	2%
R-M	Medium Density Residential (0–4 du/ac)	1,186	8%	138	12%
R-H	High Density Residential (4–9 du/ac)	249	2%	127	51%
MHP	Mobile Home Park (0–9 du/ac)	96	<1%	0	0%
Residential Subtotal		5,408	34%	1,830	34%
O	Office	112	<1%	66	59%
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial	103	<1%	29	28%
C-G	General Commercial	234	1%	124	53%
C-C	Community Commercial	342	2%	308	90%
Rs-H	Resort Hotel	350	2%	241	69%
M-U	Mixed Use(commercial/office/residential)	36	<1%	12	33%
Commercial and Office Subtotal		1,177	7%	780	66%
H	Hospital	132	<1%	37	28%
P	Public/Quasi-Public Uses (Institutional)	172	1%	110	64%
Institutional Subtotal		304	2%	146	48%
OS/PP	Public Park	54	<1%	29	54%
OS/MR	Mountain Reserve	5,182	33%	—	—
OS/PV	Private Open Space	2,143	14%	3	<1%
OS/FW	Floodways and Drainage Channels	332	2%	0	0%
Open Space Subtotal		7,711	49%	—	—
Streets/Rights-of-Way		1,198	8%	—	—
CITYWIDE TOTAL¹		15,796	100%	—	—
Southern Sphere of Influence		1,465	100%	1,406	96%
Northern Sphere of Influence		4,084	100%	3,990	99%
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE TOTAL¹		5,549	—	—	—

¹ Figures subject to rounding. See discussion on Sphere of Influence on Page II-6.



Like PRDs, specific plans seek to generate development of exceptional quality through flexible planning and design. Specific plans differ in that they are intended for larger, more complex projects that integrate a variety of residential and non-residential land uses. Specific plans can also permit uses, development standards, and density/intensity levels beyond those allowed in the City's Zoning Code. In return, specific plans require an applicant to demonstrate exceptional design quality and amenities, as well as a phased, cost-effective extension of infrastructure. The portions of the City and Sphere of Influence targeted for specific plans are illustrated on Exhibit II-3.

LAND USE PLAN BUILDOUT

The Rancho Mirage Land Use Plan implements the City's Vision as an international destination resort and medical center, located in a spectacular natural setting. The Land Use Plan also attempts to ensure long-term economic stability for the City and first-class shopping, entertainment, cultural, and dining opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The Land Use Plan is shown on Exhibit II-1.

Seasonal Community

Of the City's 12,195 existing dwelling units (estimated in 2004¹), approximately 7,000 were occupied by permanent residents, while about 5,200, or 42%, serve as second or vacation homes for part time residents. The City's seasonal population increases during the fall/winter/spring months and decreases during the summer period. The majority of seasonal or second home residences are located in the City's planned residential communities.

Sphere of Influence

Land use planning for the City of Rancho Mirage does not stop at the City boundaries. Unincorporated lands adjacent to the City's borders are identified by the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as areas likely to be serviced or annexed by the City in the future. These lands are known as the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI). The City does not have regulatory control over these lands, which generally occur north of Ramon Road and extend north of Interstate 10, but does have authority and responsibility to designate its preference for land use planning in the County land.

The City's SOI is shown on Exhibit II-2, Sphere of Influence. The SOI can be seen as two major planning areas. The first is the southern SOI and represents unincorporated lands south of Interstate 10, east of Da Vall Drive, and west of Bob Hope Drive. The southern SOI (1,465 acres) is viewed as the most relevant to the City's Land Use Plan and has been identified with City land use designations. The northern SOI (4,084 acres) represents unincorporated lands north of Interstate 10, east of Da Vall Drive, west of Bob Hope Drive, and extended south of Edom Hill. The northern SOI is considered to be lands most likely to be developed under the jurisdiction of the County of Riverside. Accordingly, the City's Land Use Plan illustrates only the southern SOI; however, the General Plan Environmental Impact Report considers the impacts of the City's full SOI.

¹ The California Department of Finance reported 13,331 total units in 2004; however, this number includes an overestimation of mobile home units (1,987). The actual number of mobile homes was 851 in 2004. Accordingly, the total unit count has been decreased by 1,136 to 12,195 units.

Projected City Population

The General Plan provides for a range of residential densities ranging up to nine dwelling units per acre within six residential land use designations. This does not include the Mixed Use designation, which also allows integrated residential development, or the Hillside Reserve designation, which offers minimal residential development potential. Within the City boundaries, the majority of the area is developed as single-family residential dwelling units within private planned residential developments and standard subdivisions. The 1996 permanent population in Rancho Mirage was 10,600 and had increased to about 13,700 by January 2004.

The City's average household size was 2.05 in 1996; however, it actually decreased to about 1.96 by 2004. Based upon Exhibit II-1, Land Use Plan, the City has a potential to generate a maximum of approximately 16,600 dwelling units on 5,400 acres of residential land uses (including 36 acres of mixed land uses) within current City boundaries. Using an average household size of 1.95 persons, the City's maximum population could reach approximately 32,400.

The City's Sphere of Influence located south of Interstate 10 (projected to accommodate larger, family households), offers an additional potential for up to 3,900 homes and 11,800 future residents on 1,075 acres of residential land. For a more detailed discussion of the City's household and demographic composition, please see the General Plan Program EIR and the City Community Profile.

Projected Employment

As an international destination resort and medical and health center, Rancho Mirage maintains an employment base that is centered around the Eisenhower Medical Center and the major resort hotels. Commercial growth is expected to accelerate and employment is projected to increase in the retail, entertainment, and service categories.

Within City boundaries, the Land Use Plan provides for a total of 715 acres of Neighborhood, General, and Community Commercial uses (including 36 acres for Mixed Use). Another 112 acres are designated for Office uses, and 349 acres are identified for Resort Hotel uses. The office, retail, and hotel employment provided by the Land Use Plan could generate approximately 25,300 jobs using probable intensity factors (floor area ratios) for each nonresidential land use designation. The City's Sphere of Influence located south of Interstate 10, including Tribal lands, offers an additional potential for up to 3,200 employees on 111 acres of land designated for Community Commercial and Resort Hotel uses.



LAND USE ELEMENT

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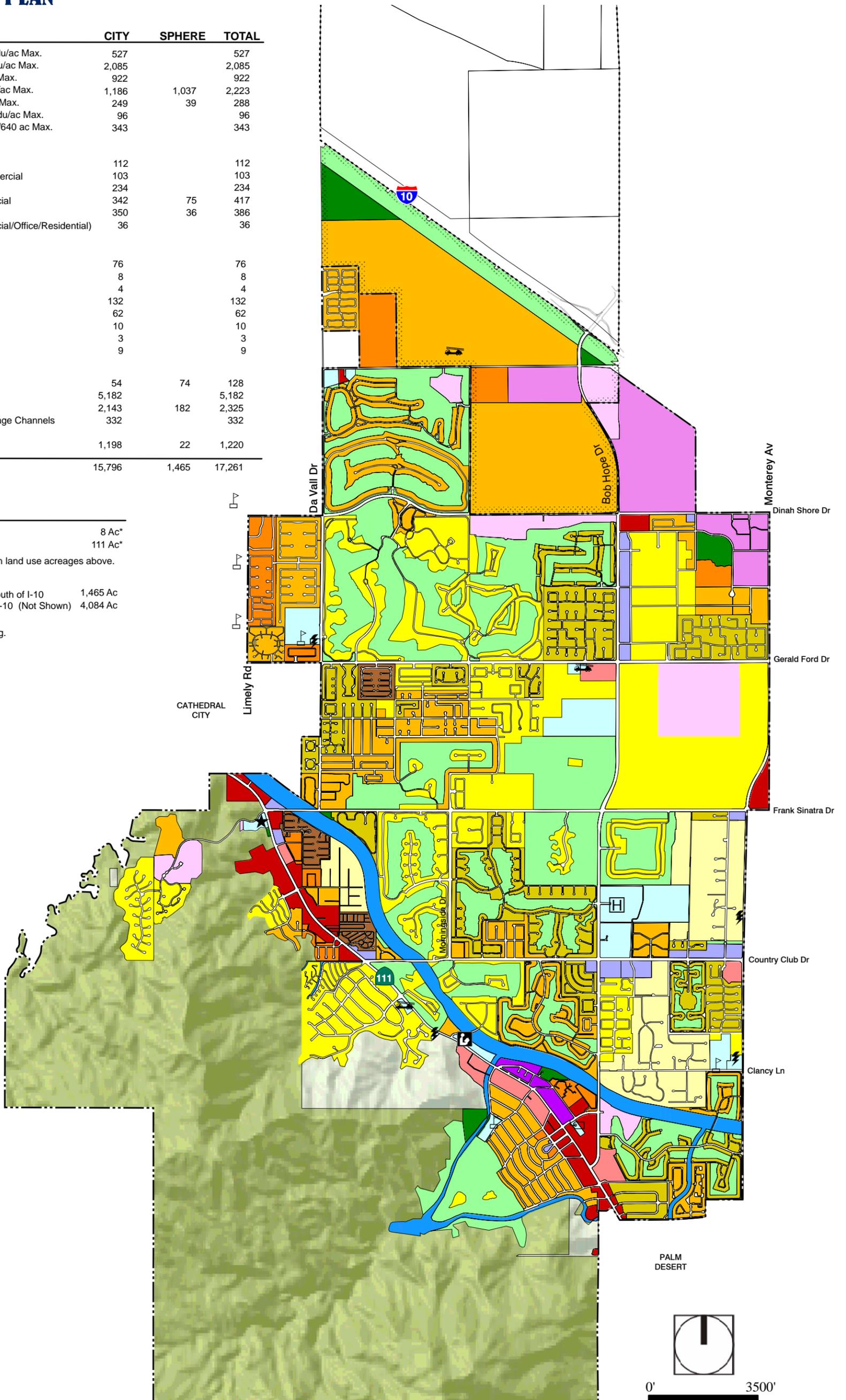
LAND USE PLAN

RESIDENTIAL		CITY	SPHERE	TOTAL
R-E	Residential Estate 1 du/ac Max.	527		527
R-L-2	Very Low Density 2 du/ac Max.	2,085		2,085
R-L-3	Low Density 3 du/ac Max.	922		922
R-M	Medium Density 4 du/ac Max.	1,186	1,037	2,223
R-H	High Density 9 du/ac Max.	249	39	288
MHP	Mobile Home Park 9 du/ac Max.	96		96
H-R	Hillside Reserve 1 du/640 ac Max.	343		343
COMMERCIAL				
O	Office	112		112
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial	103		103
C-G	General Commercial	234		234
C-C	Community Commercial	342	75	417
Rs-H	Resort Hotel	350	36	386
M-U	Mixed Use (Commercial/Office/Residential)	36		36
INSTITUTIONAL				
P	Public/Quasi-Public	76		76
P/CH	City Hall	8		8
P/FS	Fire Station	4		4
P/H	Hospital	132		132
P/S	School	62		62
P/L	Library	10		10
P/PO	Post Office	3		3
PU-SS	Utility Substation	9		9
OPEN SPACE				
OS-PP	Public Park	54	74	128
MR	Mountain Reserve	5,182		5,182
OS-PV	Private Open Space	2,143	182	2,325
OS-W	Floodways and Drainage Channels	332		332
ROW	Right of Way	1,198	22	1,220
Total		15,796	1,465	17,261

OVERLAYS

	Senior Overlay	8 Ac*
	Special Corner	111 Ac*
* These acreages are included in land use acreages above.		
	Sphere of Influence South of I-10	1,465 Ac
	Sphere Area North of I-10 (Not Shown)	4,084 Ac

Note: Figures subject to rounding.



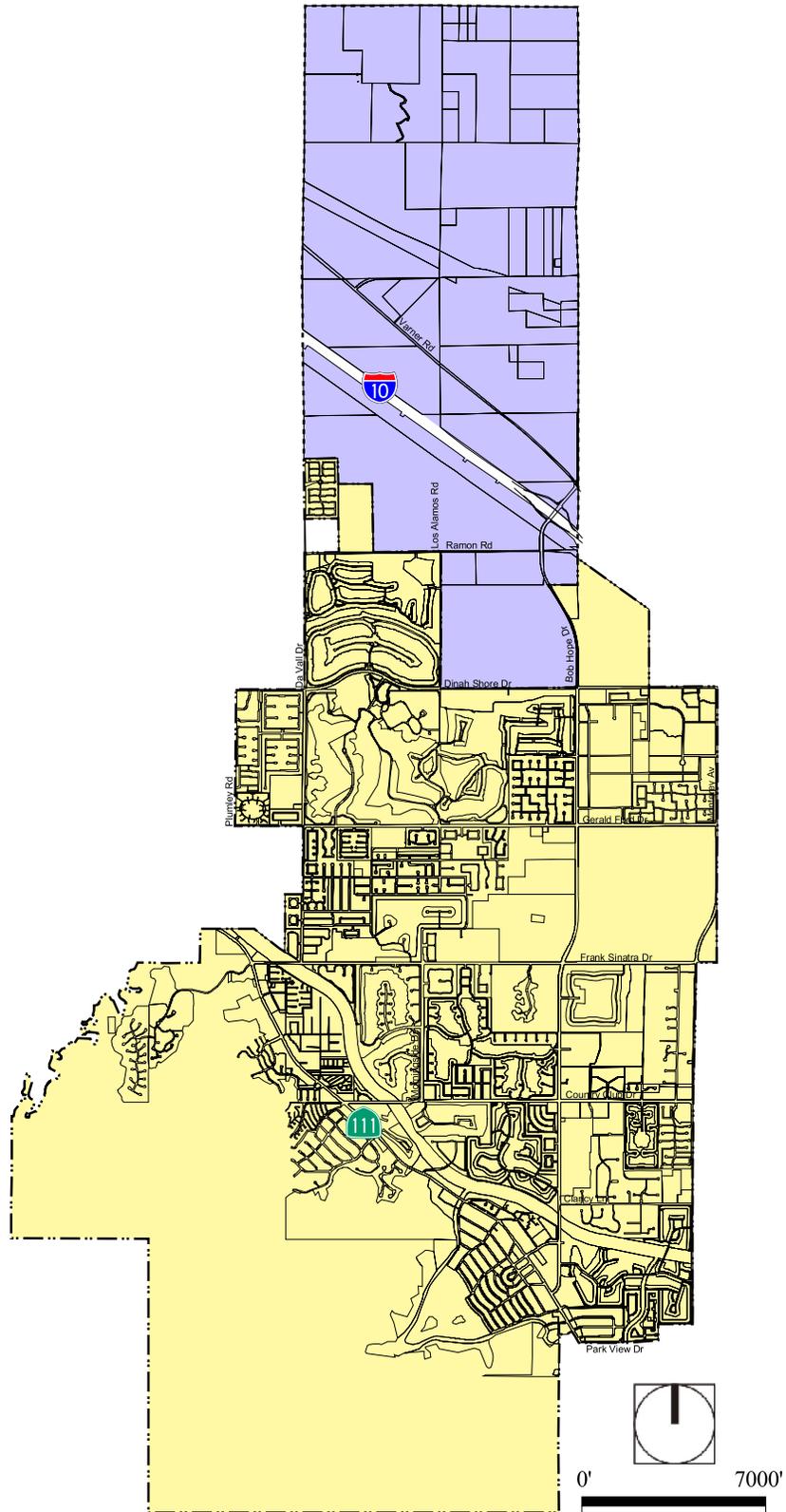
LAND USE ELEMENT

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SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

-  City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence



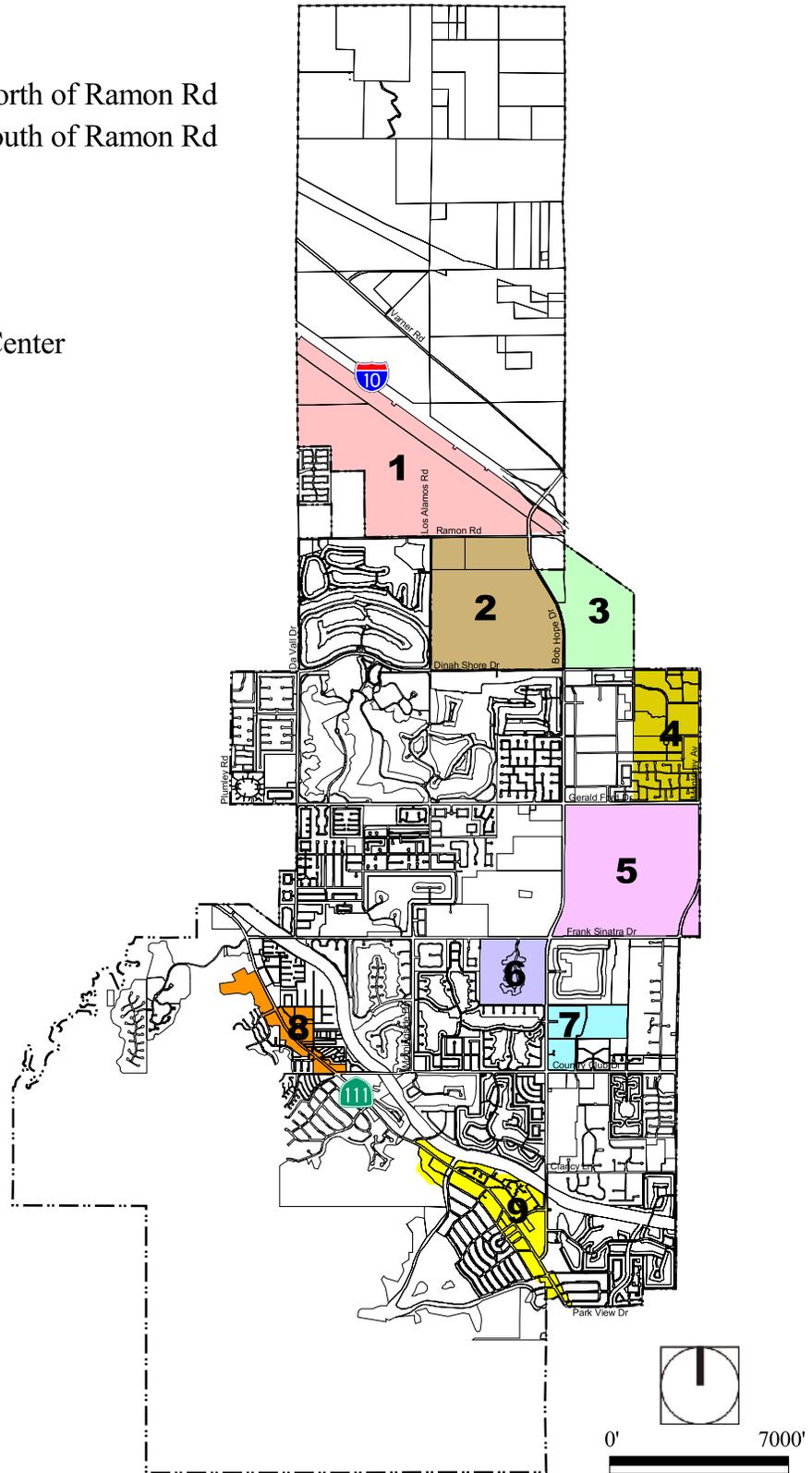
LAND USE ELEMENT

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SPECIFIC PLAN AREAS

- 1 Sphere of Influence North of Ramon Rd
 - 2 Sphere of Influence South of Ramon Rd
 - 3 Section 19
 - 4 Monterey
 - 5 The Eagle
 - 6 Desert Island
 - 7 Eisenhower Medical Center
 - 8 Highway 111 West
 - 9 Highway 111 East
- City Limits
 Sphere of Influence



LAND USE ELEMENT

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AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

Land Use Contract

The City of Rancho Mirage forged a formal Land Use Contract with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Tribe) on June 22, 1998. This Land Use Contract (Contract) identifies the powers and authority of the City and Tribe over allotted trust lands within the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation boundaries. The Contract is in effect for a term of 50 years or may be terminated earlier upon 30 days’ notice by either party. It is important to note that this Contract does not cover lands held exclusively in the Tribal Trust. Within the boundaries of the Tribal Reservation, there are approximately 790 acres of trust lands inside the corporate boundary of the City of Rancho Mirage and approximately 2,077 acres of trust lands within the City’s Sphere of Influence. Additionally, there are hundreds of acres of tribal fee lands that, although within the historical boundary of the Tribe’s Reservation boundaries, may be owned by anyone and are regulated in the exact same manner as lands located outside of the Reservation boundaries. A map of these lands can be seen on Exhibit II-4, Indian Lands.

Land Use Controls

The Contract states that although the Tribe retains ultimate authority over its allotted trust lands, the Tribe prefers to coordinate its land use actions with those of the City and surrounding communities as a means of promoting the orderly and expeditious development of trust lands. The Contract also acknowledges the City’s wish to provide a high level of public services and safety to all residents within its corporate boundaries. To accomplish these goals, the Tribe has enacted its own ordinance that adopts the City’s land use controls (including those which regulate general and specific plans, zoning, variances, conditional use permits, subdivisions, building and utility codes, permits and standards, environmental review and related matters) and applies those controls to the allotted trust lands within the City’s boundaries. The Tribe has appointed the City as its agent to enforce these land use controls. In essence, the Contract seeks to guarantee that the City will enforce the same development standards and procedures for all lands within the City’s boundary, both allotted lands and non-Reservation lands. (An exception is included on the regulation of off-site outdoor advertising displays on allotted trust lands, which are regulated by other Tribal ordinances.)

Tribal Land Use and Ownership

In the late 1800’s, the United States government established the Reservation for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Tribe). The Reservation covered even-numbered sections throughout three townships within the Rancho Mirage area. The Reservation initially covered over 30,000 acres and was owned exclusively by the Tribe. Although all Reservation land began as Tribal Trust Land, some has been allotted to become Allotted Trust Land, and some Allotted Trust Land has been sold to become Fee Land.

Tribal Trust Lands: The United States holds title to these lands in trust for the Tribe as a whole, rather than for any individual. The Tribe retains sovereign authority over the use and regulation of these lands. However, contrary to popular belief, these lands are not considered sovereign nations independent of local political boundaries; they are included as part of cities or counties.

Allotted Trust Lands: These lands are former Tribal Trust Lands, the title of which is now held by the United States for one or more individual members of the Tribe (allottees), rather than for the Tribe as a whole. The Tribe retains sovereign authority over their uses and regulation, but the Lands may be subject to the same development standards and requirements as land owned by non-Indians (per land use agreements between the Tribe and local governments). With the consent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, an allottee can sell or lease such lands. If sold, a parcel of Allotted Trust Land becomes a parcel of Fee Land.

Fee Lands: These lands are former Allotted Trust Lands that have been sold to a buyer, who then holds fee title to the land. Although the Fee Lands remain within the historical boundaries of the Reservation, they can be owned by anyone.

Tribal Ownership and Taxation*

Another common misperception of Indian lands is that they are exempt from local and state taxes. A large portion of Indian-owned lands are subject to sales, property, and transient occupancy taxes (also termed TOT or bed taxes) and contribute to local and state coffers.

Sales tax is charged and collected on all goods manufactured off-site and sold on Indian lands. For example, clothing that is manufactured outside of Indian lands, but is sold on Indian lands is subject to sales tax. Both property taxes and TOT are imposed on lands leased to non-Indians. For example, a non-Indian owned hotel that operates on Indian-owned lands through a lease agreement is subject to both property and bed taxes.

*The Tribe has reviewed this section and expressed no objections to its content.



The Contract states that the Tribe does not recognize the Sphere of Influence. However, as to those lands within the Sphere of Influence, the Contract provides that the Tribe and the City will undertake a joint planning effort to assure the coordinated development of allotted trust lands and non-Reservation lands within the Sphere. Prior to the completion of the Sphere area plan, the Tribe agreed to give the City the opportunity to review and comment on development proposals of unincorporated allotted trust lands submitted to the Tribe; the City agreed to do the same for the Tribe. Once the Sphere area plan is completed, the Tribe and City shall approve any proposed development within their respective jurisdictions which is consistent with the Sphere area plan.

Fees and Dedications

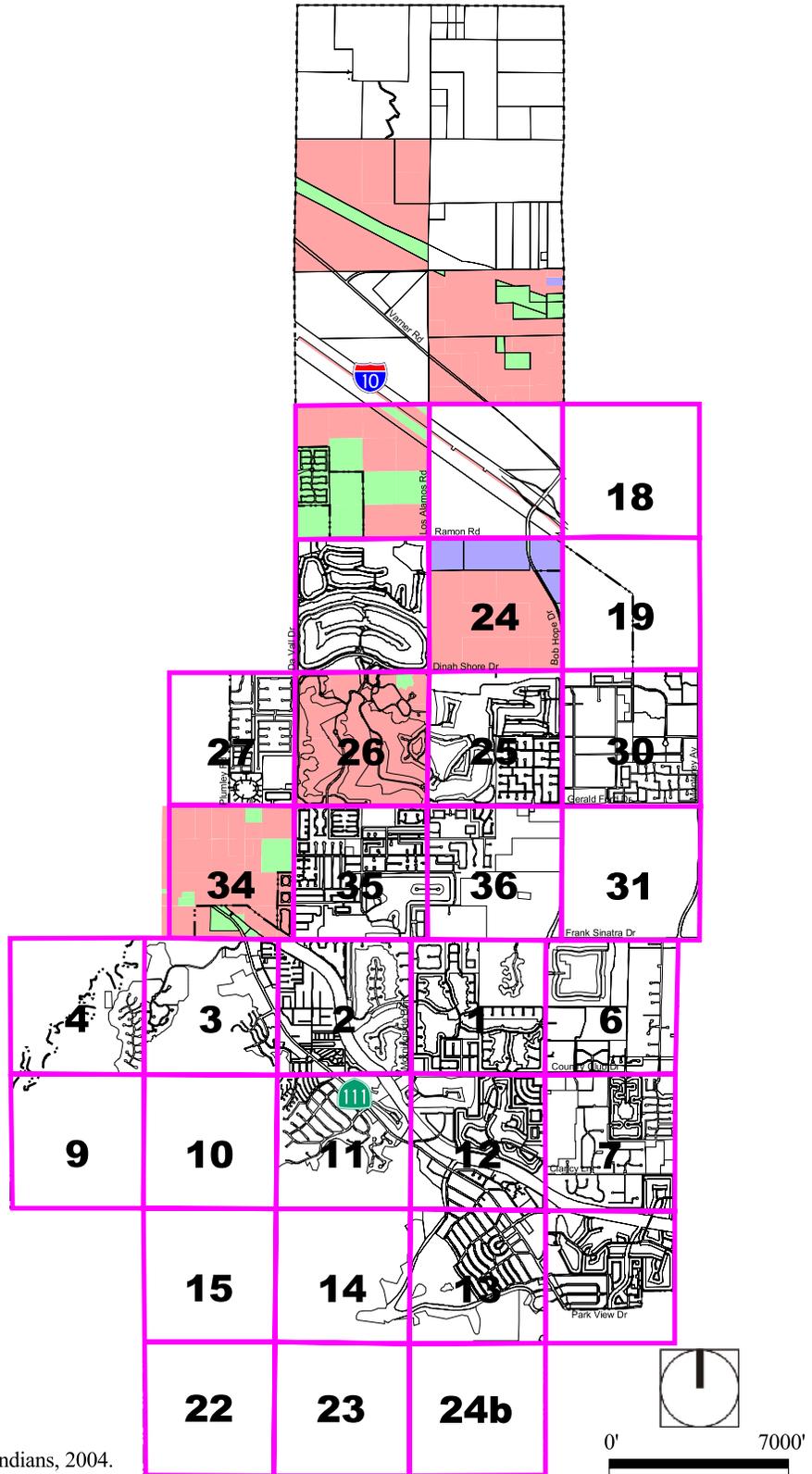
The Contract authorizes the City to collect and retain all fees that provide direct compensation to the City for its actual costs in carrying out its duties as the Tribe’s agent. The Contract also allows the City to enforce and collect development fees, defined as a monetary exaction, other than a tax or special assessment, charged by the City to an applicant in connection with approval of a development project for the purpose of defraying the costs of public services and community amenities related to the development project. In addition, the Contract allows the City to require land dedications that directly benefit a project or directly mitigates project impacts.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

In many instances, development on the lands within the Reservation will be required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Specifically, any future development that requires discretionary City approval will be subject to CEQA. For example, development on the allotted trust lands, which are subject to the City land use controls pursuant to the Contract and requires the City to issue a development permit (or any entitlements), must comply with CEQA. In the absence of the need for local action (such as development on those lands held in trust for the Tribe and not subject to the City’s land use controls), it is likely that CEQA will not be triggered.

INDIAN LANDS

- Tribal Lands
- Allottee Lands
- Fee Lands
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence



Source: Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, 2004.

LAND USE ELEMENT

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GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Citywide Land Uses

The overall balance of land uses within the City of Rancho Mirage must implement the City's desire to be an international destination resort center that offers residents and visitors amenities of a modern community while preserving the unique desert environment. To ensure high quality development that logically integrates into the existing public infrastructure systems, the City's preferred development pattern has been and will continue to be that of low density residential and high quality commercial land uses, implemented through specific plans, Planned Residential Developments, and site plan review. The City also encourages infill development in those areas that have undergone substantial development prior to encouraging development in outlying areas. Infilling along the Highway 111 corridor continues to be a priority. Rancho Mirage is rapidly building out and there remains limited opportunity for development. Therefore, the City should take action to ensure that remaining development is of the highest quality.

GOAL 1

A resort residential community of desirable neighborhoods and a variety of community facilities and high quality development.

GOAL 2

A balanced mix of functionally integrated land uses, meeting general social and economic needs of the community through simplified, compatible and consistent land use and zoning designations.

Policy 1

Specific plans shall be required to ensure new development achieves high quality building, design, and development standards and provides amenities above those expected in conventional development.

Policy 2

Specific plans shall be utilized to assure the phased, logical and cost-effective extension of infrastructure and buildout of new development.

Policy 3

Infill development shall be encouraged by prioritizing capital improvements in the developed areas of the City.

Policy 4

The City shall ensure adequate visibility and accessibility for commercial development while preserving the scenic viewsheds from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way.

Policy 5

The City shall ensure privacy and safety for residential neighborhoods by providing adequate buffering and screening, particularly those adjoining or integrated with commercial developments.



Policy 6

The Community Development and Economic Development Departments shall actively pursue opportunities to attract high quality retail commercial establishments and resort hotels in the City.

Program 6.A

Promote the development potential of vacant lands within the City by providing far-reaching marketing materials and promotional programs to the development community.

Program 6.B

Provide the development community with maps and other information showing the location of all available and planned infrastructure.

Policy 7

The City shall maintain a cooperative planning process with appropriate jurisdictions, including the County of Riverside and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, assuring an effective advisory role regarding any and all development and land use planning issues proposed within or in close proximity to the City and its Sphere of Influence.

Residential Land Uses

Background

The City of Rancho Mirage has evolved primarily as a resort residential community. In recent years, the community has experienced growth due to regional economic conditions. In 2004, the City of Rancho Mirage had approximately 12,195 dwelling units, of which approximately 9,533 were detached and attached single family units and about 1,811 were multi-family units. The City also had 851 mobile homes.

The prevalence of single-family residential development has helped establish the low density character of the City. This pattern has provided residents with open space and recreation opportunities on their own individual lots or within planned communities. Planned residential developments, the prevailing residential development type in the City, also preserve these low densities by transferring development rights to specific areas and dedicating large areas to community open space and recreation uses, particularly golf courses. Both types of development have been important to assuring the high quality residential environment of the City.

Affordable Housing

The City is, as are all other municipalities in the State of California, required by law to assure the provision and availability of decent housing and a suitable living environment for all economic segments of the community, with special attention to very low, low, and moderate income groups. For additional information addressing these and other related issues of the community associated with housing stock, please refer to the Housing Element.

GOAL 1

The preservation and enhancement of the predominantly low density, high quality residential character of the City.

Policy 1

Areas of existing residential development and surrounding vacant lands shall be planned in a manner that preserves neighborhood character and assures a consistent and compatible residential land use pattern.

Program 1.A

Assign and periodically review residential land use designations to assure that related General Plan goals, including preservation of low density neighborhoods, are met.

Program 1.B

Consistently apply the City's discretionary powers and development review process to assure that subdivision and development plans are compatible with existing residential areas.

Policy 2

Density transfers (the transfer of allowable dwelling units from one area of land to another) may occur in planned residential developments in conjunction with the provision of common area amenities and open space. Golf courses, greenbelts, pool areas and other open space uses incorporated into these developments shall be designated as Open Space areas to assure their preservation as such.

Policy 3

The City shall consider the issues of slope disturbance, development area and lot coverage, view preservation, revegetation, compatibility, public safety, and access when assessing potential residential developments.

Policy 4

Lower income housing shall be dispersed where feasible, appropriate, and compatible with surrounding land uses.

Commercial Land Uses**Background**

Rancho Mirage has seen the evolution of its commercial land from small-scale retail and service providers located along Highway 111 to community-scale centers serving a broad market area and typified by The River and the Monterey MarketPlace. As the community has continued to grow, neighborhood shopping centers have developed to serve the City's residents.

The overwhelming success of The River, a valley wide destination for upscale shopping, entertainment, and dining enhances the opportunity for additional high quality development along Highway 111. Most commercial development along the Highway 111 corridor has been regulated by the Highway 111 East and West Specific Plans. Adopted in the early 1990s, these plans set forth the types and intensities of land uses that are permitted and include design standards and guidelines to regulate development. The entire corridor is also





located within project areas of the City Redevelopment Agency and benefit from various programs that assist in the development and redevelopment of these areas.

Additionally, the performance of the Monterey MarketPlace has allowed the City to tap the market access provided by U.S. Interstate-10. With commercial development thriving at the Monterey Avenue/I-10 interchange and the future realignment of the Bob Hope Drive/I-10 interchange, this part of the City will be an important contributor to the broadened economic base.

Another of the City's important commercial strengths is the destination resort hotel market. In 2005, the City hosts three major resort hotels: the Westin Mission Hills, the Marriott Rancho Las Palmas and The Lodge at Rancho Mirage. The City also contains three business hotels: the Country Inn and Suites, the Hilton Garden Inn, and the Motel 6 Rancho Mirage. Transient occupancy tax (also termed "bed tax") is generated by the City's hotels and is an important component of the City's general fund operating revenues.

Office development will continue to be an area of importance for the City, which has gained a reputation as a preferred business address attracting medical, legal and other professionals. The City office market also benefits from the location of Eisenhower Medical Center, which supports a wide range of medical professionals with offices elsewhere in the community.

Because buildout within the City is approaching, the General Plan identifies new areas that hold commercial promise. The General Plan recognizes existing commercial land uses, as well as vacant lands appropriate for commercial development. The Plan provides six commercial land use designations allowing the development of general, neighborhood, and community commercial, as well as professional office, and resort hotels. The Plan also establishes a Specific Plan overlay, which can be used to provide control and coordination of commercial development, providing detailed design and analysis of complex projects, indicating the location and intensity of proposed uses.

The City's geographic location in the center of the Coachella Valley provides commercial opportunities in the highly competitive Coachella Valley market. The thoughtful location, distribution and assigned intensity of commercial development is expected to provide residents with a wider range of choices and services, while greatly enhancing the City's economic base.

Commercial Growth Potential

The General Plan provides substantial additional lands for future commercial development. These include lands within existing commercial developments and lands where development has yet to occur. Each of the commercial land use designations and their development potential in approximate gross leasable square feet are set forth in Table II-3.

Of the 1,177 acres of commercially designated lands in the City shown on the Land Use Plan, approximately 780 or 66% were vacant in 2004. The Community Commercial category comprises the largest block of undeveloped commercial lands (308 acres), with Resort Hotel (241 acres) and General Commercial (124 acres) comprising the next largest blocks of vacant land. Development potential also remains on lands designated for office uses, with 59% undeveloped.

**Table II-3
Commercial Land Use Development Potential**

Commercial Designation		Total Acres	Estimated Square Footage¹
O	Office	112	1,227,000 ²
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial	103	1,119,000
C-G	General Commercial	234	2,533,000
C-C	Community Commercial	342	3,725,000
C-R	Resort Commercial	350	2,120 ³
MU	Mixed Use Commercial	36	124,000
TOTAL		1,177	8,773,000 sq. ft.

¹ All square footages assume 25% lot coverage.

² Assumes pure office development, not including office uses in other commercial zones.

³ Figure refers to the number of rooms. For projection purposes, this figure assumes 400 rooms could be built within Section 31, however, this figure does not predetermine or limit the ultimate number of rooms that could be developed.

GOAL 1

High quality commercial land uses conveniently and appropriately distributed throughout the City, meeting the community’s current and future needs and taking full advantage of emerging development and economic opportunities.

Policy 1

The City shall designate sufficient lands to provide revenue to the City and a full range of commercial services to the community and surrounding areas for present and future years.

Program 1.A

Maintain the Land Use Plan on an ongoing basis to assure sufficient lands are designated for commercial uses to support the needs of the community and surrounding areas in a manner consistent with economic opportunities and the resort residential character of the community.

Policy 2

The City shall pursue high quality retail uses along Highway 111, within Section 19, and in other areas of the City.

Program 2.A

Make market information (which identifies the City’s service needs, potential sites suitable for those commercial goods and services, and advantages of incentives for locating in Rancho Mirage), available to developers and realtors.

Policy 3

Lot consolidation and integrated development planning along the Highway 111 corridor shall be encouraged to reduce fragmentation and facilitate infill development.



Institutional Uses

The provision of adequate levels of public facilities and services is one of the principal concerns or functions of local government. Governmental facilities such as City Hall and fire stations are designated under the Institutional land use designation on the Land Use Plan. The Institutional designation also allows for schools, hospitals and other medical facilities, utility facilities, public parks, museums, libraries, and other cultural facilities. A potential library and museum, along with associated meeting space for occasional conferences, may be developed on the parcel north of the Annenberg Estate. Such a development could house the collection of documents and memorabilia collected over the years by Ambassador and Mrs. Annenberg.

The extent and intensity of various land uses determines the level of public services and facilities needed to support them. Residential, commercial, and office development each generate specific demands for public services and facilities. The planned, logical extension of urban areas cannot occur without careful planning for the provision of additional institutional uses and facilities. The City has the essential responsibility to cooperate and coordinate with the appropriate agencies to assure that lands are available for such uses.

GOAL 1

Institutional uses that are efficiently located to serve the community and are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Policy 1

Institutional uses and facilities shall be developed in a manner that assures adequate levels of service, while remaining compatible with existing and future land uses.

Open Space Uses

Open space provides relief from urban congestion and creates opportunities for recreational activities, settings for public activities, places to gather in more natural environments, and protection of natural resources. One way to ensure the development or preservation of open space is through its designation on the Land Use Plan. Open space areas within the City include lands designated for the preservation of natural resources (plant and animal communities), desert washes, mineral deposits, parks and recreational facilities, and areas where the presence or existence of hazardous conditions have prohibited development.

As discussed with regard to residential land uses, Planned Residential Developments are the predominant residential land use in the City. Many benefit from the transfer of development rights or permitted densities onto smaller areas, with the remainder dedicated to open space and recreation facilities, including pools, tennis courts, golf courses and passive landscaped open space areas. These areas are required to remain as open space for the life of the development and are not available for further residential or other non open space uses.

There are four types of open space categories illustrated on the Land Use Plan. These include open space for public parks (OS PP), private golf courses and common open space areas (OS/PV), publicly owned mountainous reserves (OS/MR) and floodways/washes/channels (OS/FW). Each of these is discussed in more detail under the Open Space and Conservation Element. Below are policies and programs that will assist the City in implementing the Land Use Element as well as the Conservation and Open Space Element.

GOAL 1

The conservation of open space areas that protect environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide recreational opportunities, and enhance the aesthetic character of the City.

GOAL 2

A land use pattern that preserves the City's resort residential atmosphere, including scenic resources such as hillside and mountain vistas, waterways, and native desert communities.

Policy 1

The City shall protect and identify lands suitable and appropriate for preservation as open space areas.

Program 1.A

Review and update the Land Use Plan and information on the various types of open space and conservation lands in the community on an ongoing basis.

Program 1.B

Evaluate all development proposals and identify their impact upon and compatibility with designated open space and conservation lands.

Program 1.C

Encourage the development of a public park adjacent to the future Bob Hope Drive/I-10 interchange and near the northwest corner of the City's southern Sphere of Influence. The park will serve as an entry feature to the City.

Policy 2

The City shall confer and coordinate with U.S. Bureau of Land Management, California Fish and Game, and other local agencies to map and periodically update information on the various open space lands and facilities within the City, its Sphere of Influence, and the immediate vicinity.

Policy 3

The City shall maintain a Development Code that encourages the provision and preservation of open space areas through flexible development standards.

Program 3.A

Adopt and implement flexible development policies, standards, and guidelines that encourage quality open space amenities within new residential subdivisions and planned developments. These policies, standards and guidelines shall be incorporated into the City Development Code and other appropriate regulatory documents.

Program 3.B

Adopt amendments to the City's comprehensive grading ordinance that protect hillsides and other open space and natural resource conservation areas and reflect sensitivity to topographic and scenic qualities, wildlife resources, water or mineral resources, and air quality.

LAND USE ELEMENT

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