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**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter of the General Plan addresses the public services and facilities needed to support development in the City of Rancho Mirage. General Plan elements found in this chapter that discuss these services and facilities include Water, Sewer and Utilities, Fire and Police Protection, Schools and Libraries, Health Services, Emergency Preparedness, Public Building and Facilities, and Arts and Culture. The levels of service needed for residential, commercial, and industrial development is directly related to the intensity of development in the community. The economic life of the City is tied to the level of services, the types and intensities of land use, and the levels of demand for services and the revenue generating potential of urbanizing areas.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **WATER, SEWER AND UTILITIES ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

The provision of domestic water, sewage treatment and utility services is essential for orderly growth and development of the community. Infrastructure types and utility services discussed here include potable and irrigation water, sanitary sewage, natural gas, electricity and telephone. The purpose of the element is to establish City policy which provides for a coordinated system of these services to adequately serve the City at full build out, identifies standards for infrastructure relative to population or land use intensity and identifies courses of action and programs which provides the means to implement the Goals and Policies.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Water, Sewer and Utilities Element is directly related to the Land Use Element in that new development must be planned in conjunction with the extension and availability of essential infrastructure. Other related elements include Water and energy Resources, and Flooding and Hydrology. California Government Code Section 65302(d) provides for the General Plan to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources is waste water (sewer) treatment and natural gas and electricity availability. This Element satisfies, in part, the requirement for a Conservation Element, while also addressing other utilities as allowed by Section 65303.

### **Domestic Water**

Domestic water services are provided by the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) utilizing wells to extract groundwater. CVWD's domestic water system serving the City includes 14 wells, 7 above ground storage reservoirs (water tanks) and an extensive system of distribution lines ranging in size from 4 to 24 inches in diameter (see Exhibit VI-1). The seven reservoir tanks are located in the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains in Rancho Mirage. In 1995 there were 9 active wells in the City. Water well depths average 800 feet.

The Whitewater River sub-basin serves as the groundwater repository for the rancho Mirage area, and encompasses almost 400 square miles. City domestic water is drawn from the Upper Thermal sub-area of the Whitewater River sub-basin. Average water consumption per residence is 1 acre foot per year (325,829 gallons). Regulation of drinking water quality is provided by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, amended in 1986.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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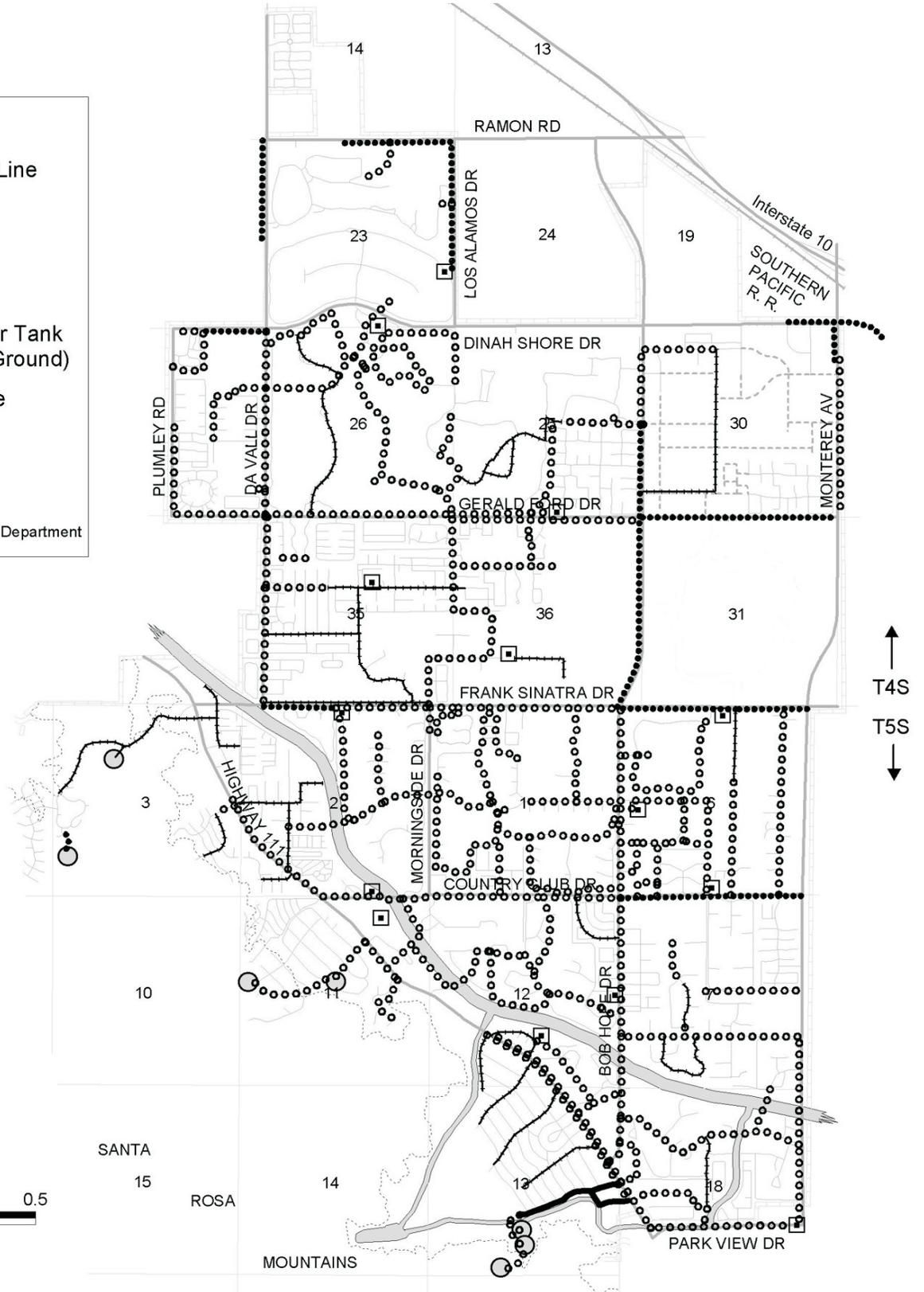
**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
UTILITIES ELEMENT**

**WATER SERVICE**

**Legend**

-  6" or 8" Line
-  12" Line
-  18" Line
-  24" Line
-  Reservoir Tank (Above Ground)
-  Well Site

Source: CVWD,  
City Public Works Department



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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Groundwater extraction in the Coachella Valley has steadily increased, leading to an overdraft situation:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Acre-Feet Extracted</b>
1991-92	73,658
92-93	76,727
93-94	81,019
94-95	81,866

Groundwater sources are being recharged via imported water carried by the Metropolitan Water District Colorado River Aqueduct, which passes through the north end of the Coachella Valley. Major natural sources of groundwater recharge include infiltration of runoff from the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Bernardino Mountains. In 1994-95, 23,920 more acre feet of water were pumped out of the ground than was replenished, resulting in a 0.22% overdraft condition.

Approximately 70% of the recharge water is imported from the Colorado River, while 30% is from natural runoff. The Colorado River water is spread in surface settling ponds northwest of Palm Springs where the water is allowed to percolate into the sandy soil. The Whitewater River subbasin water table contains approximately 11 million acre feet of water. (Also see the Water Resources Element.)

Continued increases in demand generated by residential, commercial, and gold course development will have significant long-term cumulative impacts on the groundwater supply. While the provision of recharge water has reduced the rate of overdraft, development in the Coachella Valley is expected to continue to reduce the amount of potable groundwater in storage.

The City has adopted an ordinance to require water conserving landscape design including the use of native desert plants, drought resistant landscaping, and efficient irrigation technology in private and public landscaping applications.

The District is involved in a variety of efforts to conserve finite ground water resources. In addition to the provision of domestic water, CVWD provides landscape plan checking services and publications on the design and installation of drought tolerant landscaping. The District estimates the 60% to 80% of domestic water is used for outdoor irrigation, and that total average per capita consumption is approximately 552 gallons per day. In addition to efforts to target the domestic user, the District has also developed tertiary waste water treatment capability and is providing treated waste water to various golf courses and to public landscaped areas in the vicinity of the Cook Street treatment plant in Palm Desert (see below).

### **Waste Water Treatment**

The Coachella Valley Water District also provides waste treatment collection and treatment services for the City, with effluent being conveyed to the District's Cook Street plant in Palm Desert. The District has recently completed the expansion of the facility, doubling the capacity from 10 to 20 million gallons per day, and has upgraded sewer lines serving the City. The District has also expanded its waste water distribution system, adding additional gold course customers, and is modifying operations to allow 24-hour delivery of tertiary treated water.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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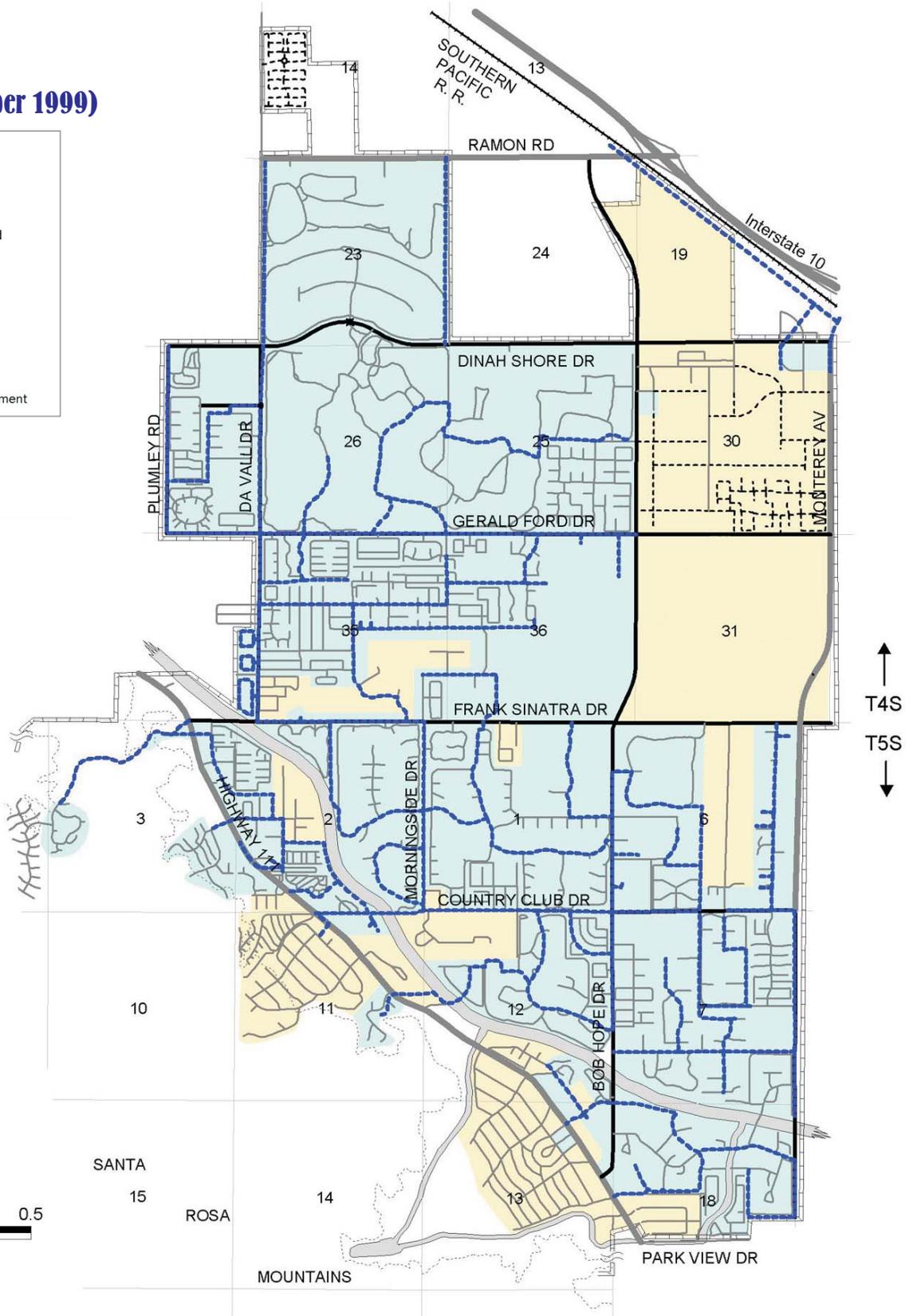
**SEWER SERVICE  
(Updated November 1999)**

**Legend**

-  Main Sewerlines
-  Neighborhoods Served with Sewers
-  No Sewer

Note: Smaller sewer lines are not shown.

Source: Public Works Department



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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While much of the City now utilized the District's sewer, substantial portions of the community still rely on septic tanks for waste water disposal. These areas include Magnesia Falls Cove, Thunderbird Cove, portions of the Peterson Road neighborhood, Thunderbird Country Club, and recently annexed lands in the northeast quadrant of the City. Residences in the Tamarisk neighborhood have recently received sewer service. See exhibit VI-2 for sewer service areas in the City.

## **Electric Service**

Electric power services are provided by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE), and to the limited extent, the Imperial Irrigation District. SCE has transmission substations in several locations in the City. Electric power is primarily generated outside the Coachella Valley, however, SCE purchases wind generated power from local producers. SCE facilities include 12 kv transmission lines for local distribution. Higher voltage lines for more distant transmission range up to 115 kv and 230 kv lines. Substations step down voltage for local distribution and use. Three substations serve Rancho Mirage: one on Ramon Road at Bob Hope Drive, one on Clancy Lane at Monterey Avenue, and one on Plumley Road south of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

A portion of the electrical service in the City is served by the Imperial Irrigation District, a water and power utility district. IID serves most of the lower Valley from Palm Desert to and including Imperial County. IID electrical rates are lower than rates charged by SCE. One explanation is that IID is a not-for-profit utility district. Businesses and industrial uses within the boundaries of IID have a district economic advantage in that a smaller proportion of their budgets are spent on electrical service.

SCE also offers various rebates for installation of energy efficient equipment, including refunds for the replacement of "through the wall" heat pumps; installation or replacement of a central electric heat pump; installation or replacement of a central air conditioning unit; replacement of a central electric heat pump, and others. Another program called Automatic Power Shift allows substantial savings from June through September, in exchange for allowing SCE to remotely "cycle-off" selected air conditioning units during periods of heavy use and potential power outages.

Electrical rates in the Coachella Valley continue to be among the highest in the nation. Regional electric utilities monopolies have traditionally been sole purveyors in distinct geographical areas and as such, have the ability to set prices without concern for competition. However, the sale of electrical power is dramatically being changed by Congress. Recent rulings by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission require all utilities, including investor-owned companies like SCE, to open their transmission lines to competitors and to share information about available transmission capacity. Customers may no longer be bound to take power from the local utility company. The City hopes to take a leading role in reducing electricity rates for its citizens.

## **Natural Gas**

Natural gas service is provided in the City by Southern California Gas, which has regional and local distribution lines in the City and its Sphere-of-Influence. It is used for space heating, domestic and commercial hot water, cooking and air conditioning applications. On average, the typical energy consuming household in our region uses approximately 6,600 cubic feet of natural gas each month.





Services are available to all prospective users and nearby major transmission facilities assure availability for most anticipated needs, be they residential, commercial or industrial. Cost of services varies seasonally and with amount of use.

### **Telephone Service**

Local business and residential phone services are provided to the area by General Telephone and Electronics (GTE), which has lines and switching facilities in the City. GTE provides a variety of basic and special services and features, including three types of residential service. Flat rate service allows unlimited local calls at one price. Measured service lowers the monthly rate but incremental charges for local calls. GTE's Lifeline Service is also available within certain age and income restrictions.

Local calls are considered to be any location from zero to twelve miles, and the cost of a local call has a set rate for the first minute and an additional rate for each minute thereafter. A variety of available service options include calling cards, Personal Secretary services and business 800 numbers.

### **Cable Television**

Cable television service is provided to the City by Continental Cablevision as secured by a franchise agreement. Continental provides approximately 60 channels with current capacity of 78. In 1997 the provider will have completed upgrades to its systems, having installed a fiber optic backbone cable system and equipment to transmit at up to 550 megahertz, allowing a broader band width and ultimately more capacity and service. On the heels of this upgrade, additional fiber optic capacity up to 750 megahertz is slated for such technologies as video digital compression, and data transmission services and will allow the cable TV company to offer additional services such as telephone communications.

The current franchise agreement provides the City with up to three public access channels for information, education and public service uses. Continental has also agreed to provide the City with a grant of up to \$90,000 to purchase equipment and establish facilities for broadcasting City Council meetings and other activities at City Hall. The provider has broadcast some Council meetings on an interim basis to date. An ad-hoc committee has been formed to make recommendations to the City Council on continued broadcasting of meetings in the future.

### **Solid Waste Disposal Services**

The City contracts with Waste Management of the Desert for provision of solid waste management and disposal services. A variety of residential and commercial services are available from the service provider, including basic twice-weekly residential pick up. Waste management also offers other services to large waste generators, including restaurants, retailers, and hotels and resorts. Most trash destined for disposal at land-fills is taken to the Edom Hill Landfill, which is managed by Riverside County. Because jurisdictions are required by federal standards to reduce its landfill-bound waste stream by 50% by the year 2000, one or more materials recovery facilities will be necessary in the valley. A materials recovery facility (MRF), frequently developed as part of a transfer facility, is a reception point for all solid waste. The waste is sorted and recyclable items are removed for reuse, and the remainder is then taken to a landfill. The City is expected to achieve the solid waste reduction goal within the specified time.

Waste Management also provides a resource recovery/recycling service to the community. This includes provision of crates or other containers for the separation of cans, glass and newsprint by residents for once a week curbside pickup. Recycling has many benefits, including preservation of landfill space for non-recyclable materials, and the preservation of energy and finite feedstock materials. This program is run in conformance with State of California Assembly Bill 939, which requires that every city and county implement programs to recycle, reduce at the source and compost 25% of its solid waste by the year 1995 goal and is well on its way to meeting the next one. The recycling program at the City Hall offices is a successful model for other businesses in the community.

## **FUTURE DIRECTION**

Water, sewer and public utilities are essential parts of community development of all types. The orderly and contiguous extension of services and facilities is integral to the logical and cost-effective extension of the urban land use pattern. The economic provision of water, energy and other public services is coordinated by the City and must be planned to adequately accommodate future growth anticipated in the General Plan. The General Plan provides service with important information of future service demands to allow the providers to determine how they can best be met.

In 1996 Congress passes a sweeping new Telecommunications Act rewriting sixty years of telecommunication laws. It significantly deregulated the telecommunications industry. As a result, the historical distinctions among telephone, cable and computer are beginning to disappear. Traditionally, Continental Cable Vision used a copper wire-coaxial cable to deliver television signals, while GTE and computer communication utilized twisted copper wires. More recently, fiber optic cabling is being used. It is cheaper, smaller, and has a greater capacity to carry large amounts of high-quality of video, data and sound. The City has a responsibility to monitor this new technology, regulate the rush anticipated of multiple providers, and plan for its installation and the needs of the City's residents into the next century.

## **GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Water, sewer and utility facilities which safely and adequately meet the needs of the City at build out.

### **GOAL 2**

Conservation of the quality and quantity of the water basin.

### **GOAL 3**

A city-wide sewer system.

### **GOAL 4**

Lower electrical rates.

### **GOAL 5**

All utility lines placed underground.





**Policy 1**

Monitor the CVWD and Regional Water Quality Control Board to reserve and protect water resources.

**Policy 2**

Encourage the expanded use of tertiary treated water by supporting the efforts of CVWD to expand the capacity and distribution of such treatment facilities.

**Policy 3**

The City shall support the formation of neighborhood-wide Assessment Districts for the purpose of sewer installation.

***Program 3.A***

The City shall prepare the preliminary engineering estimates for assessment districts for sewer installation

**Policy 4**

All subdivisions shall be connected to sewer lines.

**Policy 5**

Should a sewer line exist in the right-of-way to serve a lot and a lateral line is served by a septic system, at the point of sale the septic system shall be properly abandoned and the unit shall be connected to the sewer system.

**Policy 6**

Where a sewer line exists in the right-of-way to serve a residential unit but the unit is served by a septic system, at the point of sale the septic system shall be properly abandoned and the unit shall be connected to the sewer system.

***Program 6.A***

The City shall develop a list of residences and businesses not connected to the sewer system.

***Program 6.B***

The City shall develop a financial assistance program for a sewer installation in existing neighborhoods.

**Policy 7**

If soil conditions do not permit proper percolation, septic systems will be prohibited.

**Policy 8**

The City should take a leading role in forming a cooperative program with adjacent cities to acquire ownership of the electrical distribution system.

***Program 8.A***

The City shall investigate the feasibility of establishing a municipal electricity district, which may include acquiring ownership of electrical transmission or distribution lines and purchasing power directly from producers.

**Policy 9**

Utility lines on major streets shall have primary consideration for under-grounding.

**Policy 10**

Major utility facilities shall be sited to assure minimal impacts to the environment and the community, and minimize potential environmental hazards.

**Policy 11**

The City shall encourage the coordinated and shared use of underground transmission corridors as a means of minimizing repeated exactions into the streets.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

The Police and Fire Element addresses two of the essential functions of government, which are to assure the provision of police and fire protection services. The Element reflects the City's commitment, which places high priority on the best protection services possible. The City also recognizes the benefits of the high number of gated/walled communities, the larger of which typically have private security which enhances overall security for these households. Fire services are also state-of-the-art, with two stations in Rancho Mirage and cooperative, joint powers agreements with other communities for fire services. Consolidated contractual arrangements are also in place for police services, to enhance service in the most cost effective manner possible.

### **BACKGROUND**

Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that a General Plan include a Safety Element, or its equivalent, for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risk associated with the effects of fire, crime, or other threats. Public Resources Code Section 4125(a) also references the State Board of Forestry, which classifies lands for the purpose of establishing hazards and responsibility. Unclassified lands will fall under the jurisdiction of the City or appropriate federal agency, such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service.

### **Fire Protection Services**

The threat of fire poses hazards to life and property. Given the City's generally sparsely vegetated open desert lands and hillsides, developed areas are the source of most service calls. Fire protection is provided to the City by the Riverside County Fire Department under contract to the California Department of Forestry. A typical response to a fire will place eight personnel, including a battalion chief, on the scene within five minutes. This includes fire fighters and certified paramedics.

The service contract for fire protection is entered into jointly by the Public Safety Commission, which includes the Cities of Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, and Indian Wells, functioning through a Joint Powers Agreement. Funds for these services come from a city wide "fire tax" levied on raw acreage, residential dwelling units, and commercial developments. The Riverside County Fire Department maintains thirteen fire stations in the upper Coachella Valley. The following fire stations are well situated to provide fire protection services to the City and its Sphere of Influence, and include two stations located within the city limits.

*Rancho Mirage Station, No. 50* is located on Highway 111 between Thunderbird Cove and Thunderbird Heights. This station is equipped with one 1,250 gallons per minutes (gpm) Telesquirt fire truck staffed by paid personnel and one paramedic unit staffed by two paid paramedic fire fighters.

*Rancho Mirage Station, No. 69* is located on Gerald Ford Drive, less than one-quarter mile west of Bob Hope Drive. This station is staffed with two paid personnel with one engine.



*Palm Desert Station, No. 33* is located on Town Center Way, just south of Fred Waring Drive in Palm Desert, less than one-half mile from the Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with one 1,250 gpm Telesquirt fire truck, one 102-foot ladder truck company, one paramedic unit with two paramedics fire fighters, and one mobile air chamber (breathing support) unit manned by volunteers.

*Palm Desert Station, No. 71* is located at the intersection of Portola and Country Club Drives. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with one Telesquirt ladder truck including pumping unit, and a medic unit with two medics.

*Cathedral City Station, No 411* is located on Date Palm Drive in Cathedral City, approximately one mile from the western Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with a new type of fire engine, which includes medical transport capabilities, a 1,250 gpm pumper truck (for reserve), and a part time squad of paid reserves. Response time to Rancho Mirage could be slightly higher than the desired five minutes from this station.

*Cathedral City Station, No. 412* is located south of Ramon Road and west of Date Palm Drive approximately one mile from the Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with a 100-foot ladder truck company, a medic unit with paramedic fire fighters, and a part time squad of paid reserves. Because the Riverside County Fire Department has an extensive network of fire stations, the Cathedral City stations are called infrequently as Rancho Mirage back-up.

*Thousand Palms Station, No. 35* is located at 72 695 La Canada Way just east of Varner Road in Thousand Palms. This station is equipped with one 1,250 gpm pumper truck staffed by paid personnel and one squad of volunteers.

National Fire Insurance Organizations and the National Fire Protection Association formally recommend, respectively, a maximum three-mile and five-minute response parameter for siting fire stations. While existing levels of service appear adequate to protect existing improvements in the City, continued growth may stimulate the need for additional fire stations. Further consultation and coordination with local fire officials will be required to determine the optimum location for additional future facilities.

### **Police Protection Services**

Police protection in the City is provided on a service contract basis by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, which operates out of the Palm Desert Station. Office facilities for Sheriff's personnel are also provided in City Hall. In 1996, sixteen police personnel served the City, providing three patrol cars on duty at all times, an additional patrol car for traffic enforcement twelve hours per day, and a two-person plainclothes "target team" to focus on specific crimes. In 1996, the City provided a ratio of one officer per 688 population, well above the commonly accepted ratio of one officer per 1,000 population.

Police response times can vary significantly, depending on the location of patrol cars at the time of a call. The average emergency response time in Rancho Mirage is four minutes or less to any location. Methods to reduce or prevent crime include adequate street and security lighting, and development of "defensible space." Defensible space permits surveillance and provides the highest possible level of security, use of appropriate security hardware, and building siting and visibility. The City also promotes the Neighborhood Watch Program. This program exists in both public neighborhoods and private

communities. The Sheriff's Department has indicated that the relatively high number of walled and gated communities in the City does not necessarily result in a measurable reduction in crime.

To understand the issue of crime it is imperative to consider geographic, demographic, economic and other factors specific to a jurisdiction. The transience of the population, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family conditions with respect to the family unit is correlated to crime statistics. Considering a jurisdiction's industrial/economic base, economic conditions relating to median income, poverty level, job availability, dependence on neighboring jurisdictions, and transportation systems are all key factors in assessing and understanding the crime issue.

The strength and effectiveness of law enforcement in a city should also be considered when comparing crime statistics. One city may report more crime than another, not because there is more crime, but rather because its law enforcement, through proactive efforts, identifies more offenses. A high ratio of officers to population allows identification and reporting of crimes more effectively. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime influence their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses. This will have an impact on the volume of crimes reported to police.

The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which would result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. The substantial numbers of gated communities with their own security services probably reduces the demand for police services in the City. Nonetheless, it can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police protection services and personnel.

### **Citizens on Patrol**

The Citizens on Patrol (COPS) program is a group of volunteers 55 years of age and over who voluntarily patrol the City. Started in 1993, the program currently has more than 29 trained volunteers, and is targeted ultimately for a force of 40. Supported by the City, COPS volunteers receive training by the Sheriff's Department and the Palm Springs Police Academy. The COPS volunteers operate a City-owned van, using the Sheriff's annex at City Hall as their base. The City provides uniforms and badges for the volunteers. The COPS volunteers are considered to be "extended eyes and ears of the Sheriff." Other cities have sent representatives to Rancho Mirage to study the COPS program.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The distribution of land uses and anticipated development pattern will continue to directly impact the City's ability to provide adequate fire and police protection. The availability of staff and equipment and the need to provide protection services within a minimum time frame affects the responsiveness of the City's police and fire departments. Development in the City that is distant from services may risk longer response times, which must be considered in land use planning, circulation/traffic planning, the provision of fire flows, and in emergency preparedness planning.

It can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police and fire protection services and personnel. The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which will result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and





will vary from community to community. Fire protection needs are more easily established but are highly dependant upon the location, type, and intensity of future development.

## **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

A high level of police and fire protection and paramedic service.

#### **Policy 1**

All new and improved developments shall be reviewed for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.

#### **Policy 2**

Enforce fire standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.

#### **Policy 3**

Potentially hazardous material use and storage shall be regulated by the City and other appropriate agencies.

#### **Policy 4**

Due to the fire hazard potential of hilly areas with slopes of ten percent or greater, access problems, lack of water or sufficient pressure, and excessively dry brush, special on site fire protection measures shall be specified during project review.

#### **Policy 5**

Emergency police, fire and paramedic vehicle access shall be provided with all new development to the satisfaction of the City.

#### **Policy 6**

The City shall assist the Sheriff's Department in promoting the Neighborhood Watch Program.

#### **Policy 7**

Promote walled and gated communities recognizing their potential effect on reducing crime in the City.

#### **Policy 8**

The City shall support the Citizens on Patrol program.

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**SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT**

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Element is to describe school and library facilities in the City and surrounding serving area, and provide guidance and direction for decision makers to ensure support and convenient access to these essential services. City residents of all ages deserve the opportunity to gain a basic education and to continue to expand their personal and professional horizons through these important educational and cultural resources. The convenience and safe accessibility of the City's school and library facilities depend upon the community's land use pattern, and the efficiency and safety of its streets, and the availability of bicycle lanes/paths and public transit.

**BACKGROUND**

Continued residential development activity, a larger permanent population, and the increased percentage of families with school age children can be expected to increase pressures on the local school districts which are required by law to provide school facilities to accommodate students. The City is served by two public school districts: the Palm Springs Unified School District, serving all of the City except that portion east of Bob Hope Drive, and the Desert Sands Unified School District serving the rest of the community.

California Government Code Section 65302(a) requires that, among other things, the General Plan assess the general distribution and location of educational facilities, and determine the adequacy of these facilities.

As of 1996, the Palm Springs Unified School District has located one elementary school within the City, the Rancho Mirage Elementary School on Indian Trail Road in the Magnesia Falls Cove area. It provides class levels K through 6, with approximately 560 students. Students living in Rancho Mirage must currently attend middle and high school level education in surrounding communities. There are no Desert Sands Unified schools in Rancho Mirage.

Both the Palm Springs and Desert Sands Unified School Districts have declared that their facilities are overcrowded. In addition to permanent classroom facilities, both Districts use portable classroom buildings on most campuses. The Palm Springs School District Master Plan includes two future elementary school sites in the City: one in Section 27 east of Plumley Road in the vicinity of Vista Montana, and one in Section 30 between Bob Hope Drive and Monterey Avenue south of Dinah Shore Drive. The Land Use map includes references to these future school sites.

When the State of California reduced funding for public schools, it passed legislation effective January 1, 1987 to permit school districts to levy a per-square-foot fee for residential, commercial and industrial development. These fees must be paid by developers directly to the school district prior to the issuance of building permits. The fees are used to assist in the construction or reconstruction of school facilities. In 1996 the residential school fee was \$1.84 per square foot and the commercial per-square-foot fee was \$0.30.





## **Private Schools**

Three private schools also serve the City. The following descriptions and student enrollments are as of the 1995 96 school year.

- ✿ Marywood Country Day School provides education for preschool age through Grade 6. It is located on Clancy Lane, and has an enrollment of 130 students.
- ✿ The Palm Valley School is located on Da Vall Drive, north of Dinah Shore Drive, and provides classroom instruction for grades K 12. Its current enrollment is 208 students. This relatively new facility is a master planned campus with substantial space for future expansion.
- ✿ The Rancho Mirage Children's School has an enrollment of 43 children ranging from preschool age through Grade 5. This facility is located on San Jacinto Drive in the vicinity of the Rancho Mirage Post Office.

In the future should the state institute a Voucher Program, a redistribution of students between public and private schools may result.

## **Libraries**

In 1991 the City withdrew from the Riverside County Library system and made plans to provide its own library. There was no county library in the City; it was felt that the County system did not provide the level of service desired, and library funds annually channeled to the County could more effectively be used to fund a City Library. The City purchased a vacant 10,887 square foot bank building at Bob Hope Drive and Highway 111 and opened its library there in January, 1996, with 15,000 volumes and projections of up to 35,000 volumes in five years. Other facilities include a small community meeting room/audio visual center, a children's collection with a variety of materials and formats, a computer room, and electronic card catalogue terminals. While patrons will continue to rely on books and other printed materials, future visions of the library include increasing reliance on electronic access to information resources.

The Eisenhower Medical Center has a medical library; however, no lending to non-hospital staff is permitted. The College of the Desert, in partnership with the County Library system and the City of Palm Desert, recently (1996) constructed a new on campus college and community library. It will include the availability of computer terminals and other state of the art research facilities.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City's schools and library are important community assets that support City children and adults and are an important barometer of the social health of the City and its quality of life. These assets are also an important consideration for many considering residing in the City. As the City continues to urbanize towards Interstate 10, demographics can be anticipated to shift from higher end, second homes to more moderately priced and year-round occupied single-family homes. Schools will become increasingly important to the City's population. Schools and libraries are land use sensitive and their location requires consideration of many factors, including student safety, accessibility, impacts from noise and other factors.

Public school districts are “responsible agencies” and have “lead agency” status for the siting, planning and processing of development approvals. While consultation with local jurisdictions is required, most decisions rest with the school district, with building, planning, and design processed and approved by the State Architect’s Office. Nonetheless, the City can assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning and provision of educational facilities to provide a maximum opportunity for the education of residents of the City.

The General Plan provides the City with the opportunity to establish policies and programs to reserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure accessibility and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

## **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Education and library facilities that provide the City with adequate services and convenient access.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning, site acquisition, development and provision of educational facilities for the residents of the City.

##### ***Program 1.A***

The City should investigate the feasibility of creating a charter school.

#### **Policy 2**

The City shall cooperate in the process to secure school impact fees from developers in accordance with state law, and strive to reduce overcrowding and improve the educational quality of the City’s public school system.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall preserve and protect existing and future school sites, to the greatest extent practical, from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure compatible surrounding land uses.

#### **Policy 4**

As appropriate, the City shall pursue agreements with the school district(s) to assist in the purchase, lease or joint use of land for school and recreation purposes and the provision of recreation facilities to increase the supply of local park acreage and facilities for school students and to provide accessible recreation facilities and open space for the neighboring community during non school hours.

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall ensure that adequate library services, space and volumes are available to satisfy the literary and educational needs of its residents.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **HEALTH SERVICES ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

This Element is to provide information on the various health care facilities and services available in the City and vicinity. Health care services range from the family practitioner to surgical and other specialists working in a hospital environment. Accessible health care facilities and services are an essential part of the community's professional services.

With an older average population in Rancho Mirage, health care facilities and services are important determinants for many would be residents considering relocation to the City. As with most other areas of community planning, the availability of health care is an essential component of community planning. Issues of medical services/facilities availability are also associated with other areas of community planning, including land use distribution, traffic and circulation, emergency preparedness, and fire and police protection.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Health Facilities Element is related to the Emergency Preparedness, Public Buildings and Facilities, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials Elements. It also addresses locational criteria and is therefore related to the Land Use and Circulation Elements as well. This Element is included in the General Plan as an optional Element pursuant to Government Code Section 65303 because of the prominence of health related facilities in the City.

Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley provide a broad range of medical services and research facilities, as well as convalescent hospitals and similar facilities. The City of Rancho Mirage has shown a particular interest in assuring the provision of health care facilities, including hospitals, clinics, medical specialists, and convalescent care.

### **Eisenhower Medical Center**

The availability of medical services and facilities has been an important consideration for many of the area's residents, and in Rancho Mirage particularly, with its own prestigious medical facility, Eisenhower Medical Center (EMC). With over 1,800 employees, EMC is by far the largest employer in the City, as well as the premier medical treatment and research facility in the Coachella Valley. The EMC campus encompasses approximately 100 acres and includes the Eisenhower Memorial Hospital, the Annenberg Center for World Health Science, Betty Ford Center for Chemical Dependency, Delores Hope Care Center, Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, the Community Blood Bank, and a variety of medical office and research buildings. Recently the Hanson Birthing Center was added to provide obstetrics services to growing families. EMC is licensed for and operates 290 beds, at least 15 of which are in Intensive Care, and 14 of which are in the Birthing Center. Average occupancy is about 80%. Future development and expansion of EMC is expected, as was the case with the recent expansion of emergency room facilities and development of a trauma center. Master planning of the Eisenhower campus has been accomplished through the adoption of a Specific Plan, which sets forth the ultimate buildout of facilities on campus.





### **The Heart Institute of the Desert**

The Heart Institute is located at Hope Square, adjacent to the Eisenhower Medical Center campus, and specializes in by pass and other coronary care specialties. This state of the art facility has the lowest mortality rate for open heart surgery in the United States. It recently underwent a major expansion to its facility to include a 12-bed hospital wing.

### **Rancho Mirage Healthcare Center**

Rancho Mirage Healthcare Center located on Country Club Drive, provides convalescent hospital services in a skilled nursing environment, primarily for patients on a rapid recovery track following surgery. The center also provides hospice care for the terminally ill. The center has 99 beds and is a qualified Medicare facility.

### **Other Health Care Providers**

In Rancho Mirage, medically related uses are beginning to cluster in the Bob Hope Drive Country Club Drive area. Hope Square is a 33-acre medically related office park with two phases complete. The Mirage Center dental surgery facility on Country Club Drive is a newer 16,750 square foot building with space available on the site for expansion. The City would like to encourage its focus on existing and future medically related uses in this geographic area.

Other Valley hospitals capable of providing health care services include Desert Hospital in Palm Springs and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Indio. Desert Hospital is licensed for 350 beds; the occupancy rate is approximately 80%. Twenty-four-hour Emergency and Trauma Center facilities are available with at least one full-time physician on duty. Desert Hospital also has a Home Health Care department that provides in home nursing and household maintenance services. The Hospice of the Desert is also housed at Desert Hospital, providing specialized service and counseling to the terminally ill. The John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital is licensed for 130 beds, and provides twenty-four-hour emergency care facilities, and is a base for paramedic service.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Hospitals and convalescent facilities are regarded as sensitive land uses and should be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels or high levels of air pollution. The General Plan plays an important role in assuring the long-term viability of the City's health care facilities by regulating surrounding land uses and minimizing adverse impacts from traffic, noise and other conditions. The Eisenhower Medical Center Specific Plan will be incorporated into the General Plan by reference and will assure consistency between these two regulatory documents. The General Plan also provides opportunities to establish goals and policies that encourage the development of additional medical and health care and possibly research facilities, particularly in the vicinity of EMC, that address the changing demographics of the community and capitalize on the City's economic dominance in the health care field.

## **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

High quality of health care facilities and services to promote the good health and well being of the City's residents.

#### **Policy 1**

Coordinate with all medical service providers within the City to assure adequate health care facilities and services to meet the needs of the City's residents.

#### **Policy 2**

Encourage the development of medical and health care facilities which address the changing demographics and the City's desire to expand the economic base of the community.

#### **Policy 3**

The EMC Specific Plan shall serve as the development guide for the campus.

#### **Policy 4**

Hospitals, convalescent, assisted care, and similar type facilities shall be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Element is to provide information on the critical facilities necessary to effectively respond in the event of an emergency. It also identifies the various potential impacts of significant man made and natural hazards within or affecting the community and how they direct emergency preparedness. The City's capabilities in responding to natural and manmade disasters are also identified. The City's substantial potential exposure to major seismic events and flooding threats cannot be prevented, but preparation can be made for an effective response. Man made threats include wildland and urban fires, hazardous materials spills and leaks, and major transportation accidents, including automobiles, trucks, trains, and aircraft. The element sets forth goals, policies, and programs designed to allow the City to be prepared for emergency threats.

### **BACKGROUND**

Concern regarding emergency preparedness is directly related to the Geotechnical Element (where seismic hazards are discussed), the Flooding and Hydrology Element, the Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element, and the Police and Fire Protection Element. Other related Elements include Land Use, which affects essential relationships of use to location specific threats, and Circulation, which defines the availability of, and need for securing evacuation routes in the event of an emergency in the community. Applicable law includes Government Code section 65302(g), which states that the General Plan shall address "the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure...; slope instability leading to mudslides or landslides."

The Coachella Valley is subject to significant hazards, which constitute serious threats to life and property. The Valley's substantial potential for earthquakes and flooding are natural occurrences which can be anticipated but cannot be prevented. However, the magnitude of the effect of natural disasters on life and property can be addressed, and a coherent response to such disasters prepared. The goal is to have a realistic assessment of the potential for disaster and response plans for recovery after a disaster has occurred. Due to the large number of public, quasi-public, and private agencies involved in emergency preparedness planning, and their differing areas of responsibility, cooperation and coordination between agencies are essential.

Communications is the critical element in any emergency response capability and must be maintained even in the event of wide ranging disastrous events. Cities, emergency and safety agencies, water districts, utilities, and other involved private agencies must be able to remain in contact in order to coordinate the provision of supplies and personnel. To this end, it is imperative that regular and effective on-going organizational meetings be held in order to assure the efficient and responsive provision of emergency services and supplies.

The development of a carefully conceived emergency preparedness plan includes a disaster operations plan, which sets forth the organization and administration of disaster response efforts such as debris removal, evacuation and emergency communications, law enforcement, fire protection and rescue, the provision of health care and emergency shelter, allocation of emergency food and medical supplies, and the maintenance and restoration of





critical services, including transportation, water and sewage, electricity, natural gas, and telephone service.

### **Critical Facilities**

Certain critical facilities will become essential in the event of a major emergency and are an essential part of the emergency response plan. These include facilities that provide or house emergency services, including hospitals, fire stations, police and emergency services facilities, governmental operations, and utility facilities, especially telecommunications. Commercial radio stations can also play an essential role in apprising the community of appropriate actions to take.

Other critical facilities include evacuation routes and peak load water supply and delivery systems. Evacuation routes may play an especially critical role by allowing the evacuation and/or the delivery of ground based assistance access to affected parts of the City.

### **Emergency Transportation and Circulation**

One of the single most important activities after a major disaster is the delivery of emergency personnel and relief supplies. Access to the community can be affected by major damage from natural forces, including earthquakes and flooding. Therefore, all weather and earthquake resistant bridges, culverts, and roads adjoining cut slopes must be given careful attention. Programs can be developed in close coordination with CalTrans, Riverside County and adjoining cities to assure maximum functional integrity of major roads serving the City.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance to the City and victims of a disaster can come from several sources, with the state and federal governments being the most important. In order to qualify for this assistance, the City must declare a local emergency within 10 days of the actual occurrence of the disaster, have damages assessed, and must apply for aid within 60 days of declaring the local emergency (Government Code Section 8680 8692).

### **Emergency Preparedness Coordination**

The Riverside County Office of Disaster Preparedness is the responsible lead agency for the coordination of the various agencies in the event of an emergency. In the City, the fire station on Highway 111 east of Country Club Drive serves as the base of operations for emergency response. In addition to City staff assigned to specific tasks, ranging from management and coordination to field operations, the City has agreements with local contractors to augment public agency resources and capabilities.

### **Emergency Preparedness Commission**

Since 1991, the City has had a five-member Emergency Preparedness Commission involved in a variety of projects. Commission members present information to homeowners associations for training and education regarding emergency shelters. City staff is responsible for the City's two medical caches and shelter kits in conjunction with the American Red Cross. One of the Commission's goals is to encourage all private community groups to purchase 40-channel citizen band (CB) radios. This commission also has a physicians subcommittee to coordinate deployment of medical personnel that are well

linked to Eisenhower Medical Center. The Commission works closely with Riverside County in the development and dissemination of information to the public advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.

### **Mulfi Hazard Functional Plan**

The City is one of the few jurisdictions in the Valley which has an adopted emergency preparedness plan, called the Multi Hazard Functional Plan. Based on a similar document adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, the City's Plan has also been endorsed by the Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Adopted by Resolution, the plan is hereby incorporated by reference into this Element.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In addition to the detailed organizational directives, scopes of responsibility, operational priorities, authority and powers established in the City's emergency response plan, emergency communication protocols and other components of the response plan require close multi agency coordination. The ability of the community to respond to emergencies will also be affected by the distribution of land uses and the location of future fire stations and other public safety facilities. Development standards set forth in the City's zoning ordinance will also determine how effectively emergency personnel can respond to events affecting occupied structures.

### **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

#### **GOAL 1**

A coordinated, responsive, and effective emergency preparedness disaster implementation plan and a high degree of readiness to respond to disastrous events.

#### **Policy 1**

Public facilities shall be developed and sited to assure maximum protection from environmental hazards such as earthquakes and flood waters.

#### **Policy 2**

The City shall coordinate emergency preparedness activities with the State Office of Emergency Services.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall continue to coordinate with Riverside County in the development and dissemination of information to the public advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.

#### **Policy 4**

The City shall coordinate with Riverside County regarding a community response plan and the County's Multi Hazard Functional Plan.





***Program 4.A***

The City shall develop and update a Community Response Plan.

***Program 4.B***

Adopt by reference the Riverside County Multi Hazard Functional Plan (including future amendments) as the City's Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**Policy 5**

Encourage and assist private communities in the preparation of emergency preparedness plans.

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## **PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

This Element provides background information on the various structures and facilities in the City operated by public and quasi-public agencies, and describes some of the long-term planning issues associated with them. It is also meant to provide sufficient information to identify important and critical facilities and to assure coordinated planning and development that keeps pace with growth in the community. The element also sets forth the goal, policies and programs, which address the long-term planning needs of the community.

Public facilities are built to accommodate present and anticipated needs, some of which (most notably utilities) play a major role in determining the location, intensity, and appropriate timing of future development. Each year, local governmental agencies planning the construction of capital facilities (including cities, counties, school districts, and special districts) must submit a list to the planning agency (Government Code Section 65401) of proposed projects they would like to implement in the City. In the case of Rancho Mirage, the planning agency must then review the projects for conformity with the General Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

The City is host to a variety of public buildings and facilities, and associated issues have long been of concern in Rancho Mirage. They range from City Hall and the two community fire stations to water wells and electric power substations. They also include electric, telephone, and cable television transmission lines, schools, the new Rancho Mirage Public Library, and the soon to be built Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert. Roads and bridges, traffic signals and support facilities, and bus shelters also fall under this category. The Public Buildings and Facilities Element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation, and Community Design Elements. All six other Elements in the Public Services and Facilities Chapter are interrelated and associated with this Element. Most public buildings and utility sites are shown on the General Plan map.

Government Code Section 65103(c) states that the planning agency is to "annually review the Capital Improvement Program of the City or County and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan...." However, the local jurisdiction may emphasize the importance of this issue by requiring an optional Public Facilities Element in the General Plan (Government Code Section 65303).

The City of Rancho Mirage is a unique resort residential community with a wide range of public buildings and facilities utilized for the benefit of community residents and visitors. While much of the discussion focuses on buildings, lands and facilities of the City, utility buildings and substations are also given special attention with regard to their compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The location of public buildings and facilities is largely dependent upon their function in the community. This functional criterion does not preclude the need for these facilities to be logically integrated into the existing and planned land use patterns of the City. Those public buildings, which serve as offices where residents and business people come to conduct business, should be conveniently located and provided with safe access and adequate parking.





## **Utility Infrastructure**

In contrast, utility infrastructure, including electrical substations, and pumping and switching facilities, can generate noise and detract from the scenic values of an area. Methods typically used to integrate utility infrastructure with the surrounding area can include decorative block walls and landscape buffers around major facilities, or the construction of telephone and other equipment buildings in an architectural style compatible with the surrounding built environment. The GTE switching station on Da Vall Drive, north of Gerald Ford Drive, is a good example of how utility buildings can be designed to complement rather than detract from surrounding development. The City has also been a leader in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines and collects fees at the building permit stage to help fund this effort. An example of the impact of this policy and its implementation is dramatically shown the Community Design Element.

## **Rancho Mirage City Hall**

The Rancho Mirage City Hall is an unusual and uniquely sited complex of buildings that includes the Council chambers, administrative offices and support facilities. The City has recently completed construction of an expansion of City Hall to meet current and anticipated future space needs. The 17,605 square foot facility was expanded to provide a total of 27,677 square feet within a basement and two above-ground floors. The remodel and expansion of City Hall was completed in June 1996. Notable space included in the expansion includes a large conference room, multiple smaller meeting rooms, and a Sheriff's Annex shared with the COPS program.

## **Corporate Yard/Maintenance Facility**

In 1995, the City moved its maintenance yard and facilities from the City Hall site to a new location outside the city limits, on Varner Road in Thousand Palms. These facilities include a garage of about 4,500 square feet for equipment maintenance and storage, and an office/locker room/lounge building of about 800 square feet. The corporate yard site encompasses about three quarters of an acre. There is room for future expansion to provide showers and locker room facilities as well as space for equipment and vehicles, as the need arises.

## **Bus Shelters**

The City of Rancho Mirage has taken the lead in raising the design standard for these facilities. Rather than the typical steel, concrete, and Plexiglass shelters with more of an industrial look, the City has adopted and implemented design standards based upon Mission and Mediterranean architectural styles, which complement the surrounding built environment. Examples of these facilities include shelters at the Michael Wolfson Park and at the Eisenhower Medical Center. Placement of future bus shelters, coordinated with the Sunline Transit Authority, should consider convenience to major employment and shopping centers and other destinations that bus service could best serve.

## **Fire Stations**

The placement of fire stations is based on a geographic analysis of service area response time and is location sensitive. The City has made a concerted effort to assure the highest level of community protection, while providing facilities that are well designed and integrated into the surrounding built environment. Stations on Highway 111 and Gerald Ford Drive illustrate how highly functional design needs can be met with pleasing and sensitive building design and site planning. Fire and Paramedic services are paid for via a fire tax on parcels in the City. These facilities are also discussed in the Police and Fire Protection Element.

## **U.S. Post Office**

The U.S. Post Office, located on Rancho Las Palmas Drive just north of Highway 111, provides a full-service facility utilizing contemporary architectural design standards. This facility encompasses approximately 13,000 square feet and provides all the basic postal services offered in most other facilities, including post office boxes, voter registration, mail boxes, shipping services, and postage stamp sales. The site accommodates outdoor postal vehicle storage and parking areas for customers and employees.

## **Streetscape and Traffic Control Facilities**

While the City has made significant progress in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines, efforts have also focused on enhancing the appearance of other facilities located within the street rights of way. Specifically, the City adopted design and paint standards for street lighting fixtures, traffic signals and support standards, and street signs. Efforts continue to better integrate signal control boxes, telephone switching boxes, and other utility service facilities located in parkways.

The City also has established a City wide assessment district for the installations and maintenance of landscaped median islands on major arterials. The General Fund and License Tax on new construction pays for their installation. This on-going program, in addition to preserving roadway capacity and enhancing traffic safety and operations, is a significant enhancement of the roadway viewshed. These improvements are further discussed in the Community Design Element.

## **Schools and Libraries**

The City has one public school within its city limits, the Rancho Mirage Elementary School located in the Magnesia Falls cove area. It provides class levels K through 6, with approximately 560 students. Three private schools exist in the City: Palm Valley School on Da Vall Drive (208 students, K-12); Rancho Mirage Children's School (43 students, Preschool-5); and Marywood Country Day School (130 students, Preschool-6).

In 1991 the City withdrew from the Riverside County Library system and made plans to provide its own library. The city purchased a vacant 10,887 square foot bank building at Bob Hope Drive and Highway 111 and opened its library there in January, 1996 with 15,000 volumes and projections up to 35,000 volumes in five years. The library includes a community room/audio-visual center, a children's collection, and a computer room. While patrons will continue to rely on books and other printed materials, future visions of the library include increasing reliance on electronic access to information resources. For further discussion of these public facilities, please see the Schools and Libraries Element.





## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City of Rancho Mirage annually prepares a Public Facility Needs Study to serve as the basis for collecting the License Tax on new construction. The License Tax is an integrated impact fee (or tax) which partially funds street widening, traffic signals, utility undergrounding, median islands, bikeways, bridges, parks, fire stations, and public art. The tax is imposed at the time of building permit issuance to meet the needs and mitigate the impacts of new development. It is important that the City annually reviews and updates the Public Facilities Needs Study and if necessary adjust the License Tax to maintain consistency with the General Plan and to respond to changing development characteristics.

## **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

A coherent, compatible, and aesthetically satisfying integration of public buildings and facilities into the overall planning of the City.

#### **Policy 1**

The siting of public buildings and facilities which house City government shall provide functional, aesthetically pleasing, and convenient places for residents and city officials to conduct business.

#### **Policy 2**

The City shall coordinate with public utilities and special districts to assure the least intrusive and most compatible integration of related buildings and facilities into the land use pattern of the City.

#### **Policy 3**

The siting of equipment storage and maintenance yards and facilities will be conducted in a manner which is sensitive to and has a minimum impact on surrounding existing and future land uses.

##### ***Program 3.A***

In updating the Zoning Ordinance, the City shall develop specific design standards and guidelines regulating the siting, location, and screening of utility boxes and facilities.

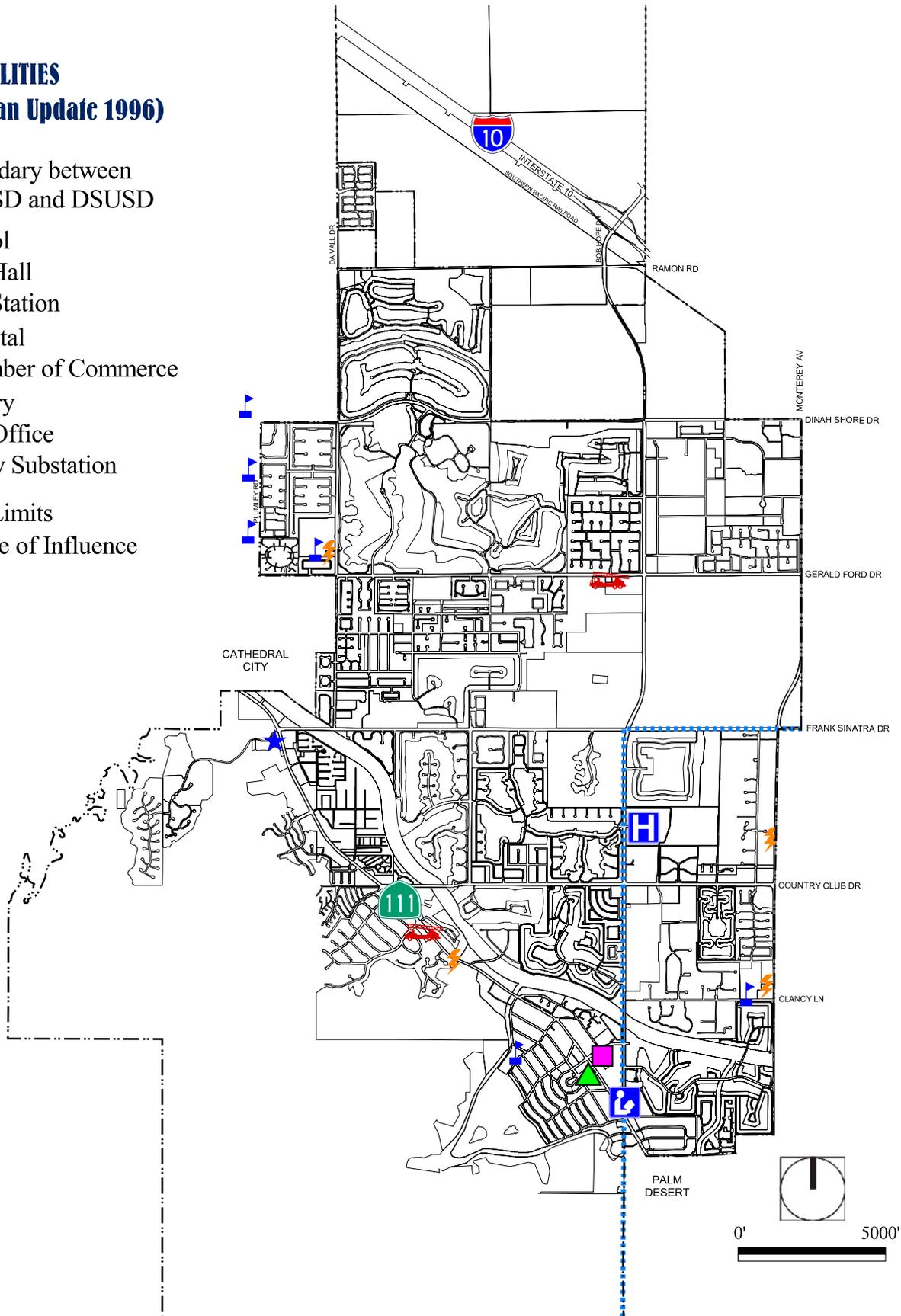
#### **Policy 4**

The City shall ensure that all public buildings and facilities comply with the same development standards as private development.

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES ELEMENT**

**PUBLIC FACILITIES  
(General Plan Update 1996)**

-  Boundary between PSUSD and DSUSD
-  School
-  City Hall
-  Fire Station
-  Hospital
-  Chamber of Commerce
-  Library
-  Post Office
-  Utility Substation
-  City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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## **ARTS AND CULTURE ELEMENT**

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### **PURPOSE**

Aesthetic values of the City are reflected throughout the community's planning efforts and provide the basis for cultural identification. The Arts and Culture Element sets forth policies and programs that maximize the role the City can play in encouraging and supporting the cultural development of the community. In addition to the direct support given to City sponsored activities and facilities, the City can also play an important role in helping to encourage and enhance the activities of public and private nonprofit enterprises supporting the arts. The purpose and intent of this involvement is to foster a better understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the cultural environment in Rancho Mirage.

### **BACKGROUND**

Directly related Elements include the Archaeological and Historical Resources Element, which conveys the past cultural traditions of the Native Americans and early settlers. The Open Space and Conservation Element reflects the high degree of importance the community places upon its natural environment and open and wild lands, including the Santa Rosa Mountains and other natural resources in and near Rancho Mirage. In addition, the Schools and Libraries Element addresses these vital institutions and facilities that are the principle vehicles for the transmission of art and cultural traditions to young residents. The Parks and Recreation Element plays an essential role in providing facilities and coordinated activities for sport and recreation. Also, the Biological Resources Element recognizes the community's vested interest in and dedication to the preservation of wildlife and habitat, and as the reason many have chosen to live in Rancho Mirage.

As a source of cultural and artistic tradition, the City of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley have a long and interesting history of human culture to draw upon, extending from Cahuilla Indian rock art, pottery, and basketry, to the modern city with state-of-the-art technologies and communication systems. Today those living in Rancho Mirage encompass a wide range of artistic appreciation and cultural diversity with common roots and shared values. In an essential way, this tradition and the modern cultural sensitivity of the community is formed more than ever by the natural environment and our awareness of it. From this rich source of nourishment and inspiration the City forms its cultural and artistic foundations.

Unlike many areas of community planning, which are relatively discrete in their application to the city limits, arts and culture is more appropriately viewed on a Valley wide basis. Residents of the City are able to enjoy cultural resources that have been supported by all Valley residents, including such facilities as the McCallum Theater, the Children's Discovery Museum, and the Desert Museum. The Living Desert Preserve also provides important cultural opportunities for residents and visitors of all communities of the Coachella Valley. Within the City, an Arts in Public Places program has been established and fees are collected to support the projects being developed. These and other arts and culture issues are discussed below.





### **Children's Discovery Museum**

The City of Rancho Mirage has spearheaded the development of a museum dedicated to the cultural and artistic development of children. A joint project of the Cove Communities (Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and Indian Wells) the museum is currently housed in temporary facilities in the City. Ambassador Walter Annenberg donated a site on Gerald Ford Drive for the development of the permanent museum, which is under construction. The Children's Discovery Museum is planned as a 20,000 square foot facility that will provide multi cultural exhibits on a rotating basis, arts and crafts instruction, an auditorium for theater and musical events, and other artistic and cultural programs and activities.

### **Desert Museum**

The Desert Museum is a fine arts and natural history museum located in Palm Springs. In addition to indoor exhibition space and instruction facilities, the Desert Museum also has an outstanding sculpture garden. This facility also houses the Annenberg Theater, which is the site of a wide array of cultural programs ranging from classical and popular music to theater and education programs. The natural history programs include dioramas of desert and mountain habitats and wildlife, rotating live animal exhibits, and a wide range of field trips and in-house education programs on the natural world. The museum is also an important repository for cultural artifacts of the Agua Caliente Indians.

### **Agua Caliente Museum**

The Agua Caliente Tribe is currently (1996) planning the development of a tribal museum in the Palm Springs. While detailed designs have not yet been developed, plans currently call for a variety of temporary and permanent exhibit areas, collections, storage and archive, outdoor courtyard and lecture area, multipurpose room, children's room, new artist exhibit area, and an amphitheater for major outdoor events. The museum will be an important venue for the appreciation of the rich Cahuilla cultural heritage.

### **McCallum Theater and the Bob Hope Cultural Center**

The McCallum Theater at the Bob Hope Cultural Center is a 1,200 seat performance facility located on the campus of the College of the Desert. A wide variety of cultural events are staged at this facility and range from accomplished local theater and concert performances to similar activities by world-renowned performers and orchestras. A wide variety of popular music and theater are performed at this facility, which is also the venue for the annual Diana Hodges International Piano Competition.

### **Rancho Mirage Cultural Commission**

The City's Cultural Commission develops and presents concepts to the City Council and organizes and directs subcommittees for the purpose of using the special talents of individuals within the community. Subcommittees are established for specific purposes or projects and, once completed, are dissolved. The Cultural Commission also advises City Council on the use of funds for the City's Art in Public Places program. The Commission is comprised of five commissioners and one City Councilperson who serves as Council liaison to the Commission.

## **BEGINNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND APPRECIATION**

### **Art in Public Places**

Another important opportunity to express and strengthen the cultural cohesion of the community is through the placement of art in public places. In the broadest sense, and consistent with the themes of a low density resort residential community that values its mountains and wild places, public art can incorporate the use of native landscaping along major roadways, reflecting the surrounding Santa Rosa Mountains and desert washes. It can include the thoughtful design and placement of public buildings, as well as the more conventional application of this concept, which includes placement of manmade monumental sculpture on public lands, or within the rights of way of major roadways.

The City has initiated an art in public places program for the development of special City entry treatments and the commissioning of works for permanent display in public areas. Sites including City Hall, the City Library, as well as City-owned parks and open space lands are all appropriate locations for public art works displays. These facilities, as well as the Children's Museum, also offer important opportunities for local artists to display their work and hold workshops and master classes. The current city public facilities funding program collects fees a license tax paid at the time building permits are issued. Fees for this purpose are levied on a per-square-foot basis and are currently (1996) \$0.022 (2.2 cents) (1997) \$0.018 (1.8 cents). New projects for this program are in development on an ongoing basis. City entry features are also funded by the license tax.

### **Amphitheater and Outdoor Events**

Unlike many cities in the Coachella Valley, Rancho Mirage lacks a public venue for open-air amphitheater outdoor events areas for festivals, musicals and stage performances. Currently (1996), City sponsored events are held at Whitewater Park. It is envisioned that such a facility would be available year-round for art shows, dog shows, arts festivals, and music performances in the cooler months and evening performances during the summer. As a place for picnics and the enjoyment of a wide variety of activities, including music and theater, an amphitheater and outdoor events area could be cost effectively developed to allow large audiences to enjoy concerts ranging from bluegrass to classical music, and from local theater to Shakespeare. The development of such a facility in conjunction with the community park planned in Section 30 should be further considered.

### **Film and Movie Industry Museum**

The City should investigate the feasibility of developing or sponsoring a film and movie industry museum in Rancho Mirage. Such a facility could serve as a keystone or anchor for a variety of other enterprises and could serve as the basis for a regional entertainment center supported by both residents and visitor. This museum could also serve as an important venue for newly released documentaries, experimental films, and competitions and festivals. The museum could focus on the science, art, and history of film-making and provide "exploratorium-like" environments on past, present and future technology. Spin-off opportunities should also be explored and impacts carefully assessed.





## **Land Use Planning as a Strategy for Cultural Resource Preservation**

It has consistently been emphasized that the low density resort residential lifestyle of the community and the close association residents of Rancho Mirage have with wildlife and the environment are integral parts of the community's culture and traditions. The development of the General Plan Land Use maps has been based on several essential values embraced by the community. These include the desire to preserve open spaces to assure the long-term enjoyment of wildlands and wildlife, and to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of local Native Americans. The Land Use Plan and various elements of the General Plan take these and other special concerns into account and will play an active role in preserving these community assets for generations to come.

The preservation of wildlife and the conservation and assurance of access to open spaces and wildlands are essential parts of the cultural inheritance of Rancho Mirage. The inspiration gained from the closeness with which residents live with wildlife has enhanced appreciation for these valuable resources.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

There are several vehicles available to implement the Arts and Culture Element, including the integration of public art into major city entries and focal points. The City may also encourage developers to include sculpture and cultural icons into major project corners, entries and parkway treatments. In addition, as discussed below, the City may wish to consider the development of a Rancho Mirage Cultural Master Plan, which would provide a coordinated approach to making the community aware of its cultural heritage, and to establish plans for facilities, activities, and events that would broaden the artistic and cultural life of the community.

Therefore, the City of Rancho Mirage should consider the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan. This plan would identify specific projects, including the Children's Museum, development of an amphitheater and outdoor events area, expanding on and encouraging additional events and fairs, and the support of artists through shows at various City facilities and elsewhere throughout the community. The Plan should also include strategies for coordination and cooperation with such groups as the Coachella Valley Watercolor Society, Desert Symphony and others to maximize their support and to minimize conflicting events.

### **GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

#### **GOAL 1**

The development and prospering of the arts and culture of the City of Rancho Mirage, and enhanced access to these amenities for all residents through City and private efforts and participation.

#### **GOAL 2**

An enhanced sense of cultural awareness and identification in the City of Rancho Mirage, through cultural events, and the development of all aspects of the arts.

**Policy 1**

The artistic and cultural heritage of Rancho Mirage shall be enhanced through efforts to expand the available venues for fine arts and crafts, as well as music and other performance arts.

***Program 1.A***

Study the feasibility of developing additional exhibition space at the City Hall, the City Library and at other City locations.

***Program 1.B***

Study the feasibility of constructing an outdoor amphitheater and outdoor events area for festivals, musical events, plays, and other performing and display arts.

**Policy 2**

Continue to take an active role in sponsoring cultural events and exhibitions throughout the community.

***Program 2.A***

The City shall pro actively sponsor and support the development of fine arts displays and musical events, and shall encourage and promote other cultural events in the community.

***Program 2.B***

The City shall consider the development of a Cultural Master Plan that coordinates and maximizes the City's resources, including local artists/associations, library and Children's Museum staff, and other artistic and cultural leaders, in supporting the arts and culture of the community.

**Policy 3**

Proactively demonstrate support for the City's desert resort heritage through the development of art in public places.

***Program 3.A***

Investigate and develop additional funding mechanisms to finance the commissioning of sculpture, monumental rockwork, landscape architectural projects, and other artistic creations that are suitable for placement in public parks and rights of way.

***Program 3.B***

The City shall evaluate the feasibility of developing an interpretive center within the City.



**PUBLIC SERVICES AND  
FACILITIES**

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