

1 | INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT GOALS

Coachella's Entertainment Commercial District offers a unique opportunity for town building—a chance to capitalize on the city's gateway location within the Coachella Valley and demonstrate the development principles that contribute to a viable, sustainable community.



Over the next 10 to 20 years, the Entertainment Commercial (CE) District can become a major Valley destination, with lifestyle shopping centers, resort hotels, golf courses and equestrian centers that draw visitors from around the world. New residential neighborhoods can be created that provide a model

for desert living, with high-quality design that reflects Coachella's natural environment. The new development can benefit Coachella's existing residents by creating a variety of jobs and a range of high-quality housing choices. The development will also bring tax revenues to Coachella that can be used to improve services to the existing community.



Entering the Coachella Valley from the east

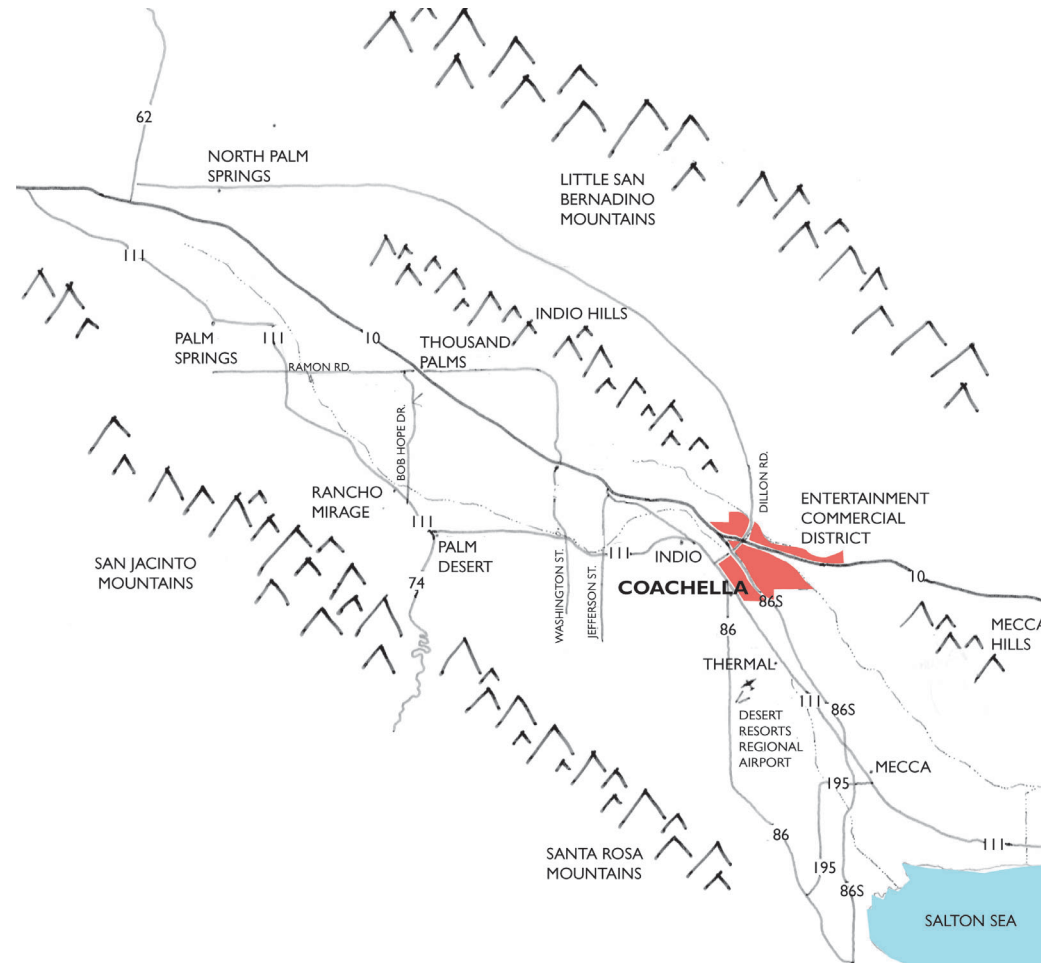
This Vision Plan provides a framework for future development in the Entertainment Commercial District. It draws on the community's goals and recommendations, as well as advice from economists, developers and City staff, to

illustrate how a carefully-chosen mix of land uses, sited appropriately and designed well, can lead Coachella to an exemplary future. The Vision Plan also explains how developers and the City can work together to turn this vision into action.

Regional Context

Coachella is located in the southeastern end of the Coachella Valley, in Riverside County. The Coachella Valley encompasses nine incorporated cities and several unincorporated communities. Interstate 10, which runs the length of the Coachella Valley, connects Coachella with these other towns. North of Interstate 10, steep slopes rise above Coachella's generally flat landscape. Coachella's location in the valley makes it a gateway to the Salton Sea, Mexicali and Baja California.

The City of Coachella is presently one of California's eight fastest-growing cities. In recent decades, single-family development has been absorbed by the spacious area north, west and south of the city's core. These unincorporated areas were historically dominated by agriculture, but they are experiencing tremendous development pressure.



Coachella Valley

Although Coachella is not currently a major destination for visitors, several nearby cities in the Coachella Valley, including Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, La Quinta and Indio, have golf courses, resort hotels and shopping centers that attract patrons from both within and beyond the Valley. Also, Coachella is within 30 miles of Joshua Tree National Park, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the Salton Sea.

The Coachella Valley’s desert climate creates year-round warm weather throughout the region. Coachella’s average high temperatures range from 69 degrees in January to 105 degrees in July; average lows range from 37 degrees in January to 75 degrees in July. Only 2.3 inches of rain fall in Coachella in an average year. Periodic high winds blow dust and sand through the Valley.



Civic Center Park in Palm Desert

Several active earthquake faults run through or near Coachella, including the San Andreas fault zone. The eastern edge of the city lies within a State-designated earthquake hazard zone. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel runs along Highway 86S in the historic alignment of the Whitewater River, providing stormwater drainage for the entire Valley. Towards the east of the city, the All-American Canal delivers water from the Colorado River to the area’s farmland.



El Paseo in Palm Desert



The La Quinta Resort



Multi-family housing in La Quinta

Plan Area

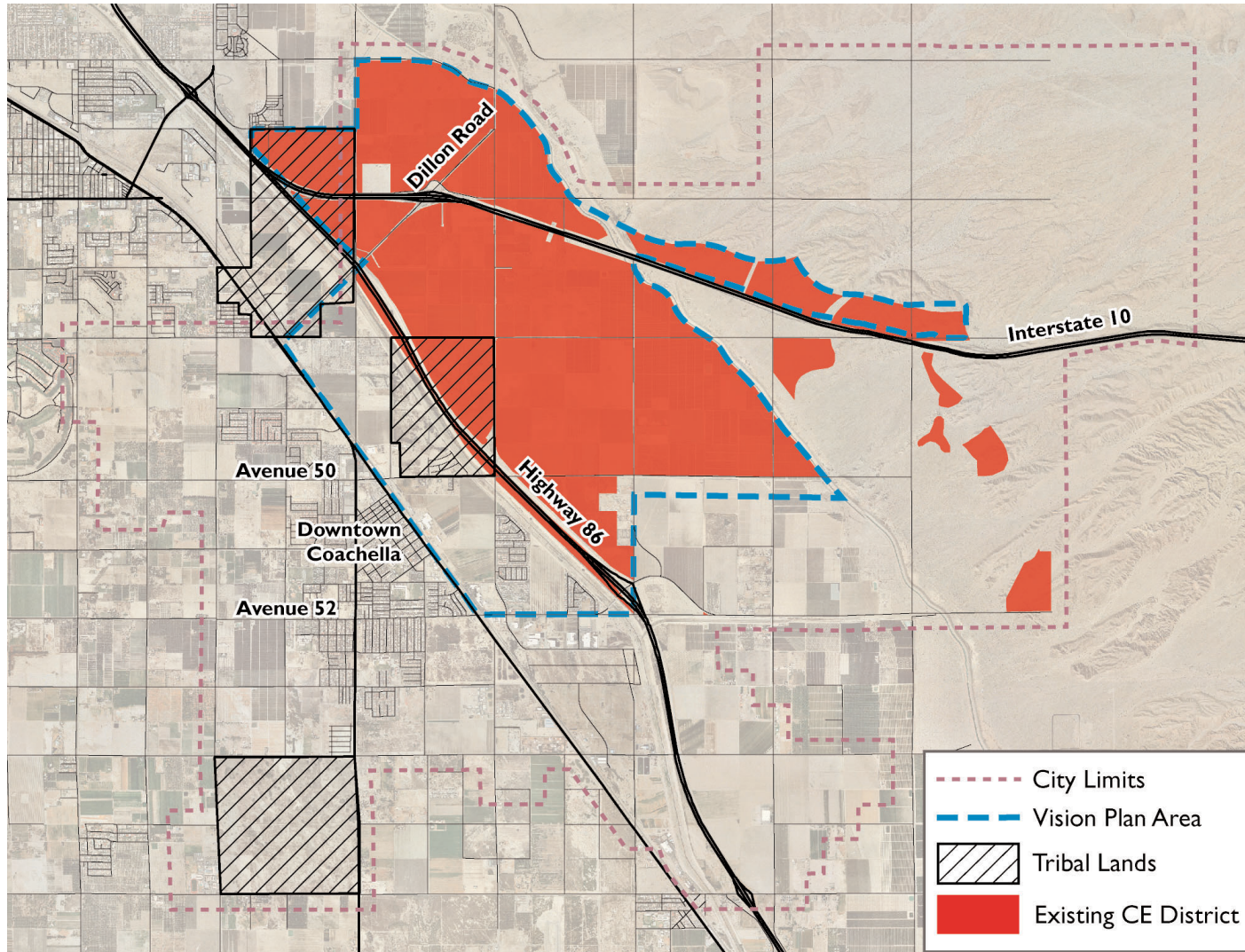
Coachella's 1998 General Plan established the CE District, a roughly 4,000-acre area east of downtown, with the goal of creating an international entertainment destination. Three major transportation arteries separate the CE District from Coachella's core: Highway 86S, Grapefruit Boulevard (Highway 111) and a major transcontinental rail corridor. The northern third of the CE District is split by Interstate 10 and consists primarily of active farmland, vacant land, two tribal-owned casinos and two well-used truck stops.

In the early stages of the planning process to update the vision for the CE District, the goal of connecting the District to the existing city was established. In order to implement this goal the land between the downtown and the CE District was added to the Plan Area. The smaller CE District areas that are distrib-

uted east of the All-American Canal were eliminated from the Vision Plan process because those areas are part of an area for which a Specific Plan is being prepared.

Although the General Plan includes assumptions about the land uses that could occur in the CE District, many of these assumptions are now out of date. Also, the General Plan does not address several issues for any new development in the CE District:

- ◆ Building strong connections between different land uses
- ◆ Providing benefits for Coachella's existing residents
- ◆ Creating options for non-motorized transportation, particularly walking and bicycling
- ◆ Respecting Coachella's natural context and the environment as a whole

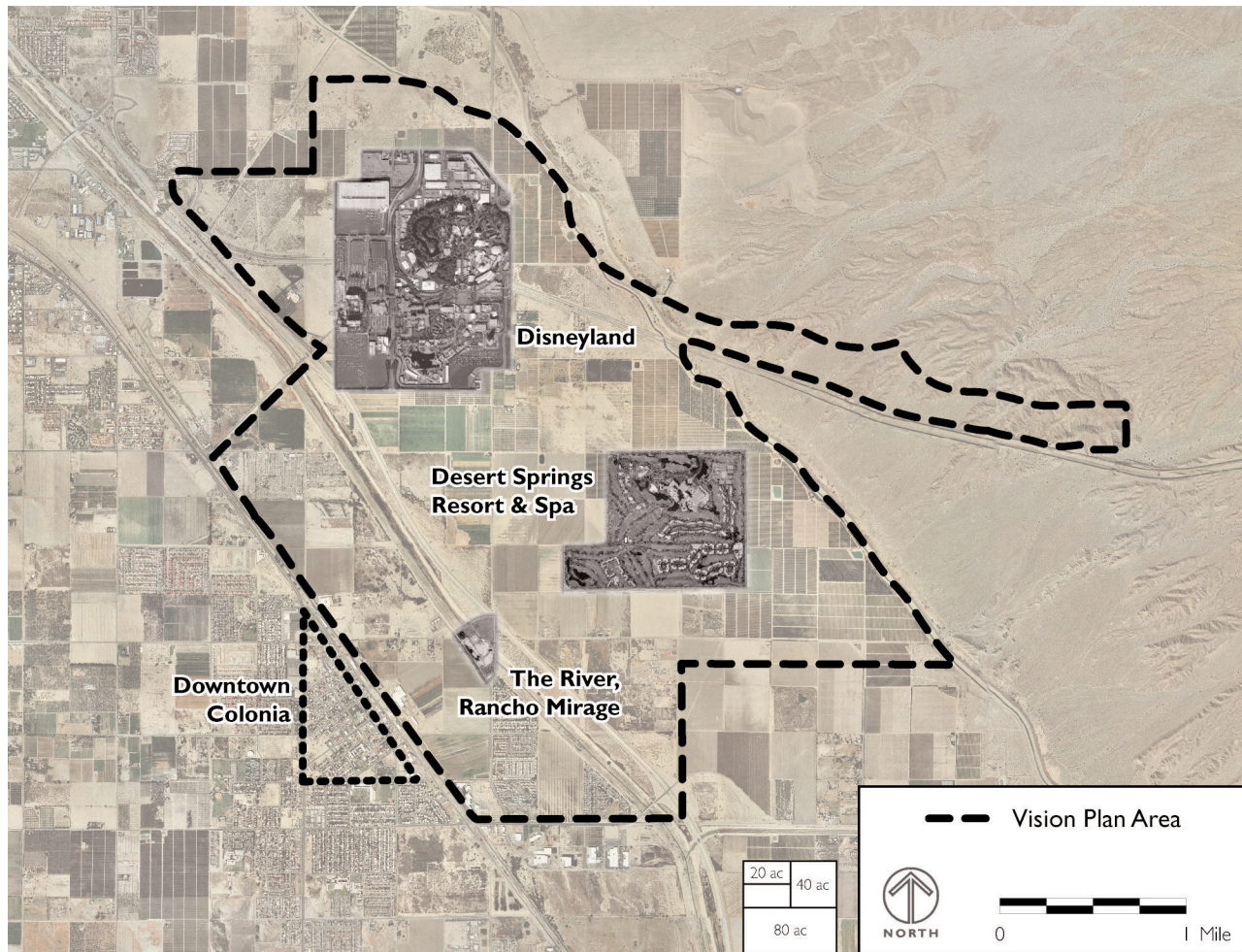


Vision Plan Area

Vision Plan Area Scale

The Plan Area consists of the CE District, together with the industrial and vacant land between the CE District and Coachella's downtown. This area is so large that it could fit The River at Rancho Mirage and the Desert Springs Resort & Spa, along with all of Disneyland, and still leave room to spare. The area comprises about one quarter of the total land area of Coachella. The area's vast size makes it essential to provide a vision that will organize new development into a coherent whole.

In addition, there is far more land in the Plan Area than is necessary to meet current and future demand for entertainment-related uses; as a result, much of the area will likely be used for new residential neighborhoods. It is essential to create an appropriate balance between these different types of development. Also, each new neighborhood should provide a broad range of land uses and activities, so that the neighborhoods can function as sustainable communities.



Vision Plan Area and scale comparisons

Project Goals

The Vision Plan’s purpose is to revisit the Coachella General Plan’s goals for the CE District and create a clear, strong vision for future development. The Vision Plan is designed to lead to a prosperous **economy**, create a quality **environment** and foster social **equity** — the three “E”s of sustainable development.

As part of the Vision Plan process, the following overall goals were developed for the project:

- ◆ **Provide high-quality design** that creates compact neighborhoods and balances different uses.
- ◆ **Preserve the environment**, and deal appropriately with the opportunities and constraints created by Coachella’s natural setting.

- ◆ **Create circulation networks** that are highly connected and that meet the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.
- ◆ **Include social benefits** as part of new development, including parks and schools near people’s homes and housing that Coachella’s current residents can afford.
- ◆ **Develop Coachella’s economy** by creating a development program that offers a range of commercial opportunities and a variety of new jobs.

Appendix A provides a complete list of the goals that workshop participants developed during the planning process, along with a description of the public workshops that helped create the Vision Plan.