

2 | SMART GROWTH GOALS

The goals described in this chapter are based on the principles of “smart growth,” an alternative to conventional suburban development that seeks to design vital, sustainable neighborhoods that meet the needs of many different people, regardless of their income levels or transportation choices. Community members, civic leaders, developers and urban planners worked together to create these goals, which have shaped all of the Vision Plan’s recommendations for future community development.

Mix of Land Uses

One of the defining characteristics of sustainable neighborhood design is the mixing of different but complementary land uses. Instead of separating residential areas from commercial development, neighborhoods provide space near people’s homes for useful services, such as video rental stores and hair salons, and for places where people





can gather in their free time, such as parks, cultural venues, restaurants and cafés. Neighborhoods also locate schools within walking distance of children's homes and provide housing near offices, stores and other places where people work, so that residents can avoid a long commute to their jobs.

Every part of the Vision Plan Area will provide a variety of land uses. Most residents will have a neighborhood park within a quarter-mile of their home, as well as a neighborhood retail center that provides places to shop. Housing opportunities will exist throughout the Plan Area, making it possible for residents to live near where they work. Public services, including schools, fire stations and police stations, will be distributed as needed throughout the new neighborhoods.

High Connectivity

A neighborhood that follows the principles of smart growth will offer many different ways for people to get around. Instead of streets that form loops and cul-de-sacs, often forcing people to make long detours, a highly-connected, more grid-like pattern of streets creates several direct routes to any destination. This street pattern also provides drivers with a variety of choices, rather than overloading a few key streets and intersections with heavy traffic. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes provide safe routes for people who choose to walk or bike to nearby destinations.

Streets in the Vision Plan Area will accommodate a range of transportation options, including walking, bicycling, public transportation and driving. All streets will have sidewalks, and trees will provide shade to increase people's comfort during the hot summer months. A well-connected network of streets will provide many route choices for drivers instead of directing through-traffic to major thoroughfares. On higher-traffic roads, dedicated bicycle lanes will improve safety for bicyclists.

High-Quality Development

All types of development will enhance the character of a neighborhood that follows smart growth principles. Retail buildings are located adjacent to sidewalks, framing the street's public space and encouraging people to walk from shop to shop; they include architectural details that make the buildings more attractive and enable them to fit in with their surroundings. Single-family houses emphasize the front door instead of the garage where they face the street, and apartment buildings use varied building forms to give a sense of the individual dwelling units they contain.

New neighborhoods in the Vision Plan Area will include attractive, high-quality design throughout. New buildings can include architectural features, such as tile roofs and white plaster finishes, that reflect Coachella's history and culture, or they can use other styles that are appropriate to the area's climate. Retail development will encourage pedestrian activity by putting buildings, not parking lots, adjacent to sidewalks and using architectural details, such as windows and awnings, that create visual interest for passersby.



Range of Housing Types

Smart growth principles lead to neighborhoods with different types and sizes of dwelling units to accommodate all parts of the population. Different types of housing are distributed throughout the neighbor-

hood; single-family houses are often located near townhouses and well-designed apartments. As people's needs change — for example, when a woman has her first child, or when an older couple decides to find a smaller house after their children move out — the variety of housing types allows people to find a new place to live nearby, so they do not have to leave their friends and neighbors behind.



New development in the Vision Plan Area will include houses, apartments and condominiums of different sizes. Large units will provide enough bedrooms for an extended family to live together in comfort. Smaller units will accommodate single people, couples with no children and retirees who want to downsize their houses.

Housing Affordability

People do not need high incomes to find places to live in a neighborhood that follows smart growth principles. Affordable housing is an integral part of the neighborhood, and it is distributed throughout the neighborhood so that people with different income levels can live on the same street, or even in the same building. The affordable housing units are designed to fit well with their surroundings and to be as long-lasting as market-rate housing units.



Development in the Vision Plan Area will include for-sale and rental housing at prices that Coachella's current residents can afford. The affordable housing units will use the same high quality of construction as other housing units, and they will be integrated throughout each neighborhood, rather than being relegated to a separate part of the Plan Area.



Jobs

Development using smart growth principles integrates commercial uses into neighborhoods, so that each neighborhood provides places to work, not just places to live. Some neighborhoods emphasize land uses that provide jobs, such as shopping centers, hotels, resorts, offices and manufacturing, but provide some homes and apartments nearby. Others emphasize residential uses but include some offices and retail stores where residents can work. Ideally, an area will provide a balance of jobs and housing, so that people who want to live near their workplace can do so.

New development in the Vision Plan Area will create many jobs for Coachella's current and new residents, especially in retail stores and offices. Other entertainment-related development, such as a new golf course, theme park or other recreational use, will create additional jobs at the hotels and resorts for Coachella's visitors.

Sustainability

Smart growth principles make it possible to create environmentally sustainable neighborhoods, meaning that natural resources, such as water and energy, are not depleted more rapidly than nature can renew them. The neighborhood's design helps people conserve resources while maintaining or increasing their quality of life. For example, when retail centers are provided near people's homes, it becomes more convenient for people to shop even as they reduce the number of trips they take by car. A sustainable neighborhood also responds appropriately to its natural setting, taking advantage of resources that are abundant and conserving those that are scarce.

Neighborhoods in the Vision Plan Area will be compact and provide a mix of land uses, making it easy to walk or bike from place to place. Buildings will include features that help reduce energy demand, including awnings and roof overhangs that provide shade; well-insulated walls and light-colored finishes that keep interiors cooler in hot weather; and ventilation systems that draw cooler air into houses at

night. Many buildings will include solar panels, taking advantage of Coachella's desert climate to reduce energy costs.

New buildings will include attractive landscaping that requires little irrigation, and reclaimed water will provide much of the water needed to keep plants green. Stormwater channels will be integrated into a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails, and stormwater detention areas can be combined with parks and plazas.



