

07 | SUSTAINABILITY + NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

This Element establishes the City's long-term goals and policies for managing and protecting its natural resources and open spaces. Our natural environment, either directly or indirectly, provides everything needed for our survival and well-being. It not only influences the development of our City's physical landscape, but also shapes our community's unique identity within the Coachella Valley. Whether it's the rich soil that supports our agricultural production, the surrounding hillsides and mountains that inspire us with captivating views or the desert climate that offers residents and visitors a tranquil setting for recreation, Coachella relies heavily on its natural resources to fulfill its social and economic needs. It is important for us to be stewards of these valuable resources for our current community and future generations.

Coachella envisions future development to minimize its impact on the local and global environment. The City will promote green building and encourage architecture that responds to the arid climate while integrated into its urban and natural surroundings. Furthermore, new development will respect the environmental constraints and natural hazards such as steep slopes, faults and areas with landslide potential. For example, some of the date groves and other farm uses will be preserved as a connection to agricultural history, a visual and open space amenity and a local food source.

The Coachella Valley's arid and sunny climate poses great opportunities and challenges for the City to use its energy and water resources wisely. As a national hotspot for solar and wind energy production within the Valley, the City is a prime location to generate clean, renewable energy. The City will seek to use less energy and increase its reliance on local, renewable energy.

With the planned development of agricultural lands into communities, Coachella will need to ensure water use in new neighborhoods does not exceed its prior levels. To execute this transition effectively, the City will conserve water by instituting new, efficient building design standards and incorporate xeriscaping into landscape design. A network of recycled water facilities should be pursued, and industrial users that use recycled water should be recruited to locate in the city. The City also should build "green streets" that treat and re-infiltrate stormwater on site.

Finally, as climate change is becoming a global priority, and California becomes more proactive in enforcing climate-related laws and regulations, the City will embrace opportunities to limit its impact on global climate change. Through the above efforts and other strategies (including transportation and land use), the City will lead the Coachella Valley in cultivating a thriving and sustainable low-carbon community.

Through long-term stewardship established by the goals and policies of the General Plan, the City will safeguard a range of natural and man-made systems that contribute to Coachella's long-term growth and prosperity. The City will establish itself as a regional environmental leader and innovator by demonstrating how to: incorporate environmentally sensitive and responsible strategies to manage energy, water and solid waste; construct homes, roads, schools and other buildings; protect and preserve the community's mineral, agricultural and cultural resources.

OUR COMMUNITY'S GOALS

Coachella is a community with close ties to the land and the outdoors. The community depends on the land for food, water, jobs and recreation. Through this close relationship, the community understands that environmental health is a key factor determining economic and community health. As such, environmental sustainability is a fundamental component of the community's vision for the future.

To achieve the community's vision as presented in Chapter 3 of the General Plan, the Sustainability and Natural Environment Element is organized around the following broad goals:

- **A sustainable community that minimizes the risks of climate change.** Mounting evidence indicates human activities are affecting global climate, which is expected to result in increasing warming in the Coachella Valley. As environmental stewards, the community has a strong desire to grow while minimizing its contributions to global warming and minimizing the risks of hazards related to a warming climate. With appropriate planning and forethought, the community intends to grow while minimizing its greenhouse gas emissions and anticipating climate change related risks.
- **A resource efficient and environmentally respectful community.** The City is in sun-drenched region, with ample opportunity for solar and wind power, as well as high demand for energy for comfortable living and economic opportunities. Additionally, water is a scarce resource must be closely managed if the City is to thrive. Through good design, green design principles, and a commitment to resource efficiency, the City can grow and minimize its impact on the environment.
- **A community with plentiful open space and parkland.** The community loves and respects the outdoors, understanding much of the City's economy is generated through agricultural operations, but also open space provides valuable recreation areas for this active City. This element also provides direction for the creation and maintenance of recreational trails, parks and open space.
- **Meet the recreational and service needs of Coachella's diverse population.** The City will play a key role in meeting the community's needs for recreational, educational and general assembly needs. As the City develops, new facilities will need to be phased in with new development to ensure residents have adequate facilities to meet their needs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1. Climate Change. A resilient community that is prepared for the health and safety impacts of and minimizes the risks of climate change.



Policies

- 1.1 **Municipal operations.** Conduct city operations and institutionalize practices that reduce municipal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and lead the community in reducing GHG emissions.
- 1.2 **GHG reductions.** Promote land use and development patterns that reduce the community's dependence on and length of automobile trips.
- 1.3 **Existing GHG emissions.** Work with community members and businesses to support their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.4 **Monitoring progress.** Monitor and update periodically the city's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.5 **Climate action plan.** Maintain, implement and periodically update a climate action plan and greenhouse gas inventory.
- 1.6 **Climate-appropriate building types.** Seek out and promote alternative building types that are more sensitive to the arid environment found in the Coachella Valley. Courtyard housing and commercial buildings can be designed to provide micro-climates that are usable year round, reducing the need for mechanically cooled spaces and reducing energy consumption.
- 1.7 **GHG reduction incentives.** Periodically review fee structures for potential opportunities to provide financial and administrative incentives to support installation of renewable energy generators, energy efficiency measures, land use patterns, and other measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.8 **Regional participation.** Act as the participant in of climate change activities in the Coachella Valley.
- 1.9 **Climate change and health.** Acknowledge the on-going and future impacts of climate change and extreme events on Coachella's residents, taking action to minimize the effects among vulnerable populations and help implement California's executive order (EO) s-13-08 and the *2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy*.
- 1.10 **Adaptation strategy.** Proactively develop strategies to reduce the community's vulnerability to climate change impacts.
- 1.11 **Urban forest.** Protect the City's healthy trees and plant new ones to provide shade, increase carbon sequestration and purify the air.
- 1.12 **Reduced water supplies.** When reviewing development proposals, consider the possibility of constrained future water supplies and require enhanced water conservation measures.



- 1.13 **Designing for warming temperatures.** When reviewing development proposals, encourage applicants and designers to consider warming temperatures in the design of cooling systems.
- 1.14 **Designing for changing precipitation patterns.** Periodically evaluate stormwater control strategies and systems for sensitivity to changes in precipitation regimes and consider adjusting those strategies to accommodate future precipitation regimes.
- 1.15 **Communications and outreach.** Continue to work with the Riverside County Public Health Department to establish social networks and website updates to distribute information on climate change impacts to vulnerable populations including actions they can take to reduce exposure to unhealthy conditions.

Goal 2. Energy. An energy efficient community that relies primarily on renewable and non-polluting energy sources.

Policies

- 2.1 **Community development–subdivisions.** When reviewing applications for new subdivisions, require all residences be oriented along an east-west access, minimizing western sun exposure, to maximize energy efficiency.

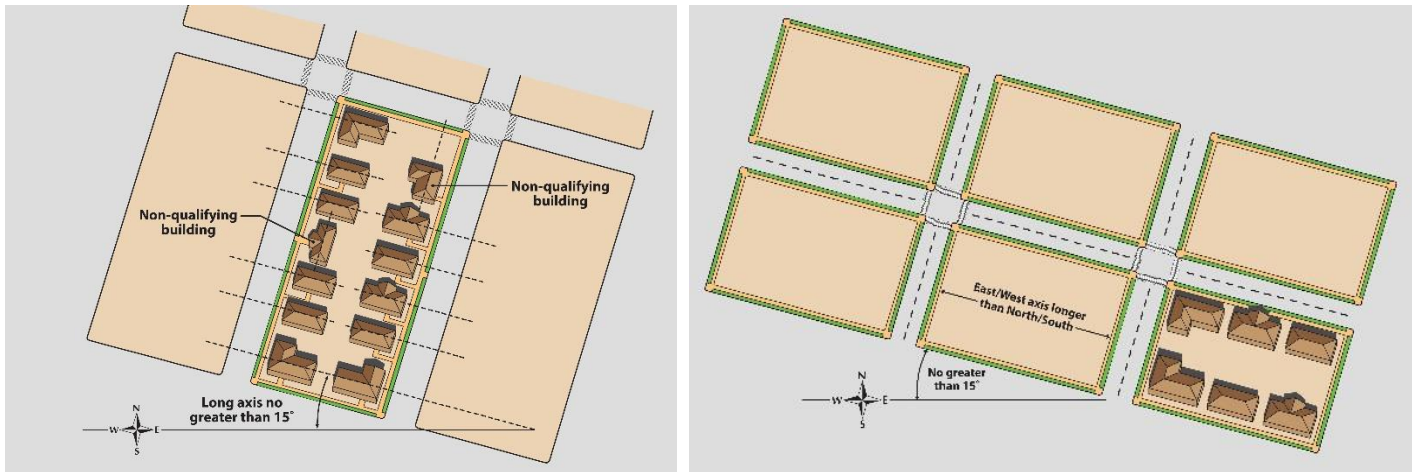


Figure 7-1: These diagrams demonstrate how the blocks and housing within can be designed to maximize building energy efficiency, maintaining the primary building axis along an east-west access to minimize western sun exposure.

- 2.2 **Passive solar design.** Require new buildings to incorporate energy efficient building and site design strategies for the desert environment that include appropriate solar orientation, thermal mass, use of natural daylight and ventilation, and shading.
- 2.3 **Alternative energy.** Promote the incorporation of alternative energy generation (e.g., solar, wind, biomass) in public and private development.

- 2.4 **Community Choice Aggregation.** Work with nearby local and regional agencies to develop a community choice aggregation system in order to secure alternative energy supply contracts for the community.
- 2.5 **Construction standards.** Consider and evaluate new construction practices and standards that increase building energy efficiency.
- 2.6 **Energy performance targets – new construction.** Require new construction to exceed Title 24 energy efficiency standards by 15 percent and incorporate solar photovoltaics.
- 2.7 **Energy performance targets – existing buildings.** When existing buildings undergo major retrofits, require the buildings to exceed Title 24 energy efficiency standards by 15 percent and encourage solar photovoltaics.
- 2.8 **Renewable energy–open space areas.** Allow the installation of renewable energy systems in areas zoned for open space.
- 2.9 **Energy-efficient street lighting.** Implement a program to install the latest energy-efficient technologies for street and parking lot lights to meet City and state standards.
- 2.10 **New industries.** Actively promote the City as a place for renewable energy generation, and a place for energy conservation businesses to locate.
- 2.11 **Publicly funded buildings.** Require energy conservation as the primary strategy to reduce energy demand in new and renovation projects using public funds.
- 2.12 **Solar access.** Prohibit new development and renovations that impair adjacent buildings’ solar access, unless it can be demonstrated that the shading benefits substantially offset the impacts of solar energy generation potential.
- 2.13 **Use of passive open space.** Allow renewable energy projects in areas zoned for open space, where consistent with other uses and values.
- 2.14 **Public buildings.** Require that any new building constructed in whole or in part with City funds incorporate passive solar design features, such as daylighting and passive solar heating, where feasible.

Goal 3. Water Resources. Protected and readily available water resources for community and environmental use.

Policies

- 3.1 **Conservation performance targets – new construction.** Require new construction to exceed the state’s Green Building Code for water conservation by an additional 10 percent.
- 3.2 **Water conservation technologies.** Advocate and promote indoor and outdoor water conservation and reuse practices including water recycling, grey water re-use and rainwater harvesting.
- 3.3 **Greywater.** Support the use of greywater and establish criteria and standards to permit the safe and effective use of greywater (also known as on-site water recycling).

- 3.4 **Low impact development.** Require the use of low-impact development strategies to minimize urban run-off, increase site infiltration, manage stormwater and recharge groundwater supplies.
- 3.5 **Recycled water.** Use impact fees to set up tertiary water treatment infrastructure to use recycled water for “non-potable” uses.
- 3.6 **Education.** Support and expand programs to educate and incentivize the community on water conservation practices for landscaping.
- 3.7 **Landscape design.** Encourage the reduction of landscaping water consumption through plant selection and irrigation technology.
- 3.8 **Groundwater infiltration.** Encourage the use of above-ground and natural stormwater facilities in new development and redevelopment, such as grassy or vegetated swales, permeable paving and rain gardens.
- 3.9 **Water quality detention basins.** Require water detention basins to be aesthetically pleasing and to serve recreational purposes, such as in the form of a Mini Park. Detention basins designed for active uses are intended to supplement park and open space and should not be counted towards a developer’s minimum park requirements, unless otherwise determined by the Planning Commission and City Council.
- 3.10 **Retention Basins.** Encourage storm water retention basins to be underground in future development so as to achieve the most efficient use of land and compact development and promote the urban character goals of the General Plan.

Goal 4. Green Building. Community building stock (both new construction and renovations) that demonstrates high environmental performance through green design.

Policies

- 4.1 **Public buildings.** Require all new and substantially renovated or reconstructed City-owned and operated buildings in excess of 5,000 square feet achieve a LEED Silver Certification standard, as determined by the U.S. Green Building Council, or a substantially similar green building standard.
- 4.2 **Affordable housing – green design.** Require affordable housing developments to prioritize green building design features that reduce monthly utility costs, enhance occupant health and lower the overall cost of housing.
- 4.3 **Education.** Provide technical support and information to educate the development community about green building.
- 4.4 **Reducing GHG emissions.** In consulting with applicants and designing new facilities, prioritize the selection of green building design features that enhance the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.5 **Heat island reductions.** Require heat island reduction strategies in new developments such as light-colored cool roofs, light-colored paving, permeable paving, right-sized parking requirements, water efficient vegetative cover and



planting, substantial tree canopy coverage, south and west side water-efficient tree planting, and shaded asphalt paving.



- 4.6 **Public realm shading.** Strive to improve shading in public spaces such as bus stops, sidewalks and public parks and plazas through the use of trees, shelters, awnings, gazebos, fabric shading and other creative cooling strategies.

Goal 5. Agricultural Preservation. Viable, productive local agricultural lands and industry.

- 5.1 **Prime agricultural land.** Prioritize the conservation of state-designated Important Farmlands and discourage the conversion of these lands to urbanized uses until such time as the land is needed for additional growth.
- 5.2 **Agricultural economy.** Maintain and support a viable agricultural economy within the City that recognizes the community's agricultural heritage.
- 5.3 **Agriculture preservation.** Continue to work with landowners in maintaining and extending existing Williamson Act contracts.
- 5.4 **Preservation tools.** Preserve agriculturally important lands through conservation subdivisions, conservation easements and the transfer of development rights.
- 5.5 **Water-efficient agriculture.** Promote crops and methods that require limited or no irrigation.
- 5.6 **Habitat restoration.** Allow unviable and abandoned farmland to revert to desert, habitat area and open space, especially in areas contiguous to existing habitat and desert.
- 5.7 **Accessory uses.** Consider allowing accessory uses that are complimentary to agricultural production to improve the financial viability of agricultural land.
- 5.8 **Buffers between agriculture and urban uses.** Require new developments, whether they are new urban or new agricultural uses, in which urban and agriculture uses would be adjacent to maintain a protective buffer, such as landscape setbacks, hedgerows, windrows, or canopy trees that ensures land use conflicts do not occur.
- 5.9 **Right to Farm.** Support the right of existing farms to continue operations.
- 5.10 **Preservation of slow-growing trees and crops.** Encourage the preservation of date groves, citrus orchards, vineyards and other crops which require substantial growth before achieving mature production rates.
- 5.11 **Farm worker housing.** Encourage the producers of agricultural products to provide suitable housing for farm laborers that meets applicable health and safety standards.
- 5.12 **Market transformation.** If the agri-business industry declines in Coachella, support efforts that facilitate the transition of uses, businesses and employees from agriculture to other sectors of the local economy.
- 5.13 **Voluntary conservation.** Support private conservation organizations that utilize voluntary conservation easements as a tool for agricultural land conservation to accomplish preservation of agricultural lands and continued agricultural operations.

Goal 6. Visual Resources. A city with stunning views of the hillsides and mountains surrounding the Coachella Valley.

Policies

- 6.1 View corridor preservation.** Protect and preserve existing, signature views of the hills and mountains from the City.
- 6.2 Scenic roadways.** Minimize the impact on views by restricting new billboards along the City's roads and highways. Electronic and animated billboards should be prohibited except in rare and special circumstances.
- 6.3 Hillside grading.** Require the preparation of a grading analysis on hillside development to pre-determine where development should occur so as to minimize the impact of new development on views of the City's hillsides.
- 6.4 Public facilities.** Plan public facilities to take advantage of the City's mountain and hillside views.
- 6.5 Dark sky.** Limit light pollution from outdoor sources, especially in rural, hillside and mountain areas, and open spaces, to maintain darkness for night sky viewing.

Goal 7. Waterways Waterways and desert washes that serve a natural, environmental function and provide aesthetically pleasing open space for the community.

Policies

- 7.1 Pollution prevention.** Limit the amount and concentration of pollutants released into the City's waterways.
- 7.2 Development impacts.** When considering development applications, require consideration of onsite detainment of stormwater runoff and require the incorporation of appropriate stormwater treatment and control measures, in accordance with the most recent NPDES permit requirements.
- 7.3 Soil erosion.** Require the prevention of water-born soil erosion from sites, especially those undergoing grading and mining activities.
- 7.4 Water quality.** Ensure water quality in the City's waterways meets applicable state and federal standards.
- 7.5 Public access.** Provide regulated public access to the City's waterways for recreation and passive enjoyment of open space.
- 7.6 Waterways as amenities.** When considering development applications and infrastructure improvements, treat waterways as amenities, not hazards, and encourage designs that embrace the waterways.

Goal 8. Mineral Areas Mineral resources readily available to support community needs.

Policies

- 8.1 Mining operations.** Permit development of mineral resources for efficient production only where extraction activities are compatible with existing or proposed adjacent land uses.
- 8.2 Resource conservation areas.** Ensure the availability of mineral resource areas for future production.
- 8.3 Open space and mining.** Provide for resource extraction activities, such as mining, as an allowed use in those areas with an Open Space General Plan Designation.
- 8.4 Recycling.** Encourage the reuse and recycling of existing aggregate, concrete and asphalt materials for new residential, commercial, and industrial developments.
- 8.5 Compatibility of uses.** Restrict mining and mineral extraction activities to those areas not adjacent to or containing sensitive receptors, important farmland, important habitat or other incompatible uses.

Goal 9. Plant and Wildlife Habitat Areas Protected plant and wildlife habitat areas that are protected, productive, viable natural resources and exist harmoniously with adjacent development.

Policies

- 9.1 Buffers from new development.** Require new developments adjacent to identified plant and wildlife habitat areas to maintain a protective buffer.
- 9.2 Agriculture and natural habitat.** Promote the creation and maintenance of natural habitat and wildlife corridors on agricultural lands through wildlife-compatible farm management practices.
- 9.3 Wildlife corridors.** Support the creation of local and regional conservation and preservation easements that protect habitat areas, serve as wildlife corridors and help protect sensitive biological resources.
- 9.4 Conservation and preservation easements.** Develop a program to facilitate the creation of conservation and preservation easements that identifies key habitat areas, habitat corridors and sensitive biological resources and:
 - Establishes a simple process for land owners to grant easements, including identifying organizations or agencies capable of holding the easements; and
 - Provides information to the landowners of identified properties about the benefits of conservation and preservation easements.
- 9.5 Multiple species habitat conservation plan.** Support and adhere to the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.
- 9.6 Native habitat management.** Develop a program to restore native habitat on undeveloped portions of City-owned properties, where feasible, and remove invasive species where they occur.

- 9.7 **Landscape design.** Encourage new developments to incorporate native vegetation materials into landscape plans and prohibit the use of species known to be invasive according to the California Invasive Plant Inventory.
- 9.8 **Sensitive species.** Require projects proposing to develop in subareas 5, 6, and 7 to conduct surveys to determine if there is occurrence of sensitive species within the Project area. If sensitive species are present, projects must implement mitigation measures necessary as prescribed by a qualified biologist and approved by any applicable resource agency in order to receive necessary City permits.

Goal 10. Passive Open Space. Preserved open space areas that represent significant aesthetic, cultural, environmental, economic and recreational resources for the community.

Policies

- 10.1 **Open space network.** Require new development to contribute land and/or funding to expand the community's open space network, in support of the MSHCP.
- 10.2 **Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel corridor.** Preserve a public open space corridor of trails and wildlife habitat along the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.
- 10.3 **Archaeological resource preservation.** Preserve important archaeological and paleontological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.
- 10.4 **Mitigation and preservation of cultural resources.** Require development to avoid archaeological and paleontological resources, whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to the resources.
- 10.5 **Grading.** Require that proposed projects that involve a significant amount of grading shall have an archaeological and paleontological survey conducted before construction.
- 10.6 **Grading and vegetation removal.** Limit grading and vegetation removal of new development activities to the minimum extent necessary to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
- 10.7 **Wildlife corridors.** Establish and preserve wildlife corridors.
- 10.8 **Preservation of natural land features.** Preserve significant natural features and incorporate into all developments. Such features may include ridges, rock outcroppings, natural drainage courses, wetland and riparian areas, steep topography, important or landmark trees and views.
- 10.9 **Working lands.** Encourage the preservation of agricultural and other working lands as important aesthetic and open space resources of Coachella.

Goal 11. Air Quality. Healthy indoor and outdoor air quality through reduced, locally generated pollutant emissions.

Policies

- 11.1 **Sources of Pollutants.** Minimize the creation of new sources of air pollutants within the City.
- 11.2 **Land use patterns.** Promote compact, mixed-use, energy efficient and transit-oriented development to reduce air pollutants associated energy and vehicular use.
- 11.3 **Sensitive receptors.** Prohibit the siting of land uses that adversely impact existing sensitive receptors, including schools, childcare centers, senior housing, and subsidized affordable housing. The minimum distance separating these uses should be 500 feet.
- 11.4 **Public transit.** Ensure that, wherever feasible, public transit is a viable and attractive alternative to the use of single occupant motor vehicles.
- 11.5 **Single-occupant vehicle trip reductions.** Provide disincentives for single-occupant vehicle trips through parking supply and pricing controls in areas where supply is limited and alternative transportation modes are available.
- 11.6 **Neighborhood electric vehicles.** Encourage developments and street systems that support the use of Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV).
- 11.7 **Active transportation.** Support infrastructure and programs that encourage children to safely walk or ride a bicycle to school.
- 11.8 **Construction-related emissions.** Require construction activities, including on-site building and the transport of materials, to limit emissions and dust.
- 11.9 **Project mitigation.** The City shall utilize the CEQA process to identify and mitigate potentially significant air quality impacts associated with new development.
- 11.10 **Traffic congestion.** Design new intersections to function in a manner that reduces air pollutant emissions from stop and start and idling traffic conditions.
- 11.11 **Health impact assessments.** Develop thresholds of significance for sensitive land uses (schools, senior centers, medical facilities and residences) in proximity to SR86S, SR111 and I10 to require preparation a health impact assessment (HIA), as part of the CEQA environmental review process, to analyze the significance of the health impact from highway adjacency and incorporate project-specific mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts.
- 11.12 **Indoor air quality.** Require new development to meet the state’s Green Building Code for indoor air quality performance.
- 11.13 **Healthy homes.** Promote green building practices that support “healthy homes,” such as low VOC materials, environmental tobacco smoke control, and indoor air quality construction pollution prevention techniques.
- 11.14 **Alternative energy sources.** Promote the development of energy sources, such as solar, wind, and geothermal, that do not emit pollution which has an adverse impact on local air quality.

- 11.15 **Transportation demand management.** Encourage employers to provide transit subsidies, bicycle facilities, alternative work schedules, ridesharing, telecommuting, work-at-home programs, employee education and preferential parking for carpools/vanpools.
- 11.16 **Transportation management associations.** Encourage commercial, retail and residential developments to create and participate in transportation management associations.
- 11.17 **Deliveries.** Encourage business owners to schedule deliveries at off-peak traffic periods.
- 11.18 **City fleet vehicles.** Replace City fleet vehicles with low emission vehicles, wherever possible.
- 11.19 **Advocacy.** Support legislation that promotes cleaner industry, low emission technology vehicles and more efficient burning engines and fuels.
- 11.20 **Regional coordination.** The City shall coordinate its air quality planning efforts with other local, regional and state agencies, and encourage community participation in air quality planning.
- 11.21 **Air district coordination.** The City shall work with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to ensure the earliest practicable attainment of federal and State ambient air quality standards.

Goal 12. Cultural Resources and Sites. Preserved and protected cultural resources that provide the community with significant cultural, scientific, or educational value.

Policies

- 12.1 **Disturbance of human remains.** In areas where there is a high chance that human remains may be present (areas along the Whitewater Rivers/CVSC, on Tribal lands, on areas with previously undisturbed soil, in the washes and canyons found in the eastern areas of the Planning Area, and areas of historic settlement), require proposed projects to conduct survey to establish occurrence of human remains, if any. If human remains are discovered on proposed project sites, the project must implement mitigation measures to prevent impacts to human remains in order to receive permit approval.
- 12.2 **Tribal coordination.** Require notification of California Native American tribes and organizations of proposed projects that have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources.
- 12.3 **Protected sites.** Require sites with significant cultural resources to be protected.
- 12.4 **Preservation of historic resources.** Where practical, encourage the preservation of historic resources.
- 12.5 **Document historic resources.** When it is not practical to preserve a historic resource, require the architectural details and design elements of historic structures to be preserved during renovations and remodels.

- 12.6 **Discovery of human remains.** Require that any human remains discovered during implementation of public and private projects within the City be treated with respect and dignity and fully comply with the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and other appropriate laws.
- 12.7 **Paleontological resources.** Require any paleontological artifacts found within the City or Sphere of Influence be reported to the City and temporarily loaned to local museums like the Western Science Center for Archaeology and Paleontology, in Hemet, CA.
- 12.8 **Disturbance of human remains.** In areas where there is a high chance that human remains may be present (areas along the Whitewater Rivers/CVSC, on Tribal lands, on areas with previously undisturbed soil, in the washes and canyons found in the eastern areas of the Planning Area, and areas of historic settlement), require proposed projects to conduct survey to establish occurrence of human remains, if any. If human remains are discovered on proposed project sites, the project must implement mitigation measures to prevent impacts to human remains in order to receive permit approval.

Goal 13. Parks and Open Space. Increased access to parks, recreation, and natural open spaces to support and increase physical activity.



Policies

- 13.1 **Parks and recreation.** Improve existing parks and open space facilities and expand recreational programs as a means of improving the health of Coachella residents. Active play structures and/or amenities should be designed to accommodate a range of ages and abilities.
- 13.2 **Revitalization efforts.** Coordinate park development in existing neighborhoods with City revitalization and redevelopment initiatives.
- 13.3 **New parks.** Ensure existing and new neighborhoods have sufficient access to park facilities that meet the needs of all residents, and increases in new residents do not overburden existing parks.
- 13.4 **Accessibility to parks.** Seek new park locations that will serve residential areas that are more than a quarter mile from an existing or planned park or separated from an existing or planned park by a street that consists of four or more travel lanes. Where possible, parks shall be associated with and connected to the trail network.
- 13.5 **New development needs.** Work with new development to provide at least three acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents and ensure new development complies with this requirement. Strive to provide at least 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents and ensure no neighborhood should have less than three acres for every 1,000 residents. School playgrounds and fields shall be counted where access is ensured by a joint use agreement.
- 13.6 **Perimeter paths.** Create well-lit perimeter paths around parks, where feasible, to improve safety and to improve how the parks interface with the sidewalk and surrounding neighborhoods.

- 13.7 **Recreation centers.** Locate more public and private health clubs and recreation centers in Coachella in partnership with the Desert Recreation District, community based organizations and private businesses. Explore regulatory or financial incentives in the zoning code and development approval process to encourage the location of private/non-profit recreation facilities (e.g., gyms, yoga or dance studios, martial arts, etc.).
- 13.8 **Diverse recreation programs.** Ensure that recreation programs are affordable and meet the diverse needs in the community for users such as seniors, youth, non-English speaking groups and special needs groups.
- 13.9 **City-wide open space network.** Establish a city-wide open space network within walking distance of residential neighborhoods.
- 13.10 **Coachella Whitewater Trail.** Establish a multi-use trail that runs along the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.
- 13.11 **Coachella Whitewater Trail.** Establish a multi-use trail that runs along the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.
- 13.12 **Active Recreational Areas.** Prohibit consideration of natural drainages and other sensitive resource areas as active park land.
- 13.13 **Nature access.** Work with the County Tribal Governments and other recreation and open space districts to create desert preserves with hiking trails, nature observing areas and picnic areas.
- 13.14 **Parks classification system.** Adopt and utilize the parks classification system identified in Table 6-1 to help guide maintenance and planning work in the city.
- 13.15 **Sustainable landscaping.** Promote sustainability for residences through desert-friendly water-efficient landscaping for parks. Establish public demonstration gardens using native desert planting.
- 13.16 **Unique features.** Encourage parks and trails to be designed to conserve scenic and natural features and encourage public awareness of Coachella's unique geography.
- 13.17 **Park maintenance.** Ensure all parks will be clean, well-kept and well-maintained, preserving them as primary community gathering points in the City.
- 13.18 **Clean parks.** Create methods and opportunities that encourage residents to monitor and report vandalism along with maintenance issues in parks.
- 13.19 **Keep America Beautiful program.** Consider becoming a "Keep America Beautiful" community and utilizing free technology and online mapping programs so residents can report issues using their smart phones or other portable devices.
- 13.20 **Park environments.** Ensure parks in Coachella are a safe and well-lit environment for recreational activities, day and night.
- 13.21 **Funding.** Explore innovative funding and development concepts with non-profit groups.
- 13.22 **Park fees.** Collect land dedications or in lieu fees from new development for the provision of parks and recreation facilities, in pursuit of a minimum parkland standard

of three acres per 1,000 residents, as allowed by the California Quimby Act. Establish policies for identifying neighborhoods that have a preference for the physical provision of park and recreation infrastructure over in lieu fees and administer a fee through which new development can provide parkland in lieu of certain development fees.

- 13.23 Sports facilities.** Regularly assess how existing sports facilities (e.g., pools, fields, courts, etc.) match up with the demand and incorporate findings into the planning of park improvements and developments.
- 13.24 Economic opportunities.** Utilize parks to maximize new and existing economic development opportunities through recruitment of new entertainment uses and by coordinating park development to support commercial development.
- 13.25 Regional parks.** Seek out opportunities to create regional parks, such as professional-quality soccer fields and baseball fields, that will attract tourists to the City.

Table 6-1: Parks Classification Standards

PARK TYPE	ACRE RANGE	POP RADIUS	DISTANCE RADIUS	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
MINI PARKS	Less than 1 acre to 1.5 acres	Not population radius sensitive	Within walking distance of immediate area	Parks that exist primarily in residential areas or adjacent to light business zones and have features such as grass, shade, trees, passive areas, green space, shelters, native plant life, playgrounds and play structures. Use is limited to the local neighborhood. They may be realized in "tot-lot" configurations that provide secure recreational space for small children and typically include equipment such as swings, slides, 'monkey bars' and sand boxes while leaving sufficient room for people to sit and enjoy the space. Mini-Parks are intended to serve a population within a walking distance or short biking distance.
PLAZAS/GREENS	Up to 2 acres	Not population radius sensitive	Close to entertainment and business support areas	Plazas and Greens have the widest variety and the most intense activities of all open spaces. Plazas and Greens serve as formal or informal community gathering spaces. Plazas are unique to the City of Coachella and represent a connection to the culture of the community. These park types are often shaped primarily by building frontages. Plazas are shaped primarily by building frontages and are primarily hardscape with occasional landscape in planters or containers. Greens are landscaped open areas located at the center of a community. Features may include gazebos, water features, trees, shade, performance areas, public artwork and other similar features.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	About 1.5-15	6 to 10 acres per 1,000 residents	About a 2.5 mile radius in the developed area	Parks provide large unobstructed areas for passive or active recreation throughout neighborhoods. Often contain community gardens and playgrounds and are primarily landscaped. These parks are located in residential areas. They include features such as: grass, trees, restrooms, tot lots, picnic and shade shelters, grills, playground equipment, open fields, informal sports areas, swimming pools and/or neighborhood center.
COMMUNITY PARKS	About 10-50 acres	One site per 25,000 residents	About a 5 to 10 mile service radius	Parks located in large areas that are compatible to surrounding uses with features such as: large grass areas, large picnic and shelter areas, restrooms, on-site parking, swimming pool, community center, sports areas/complexes, lights, entertainment areas, special features such as skateboard areas, outdoor theatres, disc golf, BMX, exercise station, ponds and/or water features.
SPECIAL USE PARKS	50+ acres	One site per 50,000 to 200,000 residents	About a 25 mile service radius	Parks not located in residential areas. Features might include: large scale sports complex, special events site (such as fairs and festivals), gardens, concessions, trails, natural/open space, lakes, animal uses.
NATURE/OPEN SPACE	As resources available (usually large)	Not population radius sensitive	As natural resource areas are available	Areas generally free from development or developed at low intensity uses that respect natural environmental characteristics and serve as preservation of natural, cultural, archaeological resources, passive outdoor recreation, public safety and health, and shape urban form. In some cases, these open space types may include working lands such as farms, ranches, and mining areas.
GREENWAYS/TRAILS	As resources are available	Not population radius sensitive	Distance is a function of in and between park options	Greenways and Trails may consist of walking, biking, hiking, equestrian, greenway, long distance, off road, rail, canal, and waterway with the purpose to meet passive or active recreation, informal or formal transportation.
LINEAR PARKS	Should connect with trails	Not population radius sensitive	Tied to neighborhood entries and park sites	Purpose is to connect parks, entry ways, transportation route, and unique features. May be concrete, asphalt, or crusher fine, among other options.