



CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY

2040 GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

All incorporated cities and counties are required by the California Government Code to prepare a comprehensive, long-term general plan, which directs the development of the community. As an official document of the City of Cathedral City, the Comprehensive General Plan provides the goals, policies, and programs to guide the development of the City and to preserve its valued assets, resources and quality of life. In addition to goals and policies, the General Plan includes issue discussions, factoids, diagrams and maps, tables and charts that provide direction for the prudent and conscientious management of existing and future development.

The makeup and composition of Cathedral City are briefly described below. The planning area, including the City limits, the City Sphere-of-Influence and additional lands are described, as are the regional context and long-term perspective taken by the City in developing this document. Portions of the City include Reservation Lands of the Agua Caliente Tribe and allottees. Finally, this brief discussion provides an overview of the Comprehensive General Plan and the Environmental Impact Report, and their roles as the principal guidance for the development of the community.

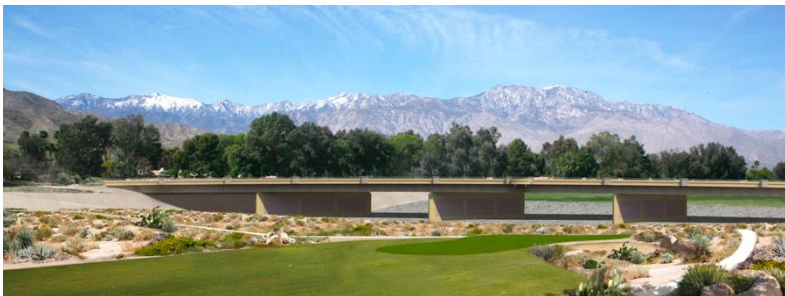
CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY

The City of Cathedral City is located in the Coachella Valley, in the central portion of Riverside County. The City is bordered on the west by the City of Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs, Rancho Mirage and unincorporated county lands on the east, and unincorporated county lands to the south and north. The City currently encompasses 23± square miles and extends from the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains on the south to Edom Hill and the Indio Hills on the north, with most of the City occurring on the valley floor. This General Plan addresses not only the 14,557± acres located within the City limits and encompassed in five City Council electoral districts. The City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) encompasses 23,544± acres. These SOI lands are located north of US Interstate-10 and the Union Pacific Railroad corridor and extends east to beyond Cook Street.

Cathedral City is the second largest and one of the most diverse communities in the Coachella Valley with a 2016 population that is 60.5% Hispanic, 30.4% non-Hispanic white, 4.6% Asian and 2.82% African American. Incorporated in 1981, development in the City began in the early part of the 20th century and today hosts a diverse mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial developments, and an array of artists, musicians, makers and doers from all walks of life. With major hotels and golf courses, excellent schools and a thriving and expanding commercial and service base, the City is working to further diversify its economy and employment opportunities.



Cathedral City is well served by major transportation routes and is actively working with its neighbor cities and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) to expand multi-modal transportation and other attributes of a *healthy city*, and to bring commuter rail and express mass transit service to its regional access system. Major recreational and educational facilities are also becoming integral parts of the range of services and facilities available in the City. Cathedral City has become one of the valley's most desirable and affordable places to live, and leads the way in preserving open space, parks and recreation facilities, and integrating public art into the fabric of the community.



Most of the City south of US Interstate-10 is already developed and the remaining vacant lands in this area are generally located east of Date Palm Drive and north of Dinah Shore Drive. In recent years, the City's corporate limits have expanded to include lands north of US I-10 and have extended east to Bob Hope Drive, where large-scale master planned communities have already been

approved for development. As noted, the City's Sphere-of-Influence extends eastward on the north side of US I-10 taking in the community of Thousand Palms, continuing eastward beyond Cook Street and including the Classic Club and the surrounding master planned community.



Development over the past decades has been focused along the East Palm Canyon Drive (Highway 111) corridor, and the northern areas of the City on the valley floor. The City is situated across a variety of geographic and geologic conditions, including a mid-valley alluvial plain and limited mountain foothills, as well as the sandy desert floor. The Santa Rosa Mountains bound the City on the south and Edom Hill and the Indio Hills bound the City on the north.

The extensive deposits formed by drainage from these mountains form the alluvial fans and plains on which much of the City has developed. The adjoining Santa Rosa Mountains, and the San Jacinto and Little San Bernardino Mountains to the west and north, respectively, also provide dramatic and valuable viewsheds. The City is a geographically and biologically important location, where significantly differing wildlife habitat, landscapes and geology meet.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public has played a vital role in this most recent General Plan update. Through a program of numerous public workshops and study sessions, members of the general public, including residents and business owners, described their hopes, concerns and vision for the community.

Workshops were held throughout the City where an overview of the General Plan and update process was presented. Information handouts on the General Plan, and the environmental review and public hearing process were also provided. Comments were recorded during many one-on-one and group sessions, on comment cards and by other means.

Focused public study sessions were also held jointly with the Planning Commission and City Council, and continued the review of land use assignments throughout the City. These study sessions also reviewed and discussed the City's roadway network and roadway classifications, as well as the new *Active Transportation Plan*, which is a part of the *Circulation and Mobility Element*. In addition, draft General Plan Elements were taken to various City committees and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Public Arts Commission. Following these final study sessions and committee and commission meetings, which provided additional opportunity for public input, the Draft General Plan and environmental review document were made available for a 45-day public review period, during which additional comments were received and considered. The adopted General Plan reflects the values and aspirations of the community and provides vision and guidance for the City's development through the Year 2040.



BASIS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan update is an evolution that stretches back to a time well before the City's incorporation in 1981. Urban development in the Coachella Valley has occurred in only about the past 100 years and for many centuries before that the region was settled by the Cahuilla Indians.

The knowledge and history of the Cahuilla and the valley has been handed down from generation to generation. In modern times, science and technology have been brought to bear with first railroads and later highway transportation crossing the distance and connecting the valley with the outside. Early in the 20th Century large-scale agriculture, and the development of settlements, towns and cities has followed.

"A city is not gauged by its length and width, but by the broadness of its vision and the height of its dreams."

- Herb Caen

"What is the City but the people?"

- Wm. Shakespeare

The General Plan update has also been informed by a deepening understanding of local air and water resources, changing climate and hydrologic cycles, flooding, earthquakes and other geologic hazards. Modern technology has also introduced many new hazards. But we have chosen to better cherish and protect our cultural, biological and other environmental resources. These have shaped this 2040 General Plan update.

GENERAL PLAN VISION STATEMENT

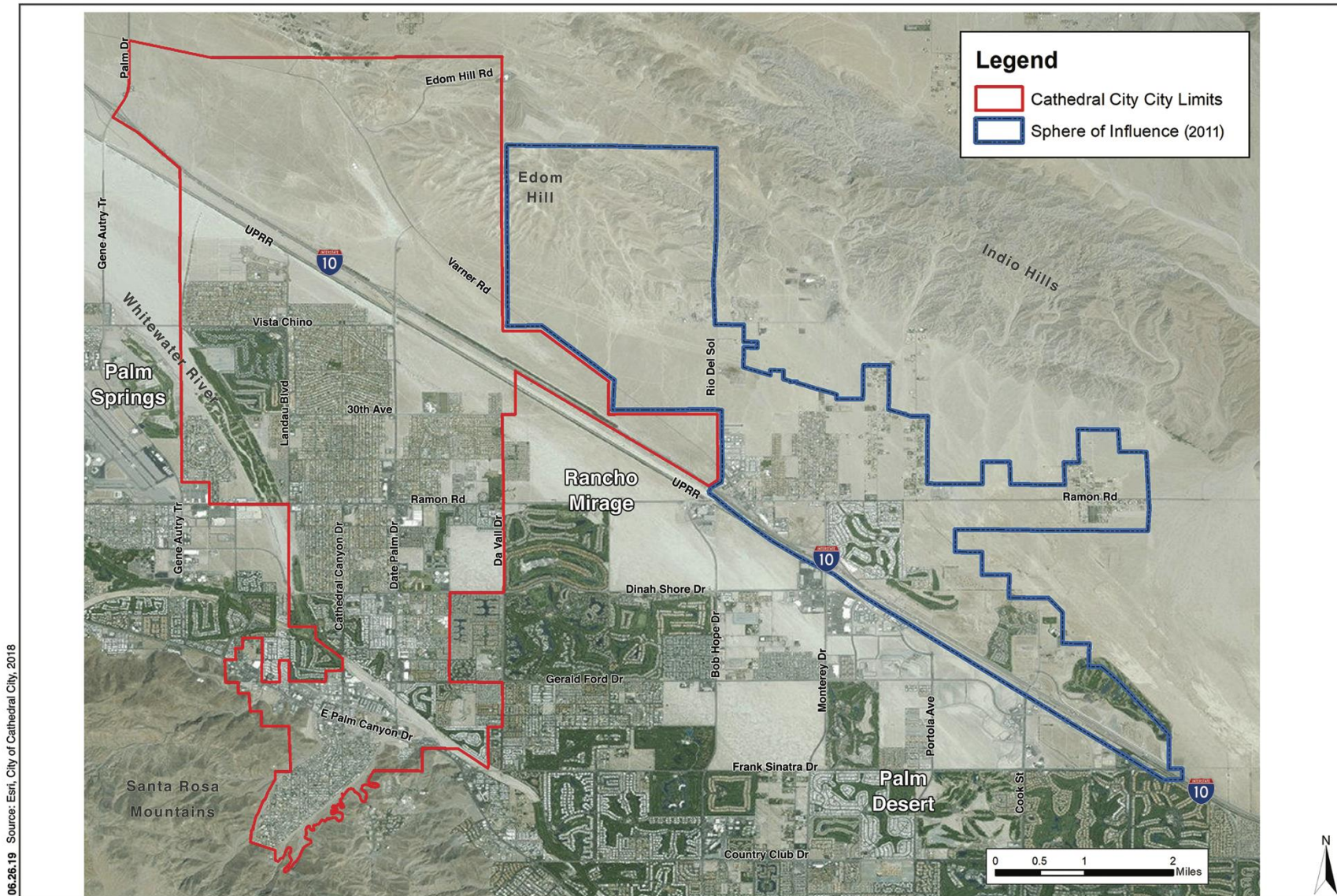
The General Plan Vision Statement is a distillation of the expressions of concern, hope and aspiration for the City of Cathedral City and its citizens. Hundreds of members of the community provided comments and various forms of input about the City's future. These are summarized in the following vision statement:

“A sustainable Cathedral City that continues to grow culturally and economically, that celebrates and embraces diversity, that provides a wide variety of housing and employment opportunities, that ensures community health and safety, that protects and celebrates the environment, and that promotes a high quality of life for all of its residents.”



Fountain of Life

Water is the source of life and most precious in our desert environment. At the Town Square Park the *Fountain of Life* is a symbol of flexibility, adaptability and persistence that can be as giving as a gentle rain and as powerful as a mighty flood. So too, the City must be progressive, adaptable and flexible to meet the changing needs of the community and take advantage of emerging opportunities. The Fountain of Life is a perfect symbol of Cathedral City and joyously celebrates our desert realm, its unique and diverse character, and our appreciation for the things that make life possible. The City General Plan serves as a strategic policy and action plan that reflects the values of the community and provides a way of making our vision and dreams for the City a reality.



06.26.19 Source: Esri, City of Cathedral City, 2018

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – WHAT’S NEW?

Since the General Plan was last updated in 2009, the State of California’s Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has updated the General Plan Guidelines (2017). The last update to the guidelines was in 2003 and there have been many changes to state law, regulations and case law. Some of the most significant changes to state law and the guidelines include the elevation of such topics as transportation, climate change, and environmental justice and other considerations of social equity.

The 2017 Guidelines are also explicit in requiring that the General Plan provide detailed data and information in each element. While it is meant to be a policy document, the reasoning behind the goals, policies, objectives and programs of the General Plan must be supported by the information and analysis set forth in the General Plan. The state planning priorities, which are intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety, including in urban, suburban, and rural communities, are as follows:

- (a) To promote infill development and equity by rehabilitating, maintaining, and improving existing infrastructure that supports infill development and appropriate reuse and redevelopment of previously developed, underutilized land that is presently served by transit, streets, water, sewer, and other essential services, particularly in underserved areas, and to preserving cultural and historic resources.
- (b) To protect environmental and agricultural resources by protecting, preserving, and enhancing the state’s most valuable natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands, natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands. It also directs the protection of recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open space, and landscapes with locally unique features and areas identified by the state as deserving special protection.
- (c) To encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that any infrastructure associated with development, other than infill development, supports new development that does all of the following:
 - (1) Uses land efficiently.
 - (2) Is built adjacent to existing developed areas to the extent consistent with the priorities specified pursuant to subdivision (b).
 - (3) Is located in an area appropriately planned for growth.
 - (4) Is served by adequate transportation and other essential utilities and services.
 - (5) Minimizes ongoing costs to taxpayers.

In general, but with important exceptions, the State General Plan Guidelines are advisory. However, the courts frequently refer to them when trying cases and interpreting planning law. For this reason, the Guidelines closely adhere to and frequently cite statutes and current case law. They also rely and are based upon commonly accepted principles of contemporary planning practice. The following words are used to indicate whether a particular subject in the guidelines is mandatory, advisory, or permissive:

- (a) “Must” or “shall” identifies a mandatory statutory requirement that all public agencies are required to follow.
- (b) “Should” or “suggest(ed)” identifies guidance provided by OPR based on policy considerations contained in California’s planning laws.
- (c) “May” or “can (could)” identifies a permissive recommendation that is left fully to the discretion of the City.

MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES

Over the past decade, the State of California has adopted regulations that have included a focus on climate change, social equity, environmental justice, and healthy communities. OPR believes that thoughtful planning based on such considerations will foster a future with a strong economy, thriving built and natural environments, and a healthy, prosperous citizenry. These themes and how they are embodied in the General Plan Guidelines are briefly discussed below.

Climate Change

In California, climate change has been the subject of multiple Executive Orders (EO) and legislation, and is a high priority subject for any General Plan update. They include establishing interim emissions reduction targets for 2030, long-term targets for 2020 and 2050, and climate change adaptation and resilience as a priority. Additional state goals include reduction of petroleum use by up to 50 percent by 2030, and an increase of renewable energy to 50 percent by 2030 through the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2016. California has set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction requirements in numerous sectors including land use and transportation planning. OPR's recommendations focus on how the General Plans can achieve GHG emissions reductions, increase resiliency to climate change impacts, and lead to healthier and more prosperous communities.

Economics

Policies related to all elements of the General Plan greatly affect economic opportunity, development, and stability. Decisions regarding land use and circulation have direct and indirect fiscal implications for local economies and, in turn, economies of urban and rural centers affect the health, climate, and equity of communities. As with all General Plan topics, even if addressed in a separate section, economic development must link and integrate with other elements in order to be successful.

Healthy Communities

In 2012, the Governor created the *Let's Get Healthy California Task Force*. Chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and asthma affect quality of life and productivity. In addition, social, economic, and environmental factors where people live, work, and play affect their health and well-being. The Task Force identified the creation and expansion of healthy communities to be one of three major focus areas for the promotion of overall health improvement. Because a General Plan allows a community to envision its future growth and development planning offers one important way to improve the community's health, local jurisdictions are encouraged to incorporate health-supporting policies into their General Plan.

Equitable Opportunities

Planning decisions affect the entire community, and the entire community must be allowed equal access to the public process (Gov Code Section 11135). Community planning and policy affects everyone and ranges from determining proximity to localized noise or air pollution, to providing healthy grocery options, to creating access to employment and education opportunity. Incorporating equity into all aspects of planning will ensure that residents of the City benefit from reduced GHG emissions, climate change adaptation policies, active transportation options, and healthy communities with access to economic opportunity for all.