



# City of Desert Hot Springs CITYWEST VISION PLAN





# City of Desert Hot Springs CITYWEST VISION PLAN

---

This report was funded in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration [and Federal Transit Administration], U.S. Department of Transportation and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The views and opinions of the agency expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation, nor Caltrans.

The contents of this report reflect the views of the author, who is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) or DOT. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.



*Prepared For:*  
City of Desert Hot Springs/  
Southern California Association of Governments

*Prepared By:*



**DESIGN, COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT**

**85 SOUTH VENTURA AVENUE  
VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93001**

**TEL: 805 643 7700  
FAX: 805 643 7782**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
2. EXISTING CONDITIONS .....	2-1
3. VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3-1
4. LAND USE PLAN ALTERNATIVES.....	4-1
5. PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN.....	5-1
6. DESIGN GUIDELINES.....	6-1
7. IMPLEMENTATION.....	7-1
APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY OUTREACH	

*List of Figures*

Figure 2-1	Regional Location.....	2-2
Figure 2-2	Study Area Base Map.....	2-3
Figure 2-3	Developed Parcels.....	2-6
Figure 2-4	General Plan Land Use Designations .....	2-11
Figure 2-5	Trails and Sensitive Plant Species .....	2-13
Figure 4-1	Preliminary Development Prototype 1: Lower Density .....	4-2
Figure 4-2	Preliminary Development Prototype 2: Moderate Density .....	4-5
Figure 4-3	Preliminary Development Prototype 3: Higher Density .....	4-8
Figure 5-1	Preferred Land Use Plan.....	5-2
Figure 5-2	Residential Overlooking Wash Area.....	5-5
Figure 5-3	Commercial Overlooking Wash Area.....	5-7
Figure 5-4	Commercial Intersection at Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard.....	5-9
Figure 5-5	Public Park Overlooking Wash Area.....	5-11
Figure 6-1	Building Orientation With Roof Overhangs .....	6-1
Figure 6-2	Appropriately Scaled Signage .....	6-3
Figure 6-3	Curb Radii.....	6-4
Figure 6-4	Typical Corridor Cross Sections.....	6-5

## I INTRODUCTION

The City of Desert Hot Springs is currently undergoing a General Plan update and is planning to join the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) in the spring of 2011. Adoption of both of these plans will require the City to balance the open space conservation easements with future development and population growth, especially in the 3,300-acre CityWest area. CityWest is an area approximately 2 miles west of Downtown Desert Hot Springs that straddles the MSHCP Conservation Area (conservation area).

The CityWest Vision Plan (Vision Plan) holds the potential to serve as an example of how planned conservation, under the MSHCP, and planned development, under the General Plan, can be balanced in Desert Hot Springs. This Vision Plan has been developed through a community workshop process with participation from the City of Desert Hot Springs, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, local property owners, and input from other local, regional, and State agencies including Fish and Game and Riverside County. The presentations and results from the stakeholder and community workshops are provided in Appendix A. This document is intended to serve as a starting point for further discussion and community planning.

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS/SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITYWEST VISION PLAN  
INTRODUCTION

## 5 PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN

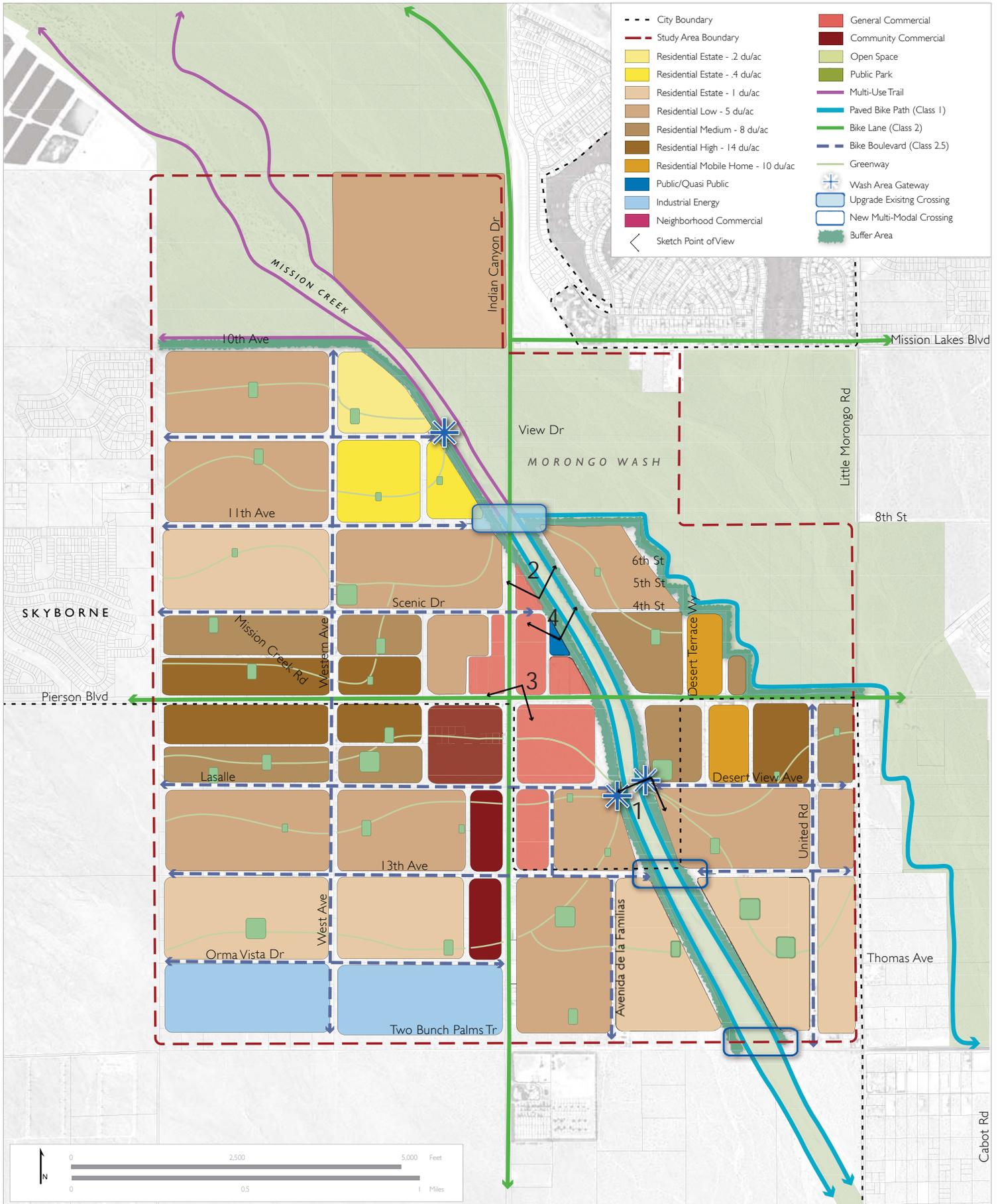
This chapter presents the Preferred Land Use Plan for the CityWest Study Area (Study Area). The Preferred Land Use Plan was selected by the community during a community workshop that presented the three land use plan alternatives described in Chapter 4. The community reached a consensus during the workshop that combined characteristics of each of the three land use plan alternatives, as described below. The Preferred Land Use Plan is illustrated in Figure 5-1. Ground-level perspective sketches are also provided to depict the design and relationship of potential development with the conservation area.

- ◆ The low-density outlying development of Alternative 1 was selected because it would attract some high income residents, particularly those with equestrian interests.
- ◆ The circulation design of Alternative 2 was selected to provide an optimal mix of transportation options.
- ◆ The dense corridor design of Alternative 3 was selected because it plans Pierson Boulevard as a robust corridor. This makes the best use of underutilized infrastructure located under Pierson Boulevard and will work well to brand the corridor as a gateway to the city. The caveat to accepting this density is that quality building design cannot be sacrificed.

Following is a description of the Preferred Land Use Plan in detail, including locations and characteristics of proposed land uses, open space and recreational resources, and the proposed circulation system.

### *A. Residential Land Uses*

The uses and locations of Residential High, Medium, Low, and Estate land use designations within the Preferred Land Use Plan are described below. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Existing Conditions) of this Vision Plan, there are some existing mobile homes and single-family homes located inside the Study Area. Land use designations for the two mobile home parks that are located



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CIAC, Riverside County Assessor, CalAtlas

FIGURE 5-1  
PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN



along Pierson Boulevard are represented in Figure 5-1. The land uses designations under existing single-family can be modified and will not adversely impact residents.

### 1. Residential High

The Preferred Land Use Plan maximizes the opportunity to plan high-density housing along the Pierson Boulevard corridor. The Vision recommends designating land along the corridor, located west of the commercial center, at the maximum density permitted under the General Plan, which is currently 14 dwelling units per acre. Under a high buildout scenario, this density could be increased to 20 or 25 units per acre.

Residential High in this location makes the best use of sewer/water infrastructure lines under Pierson Boulevard and directs vehicle traffic onto this arterial. Alleys running parallel to Pierson Boulevard provide access to parking, buffer the Residential High from Residential Medium land uses and avoid the need to install curb-cuts and drive aisles along Pierson Boulevard. Most likely, the building form would generally consist of attached row townhomes with two-car garages at 14 dwelling units per acre and increase to three-story multi-family buildings with a separate parking area, if a 20 to 25-unit density range is needed.

### 2. Residential Medium

Residential Medium land use designations, located along Scenic Drive and La Salle Road in the Preferred Land Use Plan, insulate the tracts of Residential High along Pierson Boulevard from low density residential on the north and south. This designation permits up to 8 dwelling units per acre. The arrangement of Residential Medium promotes neighborhood continuity by ensuring that single-family houses are not built across the street from high-density condos. This designation is likely to be developed into single-family houses on 5,500 square foot lots.



*Attached row townhomes like these can be built in the Residential High land use designation.*



*Small-lot single-family units like these can be built in the Residential Medium land use designation.*



*Clustered ranchettes can be built in the Residential Estate land use designation.*



*Large estate units like these can be built in the Residential Estate land use designation.*



*Traditional single-family units like these can be built in the Residential Low land use designation.*

### 3. Residential Low

The residential densities in the Preferred Land Use Plan would further decrease north of Scenic Drive and South of La Salle Road, down to Residential Low. A tract that is largely developed, located east of Indian Canyon Drive and south of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is also designated to remain Residential Low. Residential Low permits up to 5 dwelling units per acre, meaning development will likely consist of traditionally-sized single-family homes with 9,000-square-foot lot sizes. The supply of Residential Low land not only buffers the medium density development from very low density estates, but it also provides housing for middle-class residents. The illustration in Figure 5-2 below shows some housing built at this density, located adjacent to the conservation area. The sketch point-of-view is represented by two diverging arrows labeled #1 in Figure 5-1.

### 4. Residential Estate

The Residential Estate designation is used on the north, south, and eastern periphery of the Study Area. Residential Estate 1.0, Residential Estate 0.4, and Residential Estate 0.2 designations correspond to 1-acre, 2.5-acre, and 5-acre lots, respectively. The largest lots are located in prime real estate locations where viewsheds strengthen property values, and where the permanent open space of the conservation area is close by. Residences built on these parcels would generally be large, accented by many windows to catch the views, and feature ranchettes built to accommodate equestrians and houses. The sketch in the background of Figure 5-2 shows how some ranchette estates might look.

#### B. Commercial Land Uses

The commercial retail center, at the intersection of Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, is the heart of the Study Area. The Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial, and Community Commercial designations are arranged to reduce impacts on the conservation area and provide accessibility from the arterials. The Commercial Center converges into an



FIGURE 5-2  
RESIDENTIAL OVERLOOKING WASH AREA

Industrial Energy designation running west of Indian Canyon Drive, along Two Bunch Palms Trail.

The configuration of business types should support the daily needs of residents, provide shopping, dining and some accommodation for visitors. Regional entertainment and shopping opportunities should be provided along with a local-serving grocery store retailer that provides goods to local residents. A mix of sporting stores, hotels, entertainment venues and free parking should be developed to attract recreation enthusiasts who view the commercial center as a kickoff point into a network of trails and a gateway into Joshua Tree National Park.

### 1. General Commercial

General Commercial accounts for the majority of commercial land in the Study Area. This designation spans one mile down the western side of Indian Canyon Drive, fronts portions of the conservation area, and transitions the commercial center into the Light Industrial Energy designation on the southwestern side of Indian Canyon Drive. General Commercial is suitable for planned commercial centers with small- to medium-size commercial retail and commercial service uses, including hotels.



*Vertical mixed use with ground floor cafes and shops could be built adjacent to the conservation area in a mixed-use overlay zone.*

Stores facing the wash will have a different character than those facing the corridors. An overlay buffer zone could be used to facilitate a mix of cafes, local art galleries, and specialty shops framed into a conservation-area-integrated promenade, shown in Figure 5-3 (see Sketch Point-of-View #2 in Figure 5-1 for reference). Vertical mixed use with residential above commercial and live-work condos should be encouraged to provide an onsite population base that will promote market activity and safety. General Commercial located along arterials should attract anchor stores and filter business off of Indian Canyon Drive's daily commuters.



FIGURE 5-3  
COMMERCIAL OVERLOOKING WASH AREA



*A well-designed commercial center could be built in the Community Commercial land use designation.*



*Energy-themed office space could increase local employment opportunities.*



*Light industrial space could incubate new business growth.*

## 2. Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial is located on the southwest corner of Indian Canyon Drive and Lasalle. Neighborhood Commercial is suitable for a grocery store anchor with ancillary shops and restaurants.

## 3. Community Commercial

Community Commercial is located on the southwest corner of Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard. Community Commercial should be developed into an entertainment-serving center consisting of large-scale department anchor stores, restaurants and hotels. Approval of a Specific Plan is required for development in this area.

A “main street” theme illustrated in Figure 5-4 engages the central intersection, Indian Canyon Drive at Pierson Boulevard, with paseos and buildings fronting the streets (see Sketch Point-of-View #3 in Figure 5-1 for reference). The perspective rests on a large department store located on the Community Commercial-designated parcels with a clock tower and delineated architecture. Parking is located behind the buildings, buffering them from adjacent residential uses. Moderate traffic calming measures are implemented to increase pedestrian safety and provide space for limited on-street parking; however, traffic signals should be coordinated to minimally deter pass-through vehicle trips. This design facilitates both pass-through traffic on Indian Canyon Drive and a walkable scale for pedestrians.

## C. Industrial Energy

Along the southerly portion of Indian Canyon Drive, uses should be compatible with existing wind turbines, such as new office and light industrial development that is flexible enough to accommodate an array of employment opportunities. Vocational training, especially related to natural energy, would also be an appropriate land use.

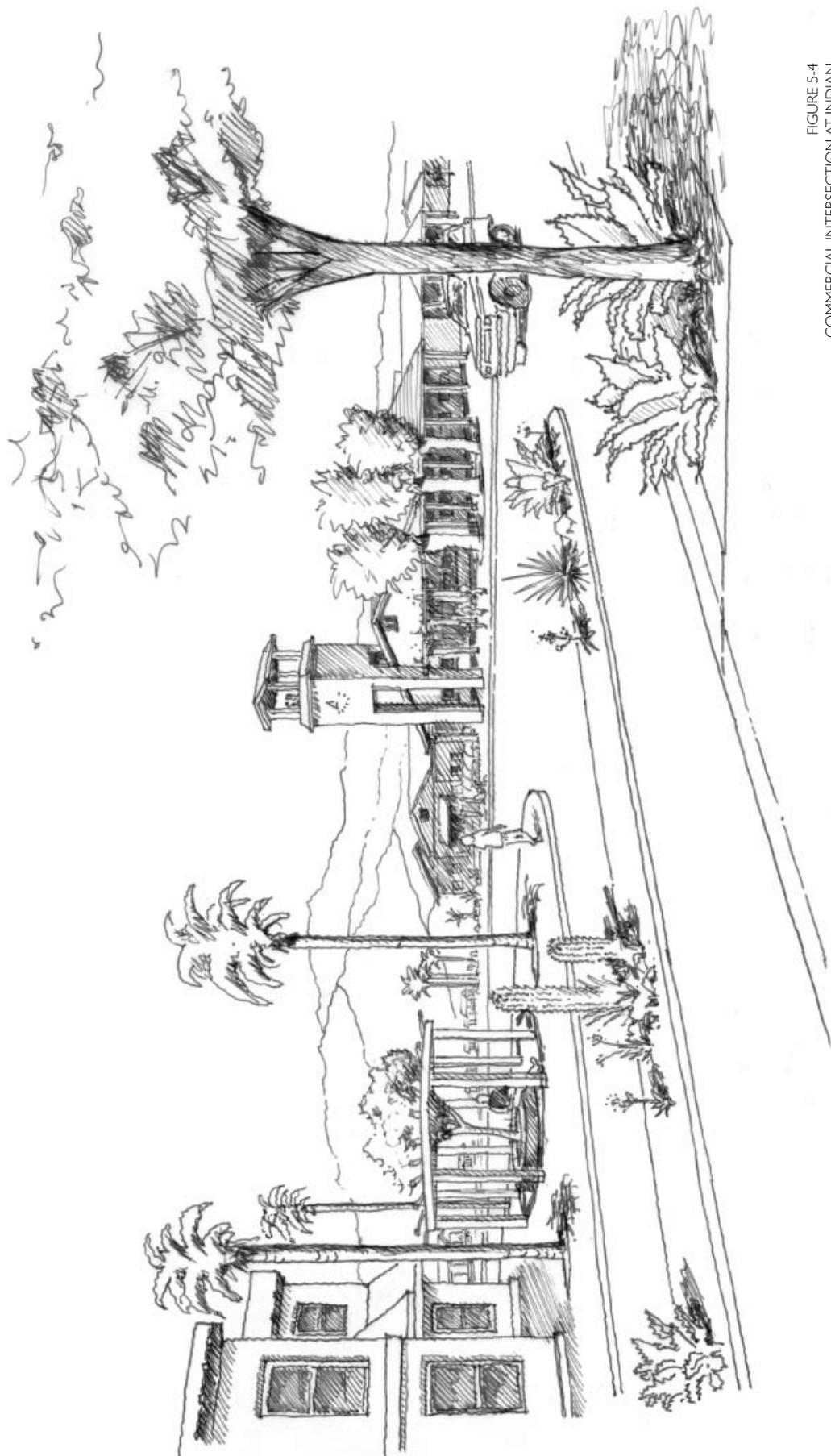


FIGURE 5-4  
COMMERCIAL INTERSECTION AT INDIAN  
CANYON DRIVE AND PIERSON BOULEVARD

#### *D. Parks, Recreation and Open Space*

The Preferred Land Use Plan arranges open space to draw attention to the conservation area, promote healthy activities and provide Class 1 paths. Along with a sustainable development approach, recreational areas should distinguish the district and reinforce the connection to the environment. The array of open space types should serve locals and visitors. Local residents should have an assortment of active parks and neighborhood connections. The natural resources should be marketed to attract visitors.

The locations of active parks are shown in Figure 5-1. They are distributed throughout neighborhoods and connected by greenways that terminate at gateways to the conservation area. Figure 5-1 identifies the sketch point-of-view of a 12-acre Public/Quasi Public space, located in the core of the General Commercial area on the northwest corner of Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, and bordering the conservation area. This area is illustrated in Figure 5-5 as an outdoor museum/mini-trail with shaded educational kiosks describing the MSHCP and native species (see Sketch Point-of-View #4 in Figure 5-1 for reference). This space could function as the centerpiece of a promenade extending along the wash, as an outdoor amphitheater for spring concerts, or as an active sports park overlooking the Mission Creek channel and trails. It would provide bike racks and shaded hitching posts with water for horses as well as parking to kick-off trail excursions.



*Greenways should be landscaped and designed to accommodate multiple uses.*

#### *E. Circulation Upgrades*

All proposed land uses are connected by an orthogonal street grid network with bike boulevards and Class 1 bike paths along Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard. Circulation improvements should be planned that provide neighborhood and commercial center accessibility as well as recreational opportunities. The street network should form the backbone of various distinct neighborhoods, and facilitate multimodal transportation.

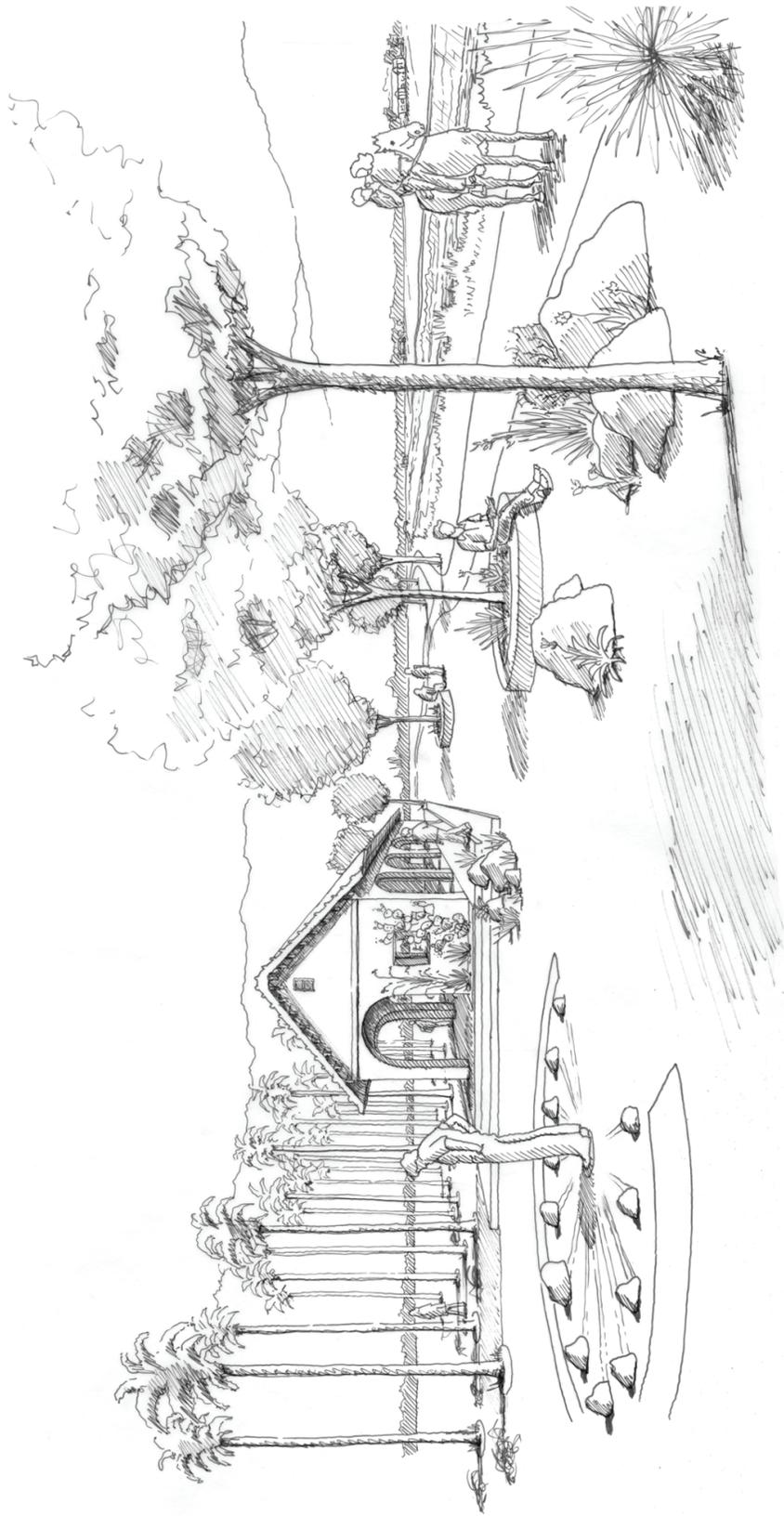


FIGURE 5.5  
PUBLIC PARK OVERLOOKING WASH AREA



*Gateways should be located along linear greenways and at trail entrances.*



*Class I Bike Paths are separated from roadways.*



*Class II Bike Lanes are suitable for arterial roads.*

The Preferred Land Use Plan, Figure 5-1, illustrates an assortment of circulation features that range from bike boulevards on neighborhood streets to rural trails running north into Morongo Canyon. The space that forms the buffer area, bordering the conservation area, contains a multi-use trail and Class 1 bike path. This trail lines a number of land uses and connects to public parks and a commercial/mixed-use promenade.

Wash area gateways funnel trips from parks, through linear greenways, onto paths and trails within the buffer area. Class 1, 2, and 2.5 bike lanes are distributed throughout CityWest to provide travel alternatives to driving. The various types of multimodal transportation features in the Preferred Land Use Plan are described in more detail below:

### 1. Greenways

Greenways are linear parks with permeable surfacing suitable for horses, bikes, pedestrians and small electric vehicles. In the Preferred Land Use Plan, greenways connect neighborhoods through the active parks and the commercial center and feed into the conservation buffer area. They allow for longer path segments such that users have fewer stops at intersections.

### 2. Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are two-way paths with permeable surfacing suitable for horses, mountain bikes, hikers and joggers. Motorized vehicles are prohibited. The trails start at 11th Avenue and wind north into Mission Creek and Morongo Wash in the Preferred Land Use Plan.

### 3. Class 1 Bike Paths

Class 1 bike paths provide the safest and most efficient means of bicycle travel. They are dedicated paved trails that are physically separated from the roadway by either distance or a vertical barrier. In the Preferred Land Use Plan, Class 1 bike paths are located throughout the buffer area south of 11th Avenue.

#### **4. Class 2 Bike Lanes**

Class 2 bike lanes share the right-of-way with a roadway or walkway. It is indicated by a bikeway pictograph and continuous stripe on the pavement, or separated by a continuous intermittent curb or other low barrier. Collector and major streets with medium to high traffic volumes and few driveways are appropriate for Class 2 bike lanes. In the Preferred Land Use Plan, Class 2 bike lanes line the major arterials of Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive.

#### **5. Class 2.5 Bike Boulevards**

Class 2.5 bike boulevards are shared roadways that are improved for bicycle transit and marked with signs to indicate a shared roadway. This class is suited for low-speed traffic residential streets and they extend through all residential streets in the Preferred Land Use Plan.

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS/SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITYWEST VISION PLAN  
PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN

## 6 DESIGN GUIDELINES

This chapter lists building, circulation and sustainable design guidelines that should be incorporated into the development of projects in the CityWest Study Area. All development should contribute to a sense of place by shaping a memorable public realm. High-quality, well-designed buildings should be provided that work in concert with each other and the streetscapes. All projects should follow fundamental principles of good architecture and design that build character and enhance the natural setting.

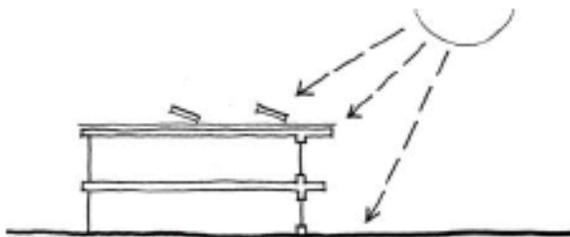
### A. *Building Design Guidelines*

The form and shape of buildings define neighborhood character. Strong design elements make more desirable places to live.

#### 1. **Building Orientation**

- ◆ A building's main entrance should face the street, not a parking lot or side yard. The building should emphasize the street-facing entrance and give it prominence.
- ◆ The south side of the building should have many windows to draw natural light to the interior. Windows should be accentuated with awnings, roof overhangs or similar features that minimize the amount of direct sunlight inside the building as shown in Figure 6-1 below.

FIGURE 6-1 **BUILDING ORIENTATION WITH ROOF OVERHANGS**





*Architectural features should provide shade and differentiate businesses.*

## 2. Building Massing and Articulation

The overall shape of each building should create a sense of variety and include features that help the building relate to the human scale.

- ◆ Residential or commercial building mass should be broken into architectural features that vary in height and depth such as pilasters and delineated rooftops.
- ◆ Residential or commercial design treatments should be required on all sides, not just the sides that face the street, and they should be consistent with the neighborhood's architectural style. Facades should also include light-colored finishes that reflect the sun.
- ◆ Deep window reveals should be used to add an extra dimension of detail on the building's surface and increase shade inside the building.
- ◆ Roof lines should include strong features, such as cornices or colored trim that balance contrast and form as well as provide a variety of profiles that are consistent with those of neighboring buildings.
- ◆ Commercial building façades should reflect the number of businesses that occupy the building.
- ◆ Ground floor commercial should provide storefront windows over at least 50 percent of the facades' length that let passersby see what goes on inside.
- ◆ Awnings and arcades should be integrated into commercial buildings to provide shady spaces for pedestrians.



*Residential landscaping should be designed with consideration for the desert climate.*

## 3. Landscaping

Although landscaping may include some plants that are not native to the desert, such as shade trees, most plants should be selected for compatibility with Coachella's desert climate. Landscaping shall also be compatible with the 2009 Mission Springs Water District Water Efficient Landscaping Guidelines that was adopted into Chapter 162 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code.

- ◆ Planters, planting beds and planting strips should be provided in building setbacks and near entryways.
- ◆ All plants should be irrigated with reclaimed water when possible.

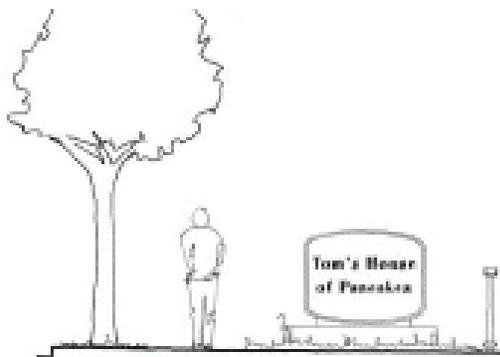
- ◆ Shade trees should be located where they can protect pedestrians from the sun and cast shade on the building's walls and windows. Some appropriate trees for greenways and streets include Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), Chilean Mesquite (*Prosopis chilensis*) and the Arabian Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*). In addition to these more formal trees suitable for greenways and streets, trees like the Paper Mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) are more appropriate as a specimen shade tree at focal points and ranchettes. Smaller shrubs appropriate for the area include Agaves (*Agave spp.*), Yuccas (*Yucca spp.*), Desert Spoon (*Dasyliirion spp.*), Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), Dwarf Poinciana (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*) and a variety of cactus.

#### 4. Signs

Commercial building signs should serve as attractive additions to the building's overall design.

- ◆ Sign materials, colors and placement should relate harmoniously to the architectural style. Figure 6-2 shows an example of a sign kept to a reasonable size and placed where it can be read by pedestrians, bicyclists and passing vehicles.
- ◆ Illumination should be limited and neon signs should not be permitted.

FIGURE 6-2 **APPROPRIATELY SCALED SIGNAGE**



*Caesalpinia pulcherrima* has attractive blossoms and can provide shade.



*Desert spoon and boulder accent* are some smaller shrubs that would fare well.

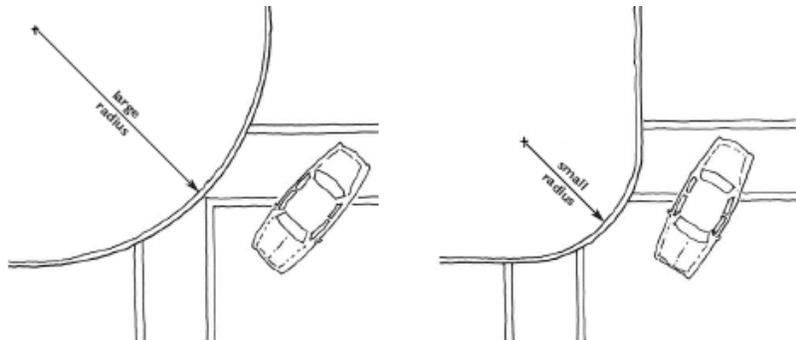
## B. Circulation Design Guidelines

### 1. Streets

Streets are publicly-owned spaces that should provide a comfortable and enjoyable environment for people who use them.

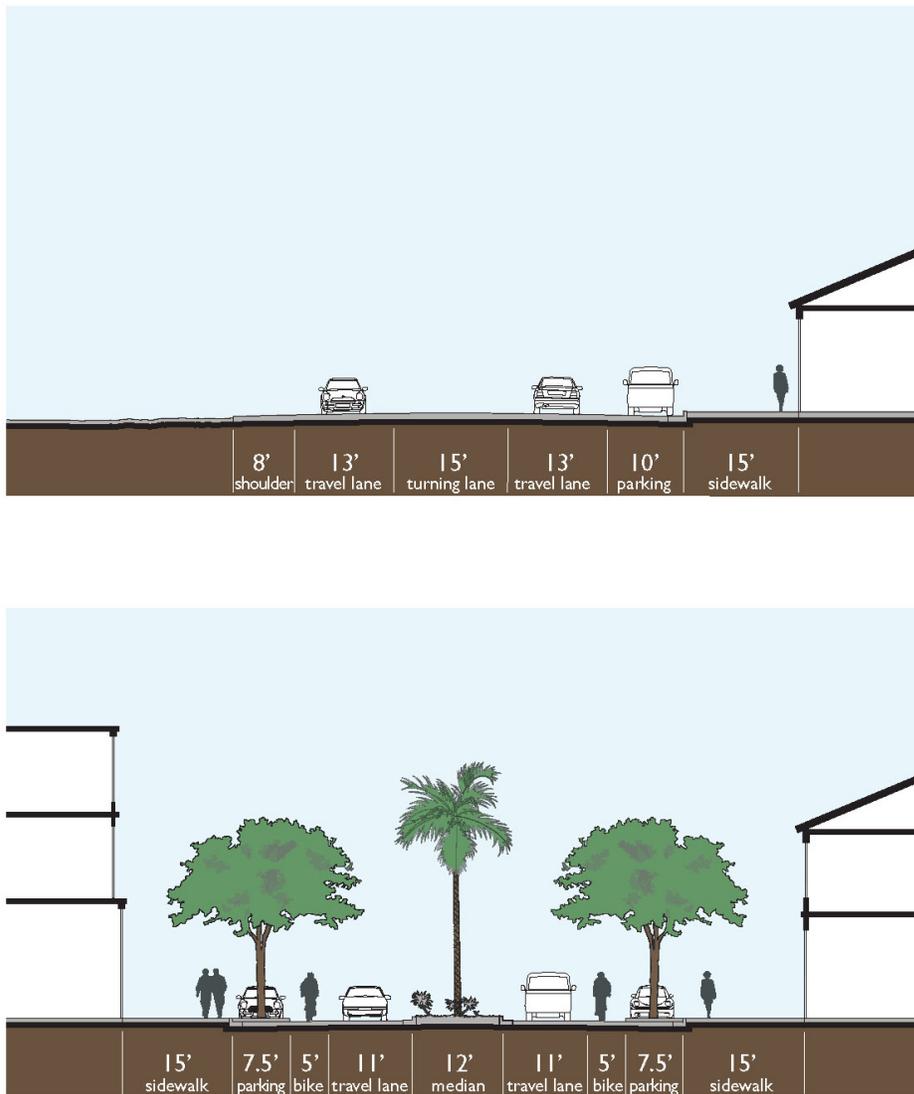
- ◆ The street network should be developed with narrower residential streets without cul-de-sacs, and highly connected neighborhoods.
- ◆ Alleys should be built behind development lining Pierson Boulevard to eliminate the need for curb cuts and street-facing garages on the corridor.
- ◆ Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard are high-capacity arterial corridors that should be reinforced.
- ◆ Moderate traffic calming measures should be implemented in the commercial center to promote pedestrian safety. An example of this would be small curb radii design, illustrated in Figure 6-3, requiring drivers to reduce turning speeds and increase pedestrian safety. Sufficient road widths should be provided to reduce conflicts between bicyclist, drivers and parked vehicles. Figure 6-4 depicts a cross-section configuration of a prototypical avenue that would be sufficient for arterial design in the study area.

FIGURE 6-3 **CURB RADII**



*Wide curb radius on left allows cars to turn at unsafe speeds; narrow curb radius on right slows cars, improving safety.*

FIGURE 6-4 **TYPICAL CORRIDOR CROSS SECTIONS**





*Nonmotorized trails should be planned in accordance with new development and regional trail systems.*

## 2. Trails

Trails can provide viable alternatives to streets. A network of trails could be used to market the area as a “nonmotorized gateway” to the Coachella Valley.

- ◆ Planned trails should be compatible with the Coachella Valley Nonmotorized Trails Plan.
- ◆ Development standards, specific plans and the subdivision ordinance should include circulation design measures that ensure land use linkages that unify the Study Area.

## 3. Transit

Transit service should be extended into the Study Area. The current provider, Sunline Transit Agency, loops a service route from the Downtown on Palm Drive, west on Mission Lakes Boulevard, south on West Drive, and back to Palm Drive via Pierson Boulevard. Little would be required to include the commercial center by extending service further west on Mission Lakes Boulevard and south along Indian Canyon Drive.

### C. Sustainable Design Guidelines

New development can cut costs, save energy and reduce pollution while creating distinctive new places that draw upon the area’s unique qualities. Energy and water conservation measures should be incorporated into well-designed neighborhoods to promote sustainable living.

#### 1. Solar Power

Photovoltaic, or solar panels offer a low maintenance way to reduce energy costs. New buildings, especially in desert locations, can draw upon the ample sunshine to generate solar power.

- ◆ Installation should be required upfront. This is 50 percent less expensive than retrofitting at a later time. The panels pay for themselves in five to ten years and State and federal tax credits reduce upfront costs.



*Photovoltaic panels offer a low maintenance way to reduce energy costs.*

## 2. Wind Power

The presence of wind farms located along the San Geronio Pass and southwest of the Study Area show that wind is a reliable resource in this location.

- ◆ Wind turbines should be encouraged on new development as a source of energy production. Several companies have begun to produce small wind turbines that can be mounted on the roof of a building. These devices are just a few feet high, operate with little to zero noise impact, and can generate hundreds of kilowatts of electricity each year.

## 3. Insulation and Thermal Mass

Traditional adobe buildings have a high thermal mass, meaning they can absorb a great deal of heat from outside and minimize the amount of heat that radiates into the building.

- ◆ New development should use materials such as masonry, concrete, and foam blocks with concrete reinforcement that each have a high thermal mass.
- ◆ The minimum amount of insulation mandated under state building codes should be increased in desert homes.
- ◆ Residential buildings should use 2-by-6-inch boards for the frames instead of traditional 2-by-4 boards to create more space in the walls for insulation against the desert sun.

## 4. Green roofs

Green roofs provide another method to increase thermal mass and lower a building's temperature. A green roof is developed when a watertight barrier is placed on a flat rooftop, covered with lightweight soil, and planted with shallow-root vegetation. Green roofs trap stormwater runoff and would mitigate pollution impacts on the conservation area.

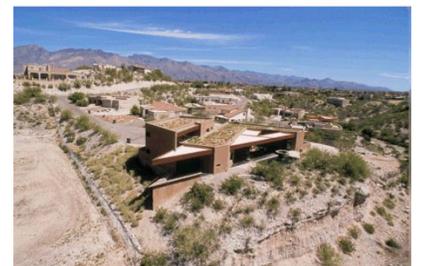
- ◆ Green roofs should be planted with native flora that will provide a form of open space and reduce the overall impact of development on local habitat.



*The Study Area's proximity to San Geronio Pass indicates there is strong potential for wind power.*



*Green roofs can be built in desert environments.*



*This house in Tucson, Arizona has green roofs and passive ventilation design.*

- ◆ Stormwater cisterns should be included on roofs to collect runoff and store it for landscaping uses such as watering plants or filling fountains.
- ◆ Some suggested green roof vegetation appropriate for the area include *Alilium spp.*, *Scutellaria alpina*, *Sedum moranense* and a variety of other hardy sedums.



*Landscaping can be designed to conserve water and be colorful.*

### 5. Ventilation systems

Efficient ventilation systems can reduce the demand for air conditioning. When a building heats up, the warm air rises where it can be expelled from the building through stack ventilation.

- ◆ Vent stacks should be incorporated into buildings to allow heat to rise and exit. When the outside nighttime temperature is comfortable, vents can be used to pump cooler night air.
- ◆ Buildings should be arranged to capture prevailing breezes. Atria, narrow building depths, and open plan environments are design tools that promote natural air flow.

### 6. Water conservation

Groundwater aquifers support growth and development in Desert Hot Springs. The limited nature of this resource, and the dry climate, means that new development should avoid excessive water consumption.

- ◆ Drought tolerant landscaping should incorporate arid plants native to the Southwest and the Coachella Valley. Wildflowers, cactus gardens, and palms can create striking yards that require little irrigation.
- ◆ Areas adjacent to the conservation area should be limited to a list of plants that will not invade sensitive habitats.
- ◆ New buildings should incorporate low-flow water fixtures to reduce water use. In recent years, low-flow and very-low-flow faucets, toilets and showers have become more efficient and less expensive. Many low-flow models perform better than standard fixtures.



*Permeable paving will help recharge groundwater supplies.*

## 7. Permeable paving

When stormwater cannot be captured, it should be allowed to drain into the soil instead of running into the stormwater facilities.

- ◆ Paved surfaces should incorporate permeable pavers, turf blocks, or other materials that allow stormwater percolation.

## 8. Detention basins

Where detention basins are necessary, they should be designed to provide usable public space during dry weather. For example a large, gently-sloped basin planted with turf grasses could serve as a playing field. A basin with steep sides could be located in a neighborhood center and paved with permeable materials, along with landscaping and seating around the edges to transform the basin into a public plaza.



*Detention basins can be used as sports fields during dry seasons.*

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS/SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITYWEST VISION PLAN  
DESIGN GUIDELINES

## 7 IMPLEMENTATION

This Vision Plan is a study that will not directly change the regulatory structure, land uses, or development in CityWest unless it is integrated into policy and regulatory documents such as the General Plan or a Specific Plan. Under California law, cities and counties may prepare Specific Plans to develop policies, programs and regulations in order to implement the jurisdiction's adopted General Plan. A CityWest Specific Plan would provide greater detail on the range of issues, policies, regulations and financing mechanisms required to implement the Vision Plan and commit to actions that will have a measurable impact.

The City is also in the process of updating and adopting a number of plans that provide a forum in which to implement the policies and programs for CityWest. The General Plan update is underway and includes annexation of County land south of CityWest. The Vortex Downtown Specific Plan will implement policies and actions that seek to revitalize the downtown area through a higher density mix of uses, building façade, and streetscape improvements. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments has completed a draft Nonmotorized Trails Plan. Additionally, the local Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) has begun to acquire land in CityWest for the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

This chapter provides strategies to implement the Vision Plan. The items discussed below are a mix of broad measures and discrete recommendations that could lead to more focused studies completed independently or included in a comprehensive planning effort.

### *A. Land Use Strategies*

The temporary slowdown of development proposals and the large number of vacant parcels provides a window of opportunity to plan land uses that will stimulate commercial investment and strong neighborhoods. The following bullets describe some land use strategies.

- ◆ Add more residential land use designations to promote a wide variety of housing types.
- ◆ Adopt a cluster ordinance for the Residential Estate designations. A cluster ordinance sets open space requirements while allowing the same number of housing units that would be permitted under zoning. This would increase the continuity of open space and reduce infrastructure costs required to serve low-density residential projects.
- ◆ Ensure that minimum residential densities are sufficient to fund public improvements and to account for planned units that are displaced in the conservation area.
- ◆ Continue to provide density bonuses for affordable housing and identify new incentives for sustainable development.
- ◆ Redesignate commercial land around Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive to reflect the Preferred Land Use Plan. This will promote a mix of businesses and attract both locals and visitors.
- ◆ Ensure that adjacent land uses transition from the commercial center into industrial/quasi-industrial uses west of Indian Canyon Drive and are compatible with the wind farms.

### *B. Circulation Strategies*

Extensive roadway improvements are required as CityWest is developed. A comprehensive assessment of circulation upgrades can assist long-range planning and identify ways to reduce automobile trips for local uses. The following are strategies to optimize the circulation network.

- ◆ Develop a CityWest Streetscape Plan to plan upgrades that will benefit the community. The plan should provide direction for roadway expansions, crossings, land use configurations, materials, landscaping and amenities. New streets could be named after the animals and plants protected by the MSHCP. Mitigations and impact fees for new development would be easier to measure with a Streetscape Plan.

- ◆ Plan in advance the amount of “take” required to complete all portions of the road network located within the conservation area. This will streamline other planning efforts and allow the City to calculate the amount of trails that it can ultimately build in the conservation area.
- ◆ Require a traffic and parking study for the commercial center to attract business and weigh the trade-offs associated with traffic calming measures for pedestrian improvements. A traffic study should conduct traffic counts and level of service data. A parking study should be used to decide the configuration of street parking and plan ways to integrate non-motorized vehicles and neighborhood electric vehicles.
- ◆ Adopt a non-motorized transportation network overlay that is consistent with the Coachella Valley Non-Motorized Trails Plan. Strategies to connect hikers, bicyclists and equestrians to trails, other cities and the Pacific Crest trail should be identified. This overlay should require all new projects to plan paths and trails in a consistent and connected manner.
- ◆ Adopt a neighborhood electric vehicle plan overlay that identifies rights-of-way for golf carts and electric vehicles that residents can use to drive to parks, complete trips to the commercial center, and access local golf courses. Class 1 Bike Paths should be modified for small electric vehicles.
- ◆ Limit access into the conservation area to specific gateway access points and maintain trails. Dogs without leashes should be prohibited in and around the conservation area.
- ◆ Amend the City’s subdivision ordinance to include standards for street networks and multi-modal transportation networks that provide alternatives to driving. This should be implemented in conjunction with the overlays and streetscape plan described above. The ordinance should discourage projects that impede accessibility by walling-off perimeters or design streets with cul-de-sacs.

### *C. Design Strategies*

Design guidelines are a tool that ensures new development reflects the vision for CityWest. The following bullets describe some design strategies that should be used to provide broad and flexible guidance for new development.

- ◆ Adopt a design overlay to buffer the conservation area with uses that will sustain the urban-nature interface. A defining cornerstone for CityWest, the overlay should permit vertical mixed-use and compact store sizes in buildings abutting the promenade along the wash. Separate building entries should be provided both along the street and the promenade, with the latter incorporated into active pedestrian spaces that include patios, porches, benches and other amenities. The overlay should be consistent with Land Use Adjacency Guidelines prescribed in the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).
- ◆ Adopt the design guidelines provided in Chapter 6 that promote high-quality design and sustainability. Hold decision makers responsible for approval of projects that meet the guidelines. Design guidelines should be compatible with MSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines.
- ◆ Provide incentives to developers to obtain LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, or a similar rating system, for residences, businesses, and master planned communities.
- ◆ Establish a landscaping program to promote the use of native plants in desert gardens and on rooftop gardens that limit water use and exotic species (prohibit exotics adjacent to conservation area). Informative brochures, signs and competitions for the best desert gardens are actions that should be undertaken to generate public interest.
- ◆ Work with homeowner associations, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission and environmental groups to implement programs that organize community gatherings or outings that educate locals about the environment and improve health through exercise and activities.

*D. Economic Development Strategies*

Jobs and housing will sustain the vitality of CityWest. Increases in sales tax revenue will help the City provide long-term service funding for safety and community facilities. The following bullets describe some business attraction strategies to develop the commercial center.

- ◆ Prepare a detailed market study for the commercial center to estimate the demand required to support new retail, the supportable neighborhood retail share, the required market shed from surrounding areas, and the types of businesses to target.
- ◆ Adopt a sustainable business policy to attract green businesses, especially in wind-energy-themed offices, R&D space, and vocational training. Corresponding programs and actions that would provide incentives for these businesses should be developed.
- ◆ Market CityWest as a focal point for natural resource recreation and as a non-motorized gateway to the Coachella Valley and Joshua Tree National Park. Signage and amenities, along with a solid non-motorized transportation network that serves bicyclists, hikers and equestrians can draw visitors from cold climates during many months of the year. Trails and points of interest should be mapped and advertised along with connections to external non-motorized transportation routes.
- ◆ Prepare a financing strategy prior to the issuing of any entitlements, or as part of a Specific Plan that would be subsequently developed for the area. A financing strategy can balance new building permits with public improvements and amenities, including streets, parks, open space and public facilities. The strategy should provide assurances for property owners to recover the fair cost of land lost to public improvements.
- ◆ Work with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to transfer the redevelopment areas into the City during annexation and use tax increment financing to build infrastructure and amenities that will attract businesses and fill construction financing gaps.

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS/SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITYWEST VISION PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION