County of San Diego General Plan

BORREGO SPRINGS COMMUNITY PLAN

Adopted August 3, 2011

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that this Plan, consisting of text and exhibits, is the Borrego Springs Community Plan and is a part of the San Diego County General Plan, and that it was considered by the San Diego County Planning Commission during nine hearings that occurred from November 6, 2009 through the 20th day of August 2010, and adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on the 3rd day of August 2011.

Attest: ERIC GIBSON, Director
Department of Planning and Land Use

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Introduction to the Community Plan

Purpose of the Community Plan

Community and subregional plans, adopted as an integral part of the County of San Diego's General Plan are policy plans specifically created to address the issues, characteristics and visions of communities within the unincorporated County. These diverse communities each have a distinct physical setting with a unique history, culture, character, life style and identity. Community and subregional plans thus provide a framework for addressing the critical issues and concerns that are unique to a community and are not reflected in the broader policies of the General Plan. As part of the General Plan this Community Plan is consistent with all other parts of the County's General Plan.

Used in conjunction with the General Plan, a community or subregional plan (Plan) is a key tool for the public, community planning/sponsor groups, County staff and decision makers to identify the existing conditions and development that positively contribute to its character and should be conserved, as well as the location, scale and design of desired new land uses and community facilities. The Plan's policies require that development be comparable to, or transition with, existing development to ensure that new development "fits" with the community and enhances the community's vision.

Scope of the Community Plan

This Community Plan covers the Subregional Group Area of Borrego Springs, which is illustrated in Figure 1. This planning area includes approximately 74,834 acres and contains the unincorporated community of Borrego Springs.

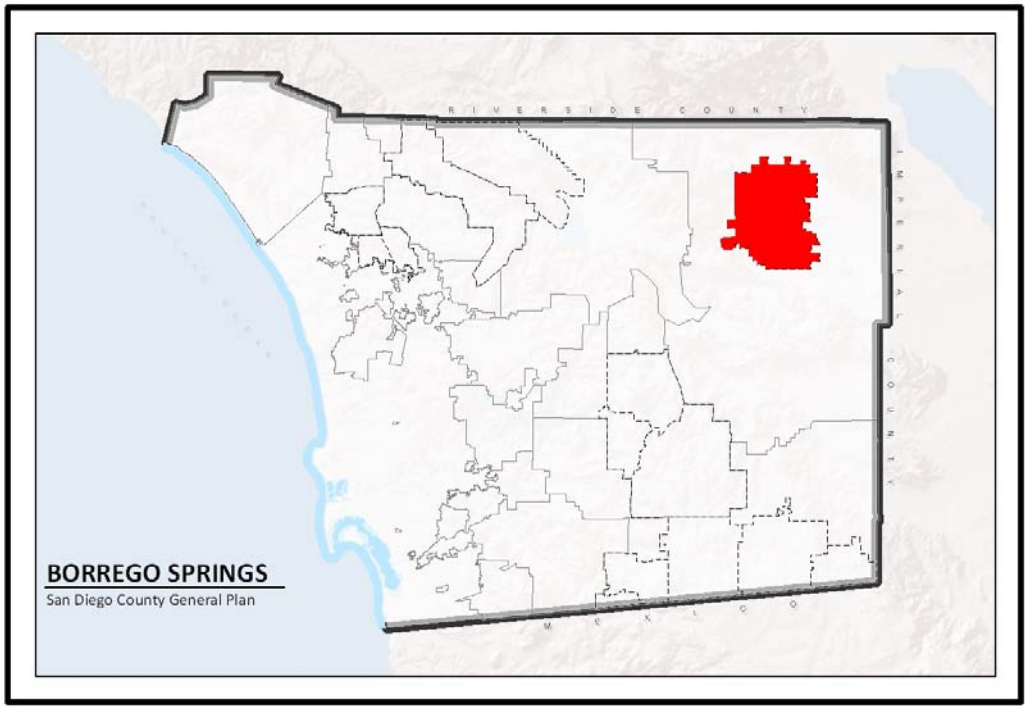

Figure 1: Borrego Springs Community Planning Area

Content and Organization of the Community Plan

The following is the content and organization of the Plan and a brief description of each of these sections of the Plan.

Vision Statement. A vision statement expresses community values about its distinguishing character, quality of life, mix of uses, development form and scale, public realm and places, mobility, economy, environment, safety and relationships to adjoining communities, open spaces and the region.

Community Profile/Community Character. A description of the Community's existing character, uses, environment, conditions, factors influencing future changes and key planning issues.

Elements. Due to the breadth and detail of the countywide elements, communities may find it unnecessary to identify unique goals and policies for all of the following subjects. Therefore, not all communities may use all of the following elements:

- Land Use. Application of countywide land use designations and goals and policies to reflect the distinguishing characteristics and objectives for the community. These may address such objectives as a specific mix of uses; priority development locations and projects; needed community facilities; development form and scale; architectural, landscape and public realm design characteristics; land use compatibility and similar topics.
- Mobility. Delineates the roadways, transit corridors, bicycle paths, equestrian paths and pedestrian trails that supplement and complete the road networks defined by the countywide Mobility Element. Policies may also address unique community issues such as neighborhood traffic intrusion, commercial district parking, local public transit and infrastructure improvements.
- Conservation and Open Space. Application of countywide Conservation and Open Space Element policies to address issues associated with designated plant and animal habitats, agriculture, water bodies, open space and other specific resources within the Community Plan Area (CPA). This may encompass actions to protect resources that may uniquely apply to specific sites or resources.
- Safety. Application of countywide Safety Element policies to address specific safety issues in the CPA. This may encompass actions to protect residents and development from defined risks.
- Noise. Application of countywide Noise Element policies to address specific source issues and impacts in the CPA. This may consider differentiation of land use compatibility standards to reflect community character and location—for example, villages located in rural setting and hillsides in contrast to those located in adjoining urban and suburban development.

- Special Study Areas. The following Special Study Areas are also addressed as Elements under this Plan:
    1. Borrego Valley Farmlands
    2. Village Core Vitalization
    3. Resource Conservation Areas
    4. Economic Development

Public Involvement in Preparing the Community Plan

Community meetings were held beginning with the Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group on January 2, 2007. Public forums were held on January 29, 2007; February 26, 2007; and March 26, 2007. There was a presentation to the Borrego Springs Real Estate Association on April 10, 2007 and a final presentation to the Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group on April 24, 2007. These meetings involved more than 100 individual residents, many of them representing groups.

How to Use the Community Plan

To use this Plan, the General Plan elements should first be reviewed for applicable goals and policies and the General Plan Land Use Maps (General Plan, Land Use Maps Appendix, Figure LU-A-6.1) should be referred to when applicable to determine the type, location and density of land use allowed. This Plan supplements these countywide policies and diagrams and further directs the land uses and development desired to achieve the community's vision.

Implementing, Monitoring, and Amending the Community Plan

It shall be the responsibility of the County to implement the Plan, to monitor progress towards its implementation and to amend the Plan when necessary. The Plan includes the community's key issues as well as the goals and policies to address the issues identified. For each policy or set of policies, there is one or more implementation actions identified to carry it out. The implementation program also identifies the County department or agency responsible for its implementation, where appropriate. Many of the policies will be implemented by County ordinances and other discretionary actions such as zoning, design guidelines, and development standards in the County Zoning Code.

Implementation of this Plan should be monitored on a periodic basis by the County and the Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group for progress towards its implementation. For compliance with State law, the Plan shall be reviewed no less than once annually so that its implementation status may be included in the County's Annual General Plan Report to the State. The annual review provides the opportunity for the Plan to be updated and amended, as appropriate, to reflect changes in the community vision, conditions or attitudes.

Community Background

a. History

A Unique Historic Legacy

A million years ago, the Borrego Valley was part of a vast savanna/grassland covered with lakes and streams. Today in the Borrego badlands, ancient fossil remains of mammoths, mastodons, camels, horses, giant sloths and saber tooth cats can be found.

Borrego's earliest human habitants (6,000 to 10,000 years ago) were likely ancient ancestors of the Cahuilla and Kumeyaay peoples, who became active in the area about 2,000 years ago. These semi-nomadic tribes traveled from the desert lowlands to the mountains, and thousands of recorded sites mark their occupation within the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the Borrego Valley. The community of Borrego Springs is named for the *borrego* (Spanish for "sheep"), acknowledging our natural inhabitants, the federally-endangered species known as Peninsular bighorn sheep.

Early Discovery: 1750 - 1930

Explorers such as Juan Bautista de Anza forged overland routes through the Borrego Desert in the 1770s; primitive paths that would become major transportation corridors. The Juan Bautista de Anza Trail is designated a National Historic Trail, and five historical sites mark where the Anza expedition camped.[1] As they journeyed through Kumeyaay and Cahuilla lands, the event may have been documented as pictographs that exist today[2].

The 1800s and the California Gold Rush brought a flourish of immigration, transportation and communications development. The historic Butterfield Stage Route quickly followed, recognized at sites such as the Vallecito and Carrizo Stage Stations (about 40 – 50 miles south of Borrego Springs), where weary travelers and horses stopped for rest and food.

Following the Civil War, the cattle industry was supported by abundant feed and easily accessible water. The 1920 – 30's era coincides with early records of "tourists" journeying from the Warner Springs area to admire the Valley's great natural beauty, plant life and scenic vistas.

Homesteading started in the early 1900s, and some structures and home sites remain. The homesteaders lived a rugged life of farming and ranching, drilling their own wells or hauling water to do so. By 1928, the Ensign Ranch was producing the first irrigated cash crops, including alfalfa hay. Also in 1928, Borrego Springs' first store and post office were established at the location known today as "Old Borego".

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1 The National Park Service has verified this information pertaining to the Anza National Historic Trail.

2 *The Forgotten Artist, Indians of Anza-Borrego and Their Rock Art*," by Manfred Knaak, 1988, Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA), Borrego Springs.

Increasingly, visitors and residents realized the great beauty and scenic value of the area, and in 1932, the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was formed to protect these unique desert lands. Interest continued to grow in the Borrego Valley.

In the mid-1930's A.A. Burnand, Jr. became a significant agricultural investor, and there were at least eight major ranches in production. Agriculture was the mainstay industry, sustained by the favorable climate and irrigation with easily accessed water. After World War II, Jeeps and other transportation improvements made desert exploration popular and brought the vivid spring wildflower blooms to wider public notice.

The Role of Agriculture -- (1940 – Present)

By the mid-1940's, the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation—the largest grape grower in California's central valley—had developed a thriving business here. DiGiorgio saw profit in getting Borrego grapes to market a full month earlier than other growers.

To protect the seedlings, DiGiorgio planted miles of tamarisk tree windbreaks, and by 1950, he had more than 1,000 acres under cultivation along north DiGiorgio Road. Much of the natural desert landscape was removed with heavy equipment to make parcels more suitable for farming. The payoff came in mid-June 1950, when Borrego grapes grossed over $750,000, with competition only from Coachella Valley. By 1957, DiGiorgio was cultivating grapes on over 2,500 acres, and there were at least 20 major ranches in business producing cash crops like grapes, flowers, alfalfa and cotton. Agriculture was the community's main economic driver, providing jobs and stability.

DiGiorgio's enterprise alone took nearly twenty wells to irrigate and more than 600 seasonal workers to harvest, pack and ship. As a result of Caesar Chavez' United Farm Workers efforts to unionize DiGiorgio employees in 1966, DiGiorgio turned off the water, abandoned farming and turned his attention to residential and commercial development.

With grapes gone, large-scale citrus farming took hold in the valley. Today, a few remaining citrus and ornamental plant farms employ a handful of local people to manage operations. These growers import seasonal harvesting crews to pack and ship produce and decorative palms to national and international distributors.

b. Relationship to Adjoining Communities

Since we are completely surrounded by the 600,000-acre Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Borrego Springs is the most isolated San Diego County community. It is over an hour's drive to any "full-service" town. Our nearest neighbors are Ocotillo Wells, Shelter Valley, Ranchita and Salton City, all very limited service communities.

c. Environmental Setting

Borrego Springs occupies 42.5 square miles with 2,300 dwelling units and 58 persons per square mile. Full-time population is approximately 2,700, with another 2,000+ seasonal, or "snow bird" residents.

Visitors and residents alike appreciate the stark natural beauty of this vast desert landscape. The low-desert climate is characterized by mild winters and extreme summers, with rainfall averaging less than seven inches per year. Our climate is a major influence on our potential as a high-quality resort and retirement community.

We are a unique San Diego County community, with no traffic lights and few streetlights or sidewalks. Homes and humans share the natural desert landscape with abundant native plants that provide precious habitat to the many wild animals. The environment is our greatest natural resource, and there is significant concern about growth's impact on the delicate desert. Our local characteristics—clean air, dark night skies, underground water supply, scenic mountain vistas, natural flora and fauna—are vital to the future wealth and vitality of Borrego Springs. This "Village in a Park" is truly a "desert island".

However, because we're dependent on a sole supply of rapidly-depleting groundwater, the issue of water ultimately impacts the economic viability of and quality of life in Borrego Springs.

Cultural Resources

Borrego Springs' first store – built by Eslie Wynn in 1929 – Old Borego Town site

A significant problem is that some developable land encroaches on cultural sites and structures, which makes it difficult to preserve our cultural history, both indigenous and modern.

Currently, the Old Borego town site is the only cultural site with the Historic District Preservation (H) Special Area Designator. However, the local history committee has identified 40 other potential historically significant sites in the CPA.

Resource expertise: ABDNHA Local History Committee

Landscape and Habitat

Due to our aquifer's overdraft and long-term drought, the already-designated Environmentally Constrained Borrego Sink area is losing large amounts of native mesquite woodlands (along with wildlife dependent on the habitat) and impacting the historic value of the area.

Dying Mesquite Trees in Borrego Sink

With the exception of the Borrego Sink, we have an opportunity to apply the Resource Conservation Area (RCA) Regional Category to other areas containing rare and endangered plant and animal species, archaeological sites, agricultural preserves, and other environmentally sensitive areas that will experience adverse impacts from development.

In the absence of such designations, natural habitats are regularly converted to manufactured landscapes using plant materials that are foreign to the desert ecosystem and require lots of water to maintain.

Water, Soils, Air

Agriculture accounts for 70—75 percent of annual water consumption, pumped from our sole source aquifer by farmers' private wells, with no cap on consumption, and outside the purview of the Borrego Water District. It is estimated that golf courses consume 20 percent and commercial and domestic uses consume 10 percent of the annual total.

Farming activity has continually tapped the aquifer for more than 70 years. Old-timers tell us that fifty years ago the water level was about 40 feet below the ground and easy to pump out. Farmers now extend their wells 300 feet and beyond to extract sufficient water to feed lemon crops and decorative plants for export.

If water consumption continues at current rates, the overdraft of the sole-source aquifer ultimately threatens the economic viability of the community. Future costs of water and uncertainty of supply make planning difficult. This issue is a deterrent to growth, impacting the demographics of those willing to invest in the community—both businesses and residential housing. The Borrego Water District has preliminary results from a U.S. Geological Survey report on the status of the aquifer, which estimates that the underlying aquifer has sufficient water in storage to serve the community for the next 50 to 100 years. The number is preliminary, and could be fine tuned as the model is calibrated; it also has been arrived to without any consideration of policy modifications that will be taken to mitigate the overdrafting of the groundwater basin.

The Water District has proposed a water credit and mitigation policy that is currently under review. The policy is designed to encourage the conversion of local farmland and high water use areas (i.e. golf courses) to land uses with less water demand. This program, in tandem with the water mitigation requirements of San Diego County is expected to substantially decrease water demand on the local aquifer.

There are a number of proposals that are being investigated by the Water District, as well as other agencies that could increase infrastructure and help protect a sustained water supply. The United States Bureau of Reclamation has proposed a joint study with the District to update the Basin Plan for the area, which could allow for a water recharge and recovery area in the basin. The California Department of Water Resources is presently evaluating the District's proposal to be the Regional Water Resource Management agency for the Borrego Springs area, as well as areas east of the Tecate Divide, which could allow for special funding sources. The District is also anticipating a 5.4 million low-interest loan in order to construct additional facilities, and the United States Congress appropriated $275,000 in grant funds to the District in order to study the feasibility of and perform preliminary engineering of a water transmission line in Southeast Borrego Springs to deliver Colorado River water from the Imperial Irrigation District.

Our soils, mostly sands and gravels of varying gradations, derive from alluvial materials deposited by seasonal floods from surrounding mountain regions, with little organic material. However, in some areas, soils are enriched by nutrients like nitrogen, a natural benefit for agriculture. Residual fertilizers remain on many fallowed farmlands and may leach into our soils and groundwater supply. High septic tank usage has the potential to degrade soils and water quality. Currently there is no use of treated effluent to water golf courses and other high water use areas.

Degradation of air quality in our community is due to large-scale clearing of soil crust and native vegetation prior to building, creating dust and blowing sand. Other contributing factors include agricultural burns during poor atmospheric conditions, off-road vehicle activity in and around the Valley, and increasing poor air quality from development in the east and southeast.

Dark Night Skies

The dark night sky over Borrego Springs and the surrounding desert area is so spectacular that a 2003 *USA Today* article rated the Anza-Borrego Desert one of the top ten stargazing locations in the nation. Residents and visitors to this area are privileged to view the wispy Milky Way in our dark night sky along with thousands of sparkling stars.

"Starry Splendor," by Dennis Mammana, used by permission

Light pollution from local and encroaching growth is threatening our dark sky, even though County lighting ordinances now call for outdoor lighting that does not point upward. Consistent lighting code enforcement—especially critical where our proximity to Palomar and Mt. Laguna Observatories makes dark skies essential for scientific operations—must be achieved and exceeded.

In July 2009 Borrego Springs became California's first International Dark Sky Community. This designation was awarded by the International Dark-Sky Association (I.D.A.). This would serve to promote our community as a preferred destination for star-seeking visitors. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park will also pursue an *International Dark-Sky Park* designation.

d. Existing Land Uses and Community Character

The growth of our low desert valley is uniquely limited by the closed perimeter of the park boundaries. Our remote location is not easy to get to, and other than tourism, there is no major industry or source of high-quality jobs. 4,000 acres are devoted to agriculture, and the majority of commercial and residential property is undeveloped.

The primary commercial and tourist-serving corridor is S-22, Palm Canyon Drive, with our central business district comprising a one-mile stretch from Stirrup Road westward to Country Club Road. Tourist-serving and other businesses are located primarily west of Christmas Circle and in The Center and The Mall.

There are well-established neighborhoods developed off major corridors (S-22 and S-3) many dating from the 1950s: Sun Gold, Ocotillo Heights, de Anza Country Club, Club Circle, Verbena, Deep Well and Montesoro (Ram's Hill) (See Figure 2: Neighborhoods, on page 11).

There is significant development pressure for housing and commercial development projects that are not consistent with our community character. Of special concern are those proposed plans that do not take the fragile ecosystem into account, or are sited

on botanically-rich, mature, native desert vegetation and which would significantly impact dark skies, scenic and vegetative elements of the community character.

Community Design

Along with the natural environment, the built environment will significantly impact the economic viability of Borrego Springs. Community design includes everything we see around us, including buildings, landscapes, roads, signs, fencing, lighting and power poles, etc.

No new commercial building has occurred in Borrego Springs in a decade—recent building is largely residential. The past ten years have seen an influx of “cheap land” seekers building modular and speculative homes that stand out in contrast to older, established neighborhoods. Often, these building types are not consistent with historical or natural desert elements and not what is typically considered to be “desert style”. Imported styles and building techniques often result in a lack of identity and fail to bond with the natural surroundings.

Farming and Industry

Farming: Today, in spite of the arid desert climate and the declining water supply, agriculture uses the most water but employs just a handful of local residents. Borrego’s agricultural products, by and large, are not consumed locally, and most farm owners actually live outside the Valley. There are approximately 4,000 agricultural acres in the north end of the Valley, about half planted in citrus, largely exported. Landscape ornamentals, palm trees and other nursery products are grown on about 900 acres and shipped to national and international destinations as well.

Industry—Tourism: One of the community’s main economic drivers is tourism—welcoming the estimated 650,000 to 1,000,000 annual visitors to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. What tourists find here is an antidote to the urban daily rat race. The Park maintains an award-winning Visitor Center at the western edge of the CPA. Park and Chamber of Commerce representatives are collaborating closely to more effectively market and promote the area, and the Chamber of Commerce has recently launched a new destination-marketing program, *Tourism Borrego*, to support those efforts.

Tourism supports nine lodging properties, about a dozen restaurants, and more than two-dozen retail establishments. Two thriving non-profit educational membership organizations offer a large number of programs for locals and visitors—the Anza-Borrego Foundation & Institute (ABFI) and the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA). These organizations and their programs attract members and financial support from people all over the world.

Our community supports many professional and trade services, and our local Chamber of Commerce has 225 members. The Performing Arts Center and the Borrego Art Institute provide cultural programs for residents and tourists.

Beside small businesses, other employers include the San Diego County Road Substation, the Borrego Springs Unified School District and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Parks and Recreation

We enjoy a number of pleasant, age-and environment-appropriate recreation facilities at the Borrego Springs Children's Center, a licensed childcare and learning center, the Borrego Springs Elementary School, and our Greater San Diego County Boys' and Girls' Club. Our Middle and High Schools have a "half-Olympic-size" pool, plus a track and a football field open for public use after school and on weekends. We also have a two-field Little League complex. Many of these facilities were funded and built by private philanthropic citizens or community organizations.

Christmas Circle Park (maintained and managed by the non-profit Christmas Circle Association) sits at the nexus of major access roads, S-22 and S-3. It has the only easily accessible public restroom facilities, recently upgraded to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Christmas Circle is the focal point for many community gatherings, activities and events, including Borrego Days Desert Festival, the Circle of Art, and the weekly Farmer's Market. The County has allotted Community Enhancement Funds (CEF) for park improvements and maintenance.

In May 2000, San Diego County purchased a 16-acre parcel along Church Lane and Country Club designated for a Community Park. However, this park has not been developed because there is no local entity responsible for Parks & Recreation, and no agency, funding, or people to manage maintenance and operations for a park of this size.

We have an integrated equestrian/pedestrian trail system, the Community Trail System that links with the federally-designated Sea-to-Sea, California Riding and Hiking Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail (see Figure 4 at the end of Section 3.4). There is no community memorial park or cemetery in Borrego Springs.

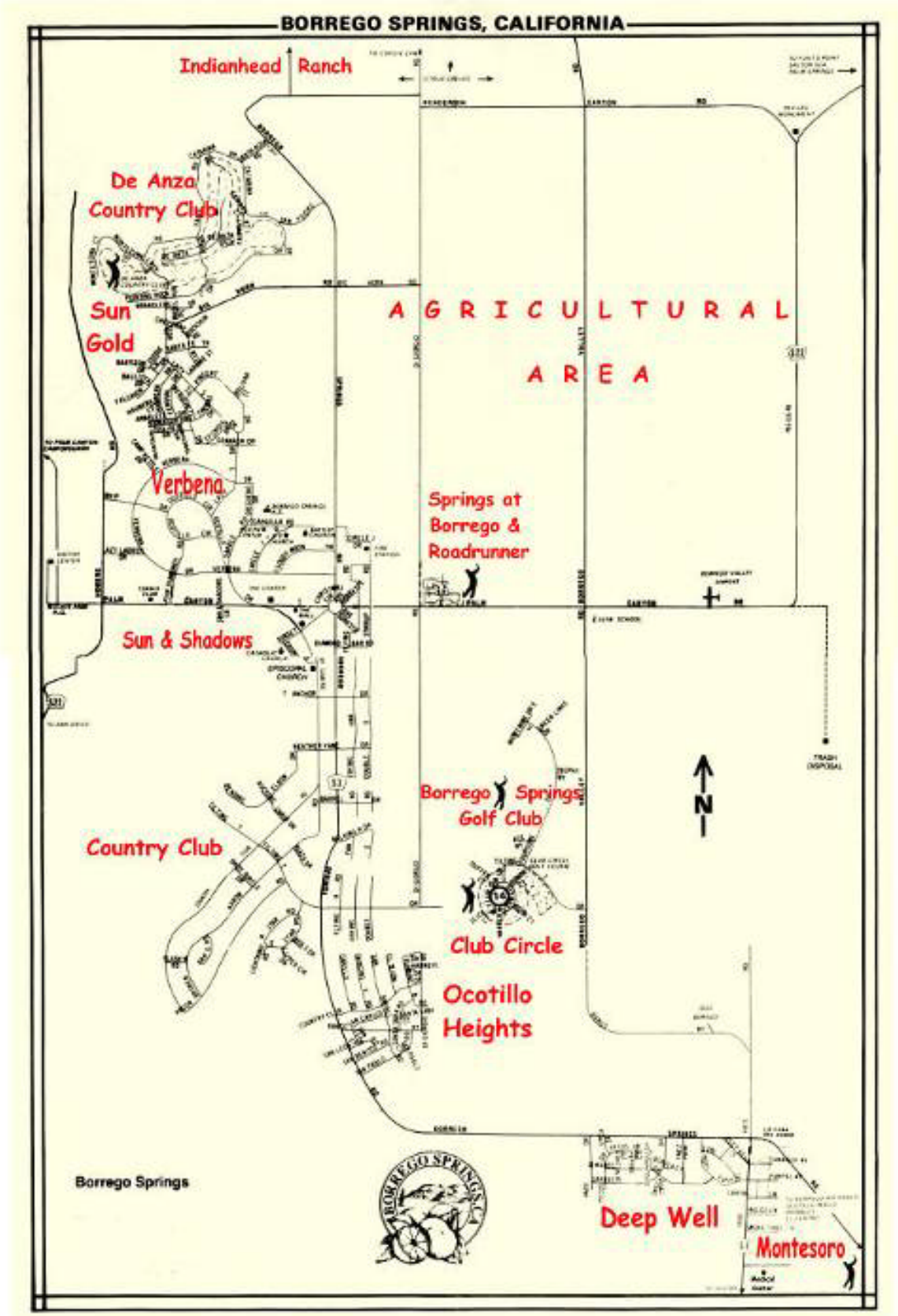

Figure 2: Borrego Springs Neighborhoods

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e. Existing Circulation and Mobility

Highway S-22, Palm Canyon drive, is the main thoroughfare through the center of Borrego Springs, and links to State Route 79 to the west and Salton City and Route 86 to the east. Highway S-3 links Borrego to State Route 78, which connects to Julian and Ramona to the west, and Brawley to the east.

Transportation

A County-approved “Back Country Rural Area” transportation map exists for Borrego Springs, supported by our Community Sponsor Group. Transportation systems include state highways, city streets, horse trails and footpaths throughout the community.

The widely-dispersed nature of the community means we are “car-oriented”. Rural bus service to surrounding areas has been significantly reduced. Since our post office does not provide residential mail delivery, residents must drive to pick up and deliver mail. Our medical center provides limited transportation shuttles from our downtown area to its facilities at Montesoro, 6.5 miles away. Without a network of sidewalks or covered walkways, hot weather walking in our downtown area is impractical, at best.

A significant concern is the deteriorating condition of internal and connector roadways. Maintenance methods (patching) are inadequate, and asphalt additives leach out in our warm environment causing roads to break apart and creating potholes.

Visual Graphics / Signage

Signage in the Borrego Valley consists of a broad variety of materials, colors, styles and size of components, not all of them particularly suited or designed for the demands of a hot, dry and sometimes very windy desert climate. These elements produce confusion and visual chaos for visitors, who experience wayfinding confusing. The size of economic loss likely due to poor / absent signage is unknown.

f. Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities

Our community is supported by the following facilities and infrastructure:

- County Road Station
- School District (High School is Red Cross Emergency Evacuation Center)
- Water District
- Fire Department
- Sheriff's Sub-station
- County Library
- Children's Center
- Boys' and Girls' Club
- Senior Center
- Medical Center
- Airport
- County Rural Bus System
- AT&T Central Office
- Chamber of Commerce

The Anza-Borrego Desert State Park headquarters provides visitor facilities that are also used by residents, including a Visitor Center, developed campground, trails and outdoor amphitheater.

There is a need for a community memorial park and cemetery. There is no hospital, and little or no assisted living or nursing home care. Long-time residents must leave their community, and often their families, late in their lives as the result of voids in these service areas.

School Service

The Borrego Unified School District, with offices on the High School campus, serves grades K-12 (currently 450 students) who attend five schools. Our School District includes Ocotillo Wells, and serves discretionary students from Ranchita and Salton City. A new charter school was recently approved by the Borrego Unified School District (BSUSD) Board of Trustees, which consists of five elected members.

Utilities

Electrical service in Borrego Springs is provided by San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E). Service reliability from SDG&E is poor, especially during summer "monsoon" season. Above-ground utility poles are eyesores that interrupt our panoramic views. They are also susceptible to damage in our frequent high winds, often disrupting service during storms. With high summer temperatures (averaging 107 degrees), costly electric

bills for residents and businesses affect our ability to conduct year round commerce, resulting in fewer services and lessened ability to market the community for year-round tourism.

Propane service providers to Borrego Springs are Amerigas and Pro-Flame Gas Co. Increasingly, residents are installing private solar generation systems.

Sewer and Water

Borrego Springs receives sewer and water service from the Borrego Water District (BWD), established in 1962. In December 1979, the latent powers of the District were activated by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission to provide water and sewer services to Montesoro (formerly Rams Hill). Since 1979, the BWD has consolidated water and sewer services within the community.

Sewer service uses existing treatment facilities located in the southeastern area of the Valley adjacent to the Borrego Sink. Service is provided via a collection system extending from the treatment plant approximately 7.2 miles north along Borrego Valley Road, and west along Palm Canyon Drive to Montezuma Valley Road. The Borrego Water District also maintains pest control and flood control powers.

Telecommunications

The local telephone company is AT&T. Only Borrego Valley businesses and residents living near Palm Canyon Drive are able to obtain high-speed data (T-1 and DSL) service. Residents living more than 10,000 feet from the central office must use dial-up or cable Internet service. The local franchised cable provider is CableUSA, providing television and high-speed Internet service. There are several Internet service providers that provide toll-free local access to their dial-up networks.

Trash Collection / Dump

Trash collection for Borrego Springs is provided by Allied Waste Services out of Imperial County. They provide customers with trash and recycle containers and make weekly pickups. Allied Waste Services also operates the local landfill at 2449 Palm Canyon Drive.

g. Public Safety

Fire Protection

The Borrego Springs Fire Protection District, formed in 1961, provides structural and groundcover fire protection and rescue services for approximately 300 square miles and about 2,500 residents. The District operates one fire station staffed by professional, full-time firefighters and trained emergency medical technicians (EMT) and paramedics. Its equipment consists of three fire engines, one hazardous material trailer and three ambulances. All ambulance personnel are either County-certified EMT 1As or paramedics. The Fire Department responds to approximately 390 calls per year.

Another fire station is under consideration by the Borrego Springs Fire Department for the purpose of bringing the Montesoro and other developments into compliance with the five-minute travel time requirement for development with densities greater then Village Residential 2.

Law Enforcement

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol provide police protection in Borrego Springs. Currently there are two resident Highway Patrol officers and three County Sheriff deputies. Ten Anza-Borrego Desert State Park rangers also maintain peace officer powers and provide additional protection. The Park also maintains a patrol plane and an assigned Pilot Ranger.

Borrego Springs has the lowest crime rate in the Rural Law Enforcement sector of San Diego County.

h. Trends and Future Projections

While current County land use regulations would permit a potential full-time population of 13,000, we are far from the growth curve that would yield such demographics. A more realistic maximum full-time permanent population level would be 8,000. The existing limiting resource is the groundwater supply, the sole source aquifer shared with agriculture and golf courses. To maintain and attract viable economic activity here, some Valley entrepreneurs maintain that a full-time population of 8,000+ is required.

The 8,000 population estimate was generated by the Community Plan study group based on the status of current development patterns balanced with the currently estimated groundwater resources available for development, along with an estimate of population necessary to generate a critical mass to encourage community economic development. There are many factors that could increase or decrease this population estimate.

There are nearly 3,000 acres of proposed development in the planning pipeline. Many developers have no experience with development in the desert environment. Many lack a sense of historical or environmental context and appear to be unaware of the values and concerns of Borrego Springs residents. The County reviews and permits such projects based on broad countywide regulations that do not take into consideration the unique conditions, challenges and needs of Borrego Springs and its limited resources.

That is why we have worked diligently and collaboratively to develop this Community Plan, the primary vehicle to protect and preserve this valuable.

Community Vision

To ensure a thoughtful approach to compatibility between the built and natural environments, our Community Sponsor Group voted in May 2006 to establish a Desert Area Initiative Committee. The committee hosted several public meetings in early 2007 to identify elements for a long-term, community-driven vision. The resulting documentation provides a framework for development, growth, programs and services that reflects real concerns of residents and visitors. Hundreds of comments from community members during the Desert Area Initiative process overwhelmingly supported the goals, recommendations and vision embodied in this Community Plan.

Job Number One: We conserved the aquifer and sustained our water supply.

To assure the creation and maintenance of a sustainable water supply for the area, the Borrego Water District, working closely with the stakeholders in the community, implemented a multi-faceted program which provided for stabilization of the sole-source groundwater aquifer through conservation measures, water supply augmentation through importation and incentives for conversion of high water consumption agricultural lands to low water consumption land uses.

Without a solution to the aquifer overdraft, we feel strongly that the following community vision cannot be realized.

The following "vision vignettes" paint a picture of the outcomes of enhanced programs and policies that our Community Plan proposes.

2028: Our community is recognized as a major destination for tourism

We are also a leader in energy efficiency and recreation, supported by San Diego County land use policies and planners in achieving these goals:

- A commitment to build further upon desert nature and history and the arts for the benefit of the community and economy;
- "Smart growth," using planned residential development and conservation subdivisions;
- Reducing traffic flow with a variety of transportation choices;
- Increasing energy efficiency in existing and new civic, commercial and residential buildings;
- Developing alternative energy sources emphasizing local generation;
- Conserving and protecting natural open space, native plants, scenic views, and dark ground environment;
- Conserving and protecting the Dark Sky environment; and
- Implementing comprehensive planning and increased efficiency measures to ensure safe and reliable water into the future.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER VISION
2020: Borrego Springs is honored as a "Distinctive Destination"

Borrego Springs is named one of twelve "Distinctive Destinations" in the nation by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In presenting the award, judges highlighted the following community qualities and accomplishments:

- Well-managed growth with ecological focus and commitment to natural and historic preservation;
- Interesting and attractive architecture appropriate to setting and environment;
- High percentage of solar powered homes and businesses;
- Recognized as an "International Dark Sky Community";
- Cultural diversity woven into the fabric of civic life;
- Pedestrian friendly downtown;
- Valley-wide trail and bike network;
- First-rate nature and outdoor-oriented opportunities for all ages; and
- Economic base of thriving, locally-owned businesses that serve the full spectrum of needs for residents and tourists.

BUSINESS CORE VISION
2015: "Great American Main Street" awarded to Borrego Springs

The Borrego Springs Village Association wins "The Great American Main Street Award," in recognition of their plan for "a strong desert community that honors its natural and cultural history and attracts those who appreciate healthy, active and ecologically viable lifestyles."

A glimpse of Borrego Springs' natural history and historic past is evident in its vitalized downtown. Its original mid-century architecture has been beautifully restored, turning the streetscape into a one-of-a-kind location that whispers of desert days gone by.

Ecologically-sound, desert-appropriate housing options are within easy walking or bike-riding distance of shops, restaurants and gathering places. Imaginative use of hardscape and streetscape—including native plants, signs and public art—create a vibrant community core.

TRANSPORTATION VISION
2020: Pedestrian-friendly plan & shuttle promote alternative travel modes

The Borrego Springs Village Association adopted a Pedestrian Master Plan in 2010, with the goal of creating a complete system of pedestrian routes, especially those connecting schools, neighborhoods, the central business district and nature trails. The Association also spearheaded the initiation of a neighborhood shuttle bus that provides daily service to reduce dependence on autos and improve services for the elderly and disabled.

The master plan documented the most critical needs facing pedestrian travelers and identified priorities, timelines and resources for addressing them. The plan also included interrelationships of trails with issues of safety, convenience, lighting, sidewalks, bicycles and other modes of transportation.

PARK & RECREATION VISION
2028: Agency Responsible Parks

Our community is served by an agency responsible for maintenance, operations and planning of community parks, including a memorial park and cemetery available to the citizens and families of Borrego Springs.

UTILITIES VISION
2028: Borrego Springs—a leader in energy efficiency

Reducing energy consumption and demand by 30 percent over five years is a big goal. But in Borrego Springs, a place that sees sun most every day, that goal was achieved by using solar energy and high-efficiency appliances.

Thanks to low interest loans and programs built on other successful models (including those by cities, counties, local co-ops and buyer groups), Borrego Springs residents and businesses rapidly invested in solar power systems and other energy improvements while avoiding high upfront costs. Borrowers repay the energy efficiency loans over time as part of property tax bills. More than 1,000 Borrego Springs residents and businesses moved quickly to upgrade their systems to solar and have enjoyed drastically reduced bills and consumption as a result.

MEDICAL CARE VISION
2028: Medical Center/Hospital Complex—a hub of comprehensive services

Our community is served by a medical center and a 25-bed hospital complex that provides community-wide transportation services, pharmacy and walk-in and emergency care. The Medical Center and Hospital attracts caring and competent general and nurse practitioners, specialists, and staff. It is equipped with the latest diagnostic tools and technology and provides basic medical services including routine childbirth, common surgical procedures, recuperative care, treatment protocols for certain conditions and hospice.

Goals, Policies, & Implementation

1. Land Use (LU)

Village or Rural Village Boundaries

Borrego Springs does not have a Rural Village Boundary. However, it has established a special study area centered around Christmas Circle to evaluate economic, infrastructure, and development potential. This special study area is targeted as a core area for development, infrastructure investment and the potential implementation of a Purchase of Development Rights program. This and other special study areas are discussed further in Chapter 6, and are intended to retain flexibility to address issues pertaining to the development and continued viability of Borrego Springs, chiefly the continued sustainability of the Borrego Springs aquifer.

Land Use Diagram

The Land Use Map is included as Figures LU-A-6 and LU-A-6.1 in the County General Plan Land Use Maps Appendix.

1.1. Community Character

Borrego Springs is a small desert community remotely located in the northeastern part of San Diego County, completely surrounded by the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. This unique "Village in a Park" is a lightly populated desert town with very hospitable winter temperatures and extremely hot summers. The environment is arid with flora and fauna uniquely adapted to the intensity of the summer sun as well as the cool winter nights. Diligent monitoring of public and private exterior lighting has maintained a dark sky environment. Geography in the valley is generally sloping alluvium posing a significant flood consideration.

Land use patterns are very low density and follow the 1940's design for the New Town Movement of the 1920/30s. The core of the village is Christmas Circle Park which serves as the town center and is a traffic circle similar to those applications in Mexico. Commercial businesses line Palm Canyon Drive (S-22) from Stirrup Road to the east to the entrance of the State Park on the west. Borrego Springs has a variety of golf resorts located away from the town center which provide recreation as well as a variety of housing for residents and seasonal visitors. Subdivisions are located mainly to the northwest and south of Christmas Circle and generally follow the availability of water lines provided by Borrego Water District from our sole-source aquifer. Citrus and ornamental tree farming incorporate approximately 4,000 acres in the north end of the Valley; this one use constitutes 70 percent of our annual groundwater consumption. Tourism has become the primary source of income during the winter season while summers have been very quiet.

a. Desert Lands

The dominant influence on the community character within the CPA is the desert lands. These lands create a sense of open space and unique community character through long sightlines, sweeping vistas, unique geography and unique flora and fauna.

The entire CPA is composed of a desert habitat native to the Colorado Desert region of the Sonoran Desert. This desert native habitat (flora, fauna and associated desert soils and drainages) has been disturbed by the process of urbanization by residential and commercial developments, roads, resorts, extractive uses and agriculture. Unlike ecosystems in other areas of the County, desert native habitat does not “bounce” back after development occurs.

Issue LU-1.1 Desert native habitat, once disturbed, may not regenerate itself at all and, if it can regenerate itself, will likely require what ecologists estimate to be a period of 100+ years to do so. The disturbance occurs and becomes an issue when entire sites are cleared for development and development plans do not come to fruition, or when more clearing occurs than is necessary, leaving uncovered terrain barren and susceptible to dust in high winds.

Goal LU-1.1 Substantially-undisturbed desert native habitat lands throughout the CPA are conserved as desert native habitat to the greatest extent possible, while previously-disturbed desert native habitat lands are replanted with native species when development or redevelopment occurs.

Policy LU-1.1.1 Ensure that remaining undisturbed and substantially-undisturbed desert native habitat lands throughout the CPA are conserved as desert native habitat to the greatest extent possible, and that previously-disturbed desert native habitat lands are replanted with native species when development or re-development occurs.

Goal LU-1.2 Establishment and preservation of a continuity of desert character, existing wildlife and vegetation corridors throughout the CPA.

Policy LU-1.2.1 Encourage the creation of conservation easements to establish and preserve the continuity of desert character and existing wildlife and vegetation corridors throughout the CPA.

Implementation-LU-1.2.1

1. Identify and map existing corridors as well as locations where they penetrate the boundaries of the CPA.
2. Locate gaps in the corridors and target the creation of easements to close those gaps.

b. Residential Land Use

Issue-LU-1.2 Standard subdivision grid and single-dwelling-unit lot development models routinely applied in the CPA degrade and detract from community character.

Goal LU-1.2 Residential developments that are consistent with community character and integrate organically into the desert native habitat and terrain of the CPA.

Policy LU-1.2.1 Require subdivisions and planned developments within the CPA to maximize the use of clustering to preserve natural habitat while minimizing the infrastructure and resource requirements, such as use of water for irrigation, whenever feasible. (See also Conservation and Open Space Element policies under Goal COS-14 Sustainable Land Development.)

Implementation LU-1.2.1

1. In consultation with the Borrego Springs CSG (BSCSG), codify what constitutes the favored Conservation Subdivision Model, so that clear distinctions and determinations can be made as to whether applications fit the model or not.
2. Review, and modify as necessary, existing County Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) procedures as they relate to submission and review of subdivision applications in the CPA.

Issue-LU-1.3 Subdivision Process Omits Sun and Wind Considerations. Current subdivision application review practices and processes do not take sun orientation and intensity or prevailing wind patterns into account.

Goal-LU-1.3 The orientation and intensity of the sun and prevailing wind patterns as major factors considered in designing, siting and orienting subdivision developments due to the intensity of impacts associated with solar radiation and west to east wind downdraft patterns in the Valley.

Policy-LU-1.3.1 Sun orientation and intensity and prevailing wind patterns during the review of Minor and Major Subdivision applications.

Implementation LU-1.3.1

County DPLU to develop and implement guidelines for developers to follow to mitigate environmental impacts when preparing Tentative Maps.

Issue LU-1.4 Lack of Community Center and Focus – Village Core. There is currently no identifiable central residential community in the CPA as developments are very spatially diverse. This adversely impacts area economic development and infrastructure use, and favors continued reliance on the automobile for mobility.

The Special Study Area discusses the goals, policies and implementation measures that should be looked at to create a Village core and surrounding Town Center

Issue-LU-1.5 Siting of New Development Commonly, subdivisions are designed in a way that does not support conservation goals and are not conducive to reducing infrastructure costs.

Goal-LU-1.5 Siting of new development to make the most efficient use (lowest overall cost) of existing infrastructure (water, sewer, electric, telecomm, roads, fire suppression, schools) rather than constructing new infrastructure.

Policy LU-1.5.1 Review and modify criteria for reviewing Minor and Major Subdivisions and Use Permit applications so as to strongly favor and encourage the siting of all new development in areas that will make optimum and most-effective use of existing public and private CPA infrastructure for water, sewer, electric, telecomm, roads, fire suppression and paramedic services and public schools.

Implementation LU-1.5.1

1. Inventory all existing public / private infrastructure elements in the CPA typically required to support new development, wherever it may be sited.
2. Develop DPLU procedures specific to the CPA for the review of new development covered by this policy.

Issue-LU-1.6 "P" Use Designators. A number of parcels now carry a "P" use designator and there is no apparent logic to the assignments.

GoalLU-1.6 Appropriately designated lands identified with the "P" designator requiring Planned Developments.

Policy-LU-1.6.1 Study and encourage the removal or modification of unnecessary Planned Development Review required by County regulations.

Implementation-LU-1.6.1

1. In consultation with the BSCSG, assign a planner to review all current assignments of the "P" use designator and recommend, where appropriate, redesignation consistent with the expressed and implied intent of this Plan.
2. BSCSG shall, in consultation with County staff, and consistent with the intent of this Plan, prepare a recommendation for a Zone change for public review and subsequent adoption by the BSCSG.

c Commercial and Industrial

Industrial land uses in Borrego Springs are limited to light impact jobs-based businesses that are largely service-related in nature. These businesses are generally located along Stirrup Road. Secondly, service-related business are located in the proximity of the airport east of the town center and tend to be of greater impact such as the concrete plant and construction yards.

More information on the needs of Commercial and Light Industrial Lands is located in the Borrego Springs Special Study Area Section and Community Growth Policy – Airport section

Issue-LU-1.7 Unique Zoning Needed. A number of historic properties (Old Borego town site, Desert Club, Whispering Sands Motel, Club Circle) were constructed prior to the adoption of the first County Zoning Ordinance and would have subsequently been assigned residential zoning, and would benefit from being re-zoned for commercial uses.

Goal-LU-1.7 The adaptive reuse of certain historic properties with appropriate commercial purposes.

Policy-LU-1.7.1 Facilitate the appropriate use of historic properties in the community, including the Old Borego town site, Desert Club, Whispering Sands Motel, Club Circle.

IMPLEMENTATION-LU-1.7.1

1. Identify and inventory all historic properties that might qualify for this treatment.
2. BSCSG to hold hearings, discuss current / intended plans and uses with current property owners and neighbors.
3. Allow spot, performance zoning to permit commercial uses, consistent with owner consent, for Old Borego, the Desert Club, etc. subject to review by and approval of the Sponsor Group.

Issue-LU-1.8 Visitor-Serving Commercial Uses. Concern that future commercial uses aimed at serving visitors of Borrego Springs are developed consistent with community character and supporting consistent economic development of tourism.

Goal-LU-1.8 Commercial uses aimed and conducted to serve visitors that are located outside the Village Core are consistent with the Borrego Springs community character and support the consistent economic development of tourism.

Policy-LU-1.8.1 Require design control / special plan requirements for all parcels now designated for Rural Commercial during development for tourism-intensive uses serving commercial wherever a Site Plan and Landscape Plan are now required to preserve the town character and enhance tourism attractiveness.

Implementation-LU-1.8.1

1. County staff to work with BSCSG to identify qualifying parcels and to review appropriateness of current assignments
2. County to apply appropriate designator to affected parcels to ensure future permit applications are properly processed and referred to BSCSG for its review and consent.

e. Mixed Use

Issue LU-1.9 Single-Use Zoning impedes Natural Development. Downtown Borrego Springs and the immediate area surrounding Christmas Circle has a mix of land uses including commercial, multi-family residential, trailer parks, businesses, office and tourist related venues. Most of these land uses are extremely low impact and do not create conflicts, but rather support the community by providing diversity.

Rigid separation of commercial and residential uses within the Village Core retards and impedes the development of a diverse, interactive, pedestrian-centered community core.

Goal-LU-1.9 A mixture of multi-family residential and commercial land uses throughout the Village Core.

Policy-LU-1.9.1 Promote the development of a vibrant, mixed-use core for Borrego Springs.

IMPLEMENTATION-LU-1.9.1

1. Investigate the impact of mixed-use zoning on efforts by the retail and food service sectors to remain open for business year-round.
2. Examine existing zoning patterns to allow developments to implement mixed-use applications in the downtown area.
3. Allow multi-family housing, including condominiums, in the downtown commercial area by-right with an appropriate zoning designation.
4. Support the development of two-story ‘shopkeeper’ units with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above.

1.2 Community Growth Policy

a. Development of Desert Native Habitat Lands

Borrego Springs privately-owned land falls into three categories: a.) undeveloped and undisturbed desert native habitat with no past or current uses; b.) developed with current, active uses and all- or partly-disturbed desert native habitat; and c.) previously developed with now-abandoned uses and all- or partly-disturbed desert native habitat. There is a sizable amount of acreage in the latter category, which detracts from community appeal and attractiveness.

Issue-LU-2.1 Desert Native Habitat Not "Self-Healing". Disturbed desert native habitat lands are not "self-healing" within decades, if ever, and there exist limited economically-feasible methods for their effective restoration. Disturbed habitat lands are visible for miles around, and detract from the character, economic desirability and unspoiled environment of the entire CPA.

Goal-LU-2.1 The permanent protection of undisturbed desert native habitat substantially protected from new development where new development is focused on previously disturbed desert native habitat lands and mitigated through the establishment of land banks.

Policy-LU-2.1.1 Discourage development on undisturbed and substantially-undisturbed desert native habitat lands outside the Village Core (excluding residential development on individual parcels existing prior to the adoption of this Plan) in favor of development on areas of previously-disturbed desert native habitat through the establishment of land banks using a using Transfer of Development Rights or other available programs.

Implementation-LU-2.1.1

1. Designate and inventory undisturbed desert native habitat lands in the CPA as a resource to be conserved.
2. Institute and/or increase existing, desert native habitat destruction mitigation ratios at maximum permitted levels for development plans that propose to impact undisturbed desert native habitat lands.
3. Investigate a system of credits for applicants in return for siting proposed new development on previously-disturbed desert native habitat lands. These credits should mostly be in the form of a density bonus or credit toward open space requirements.

Policy-LU-2.1.2 Encourage the use the existing County habitat mitigation land bank or oversee the creation of a non-profit land trust specific to the CPA to:

- Acquire, through purchase, donation or a combination thereof, undisturbed desert native habitat lands within the CPA boundaries for use in the mitigation of future development; and
- Care for and protect lands so acquired.

Implementation-LU-2.1.2

1. With the BSCSG, identify and inventory lands within the CPA boundaries which contain biologically (or) ecologically sensitive habitats and/or species, as well as culturally, archeologically or otherwise important sites.
2. Develop an acquisition plan to track the land which has been acquired as encouraged in this Plan.
3. Solicit the acquisition of lands from the inventory list.

4. Record conservation easements (or other appropriate restrictions) on those lands.
5. Coordinate with policies and implementation steps called for in the Conservation Open Space Section 3.1, and Resource Conservation Areas SSA, Section 6.3.

Issue-LU-2.2 Residential Subdivision. That more residential parcels exist and are being proposed to be created through subdivision than may be required to support a reasonable population for economic sustainability of 8,000 within the CPA. Many residential parcels were first created over 50 years ago, and remain undeveloped. This planning discrepancy risks enriching the creators of new residential parcels while simultaneously restricting or extinguishing current landowners' entitlements to construct residences on existing residential use parcels in the future. Future amendments to the General Plan could consider the extent existing vacant lots affect on population demand and investment in the community.

Goal-LU-2.2 The total number of developed and undeveloped residential-use parcels used and/or entitled for residential uses existing in the CPA do not exceed the amount reasonably necessary for Borrego Springs, a likely population of 8,000 at build-out.

Policy-LU-2.2.1 Promote a land use plan in the future where build-out of residential densities are consistent with the number of dwelling units sufficient to house a likely population of 8,000.

Implementation-LU-2.2.1

1. Establish a "baseline" estimate of the population within the CPA that would likely result from the building out of all current legal and developable residential parcels at approved densities. This would take into account typical household size and likely use of commercial/residential mixed-use and special-use parcels for residential uses.
2. Incorporate baseline population estimates into potential land use changes brought about in Borrego Springs special study areas.
3. Update the baseline estimate after relevant data becomes available from each decennial U.S. Census.

b. "Infill" Development

The past application of single-use zoning techniques to the Borrego Springs area has created groups of uses rigidly separated from each other. This rigid assignment of approved uses dates from an outdated view of the area's future development, in which prior planners envisioned 35,000+ residents in the CPA, rather than the likely population of 8,000 envisioned in this Plan.

Goals and Policies addressing the study and potential re-designation of the Borrego Springs land uses are included in Chapter 6, Specific Plans & Special Study Areas.

c. "Legacy" Residential Neighborhoods

Issue-LU-2.3 Conserving and extending the character of existing legacy residential neighborhoods consistent with current configurations. Most of the undeveloped residential building lots in the CPA are parcels created during the period from 1945-1983. Since that time, a relatively small number of new parcels have been created through subdivision.

Goal-LU-2.3 That existing uses and densities be preserved in legacy residential neighborhoods, with development limited to the renovation of existing buildings, infill at comparable density and scale and improvements that support and enhance the existing residential use.

Policy-LU-2.3.1 Prohibit, unless required for health and safety, the alteration of uses or increase densities existing at the time of the adoption of this Plan in the following "legacy" residential neighborhoods: De Anza / Golf Club Annex, De Anza Manor, Ocotillo Heights; Country Club Estates; Units A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and K; Morgan Manor; Sun Gold; de Anza Golf Estates; Indian Head Estates; and Deep Well I and II; Desert Borrego Tract; Club Circle and Indian Head Ranch.

d. Agricultural Uses

Substantial acreage within the CPA is now under cultivation or has been cultivated in the past, resulting in sizeable amounts of disturbed desert native habitat in the form of long-term fallowed agricultural lands.

Issue-LU-2.4 Agricultural Uses Severely Constrain Future Growth. Current agricultural uses contribute to the current overdraft of the sole-source aquifer that provides water to all uses throughout the CPA.

Goal-LU-2.4 The conversion of existing agricultural uses to other, less-consumptive uses by 2020 consistent with a Plan population of 8,000.

Policy-LU-2.4.1 Establish a special study area to work with the BSCSG and Borrego Water District to devise a plan to: a.) convert a majority of agricultural uses existing at the time of the adoption of this Plan (generally, those lands north of Henderson Canyon Road) to other less water consumptive uses and/or b.) secure a permanent alternative supply of water, together sufficient to meet forecast requirements.

Implementation of this Policy, as well as additional goals and policies are discussed in Chapter 6, Specific Plans & Special Study Areas.

Issue-LU-2.5 Fallowed Agricultural Lands Degrade Community Character. Long-term fallowed agricultural lands with no reasonable prospect of a resumption of cultivation are unsightly and create an impression of community decline and also a potential health hazard due to soil contaminants in windblown silt and sand.

Goal-LU-2.5 Restoration and revegetation of existing fallowed (abandoned) farmlands and their conversion to open space uses to enhance community character, health and safety and tourism appeal.

Policy-LU-2.5.1 Prioritize the preservation and restoration of existing fallowed and abandoned farmlands with their conversion to open space lands held in trust by the County or other suitable governmental or non governmental organization.

Policy LU-2.5.2 Encourage the use of existing fallowed farmlands for the installation of solar farms for energy production.

Implementation-LU-2.5.2

1. Identify and inventory existing fallowed / abandoned farmlands.
2. Develop a plan to facilitate the acquisition, restoration to desert native habitat and conversion to permanent open space uses. Possible USDA Farmland Restoration Funds are to be used.
3. Place ownership of the lands with suitable land management and/or conservancy entity(ies).

f. County Airport Area

The Borrego Valley Airport, three miles to the east of the Village Core, is an ideal area for future commercial and research park development. There is no development surrounding the airport now, permitting a re-thinking of uses in the area. There is a large quantity of disturbed habitat land in the area left over from prior, now-defunct uses.

The Airport Influence Area (AIA) for Borrego Valley Airport affects the Borrego Springs Community. The AIA is comprised of the noise contours, safety zones, airspace protection surfaces and overflight areas for Borrego Valley and serves as the planning boundaries for the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The Airport Land Use Commission for San Diego County adopted the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to establish land use compatibility policies and development criteria for new development within an AIA to protect the airport from incompatible land uses and provide the County with development criteria that will allow for the orderly growth of the area surrounding the airport. The policies and criteria contained in the ALUCP are addressed in the General Plan. Planning efforts need to address airport land use compatibility issues consistent with airport land use compatibility policies and regulations mentioned above.

Policies addressing airport compatibility are located in the Mobility and Noise Chapters of this Community Plan.

Issue-LU-2.6 Limited Area for Low-Impact Industrial / Research Parks. Due to the random historical pattern of commercialization of the CPA, subsequently “locked-in” by the adoption of the County Zoning Ordinance and prior Community Plan, there is no readily-available area specifically designated for new low-impact industrial, non-retail commercial development. The existing Stirrup Road area has parcels that are mostly built out.

Goal-LU-2.6 New low-impact industrial and non-retail commercial uses to cluster on disturbed desert native habitat lands in the immediate vicinity of the airport, dedicating undisturbed desert native habitat lands to open space.

Policy-LU-2.6.1 Promote the development of suitable areas of disturbed desert native habitat lands in the vicinity of the airport for low-impact industrial and non-retail commercial uses, with the balance of undisturbed desert native habitat lands in the same area designated for open space.

Implementation-LU-2.6.1

1. Inventory disturbed desert native habitat lands around the County airport.
2. Plan areas within the above for low-impact industrial and non-retail commercial uses, using clustering techniques.

h. Energy Production and Extractive Uses

Issue-LU-2.7 Solar / Wind Energy Projects Threaten Community Character. Intense interest in renewable energy sources has and will attract proposals for sizeable solar-energy farms or wind-generation plants in Borrego Springs, for which current ordinance and regulation makes no provision.

Goal-LU24.7 Renewable energy-related industrial uses that are compatible with the existing environment and do not detract from the unspoiled nature of the area, detract from community character or impair local economic development.

Policy-LU 2.7.1 Require all proposed energy-generation (wind and solar) uses to fully assess community-wide impacts to environmental resources, community character and economic resources to the CPA.

Implementation-LU-2.7.1

Develop guidelines and special review for all proposed solar and wind energy-generating uses.

Issue-LU-2.8 Poorly-Regulated Extractive Uses Damage. Sizeable areas of undeveloped land in the CPA are subject to potential extractive uses, specifically mining of sand, gravel and rock, threatening significant adverse impacts to community character and key resources (sightlines, viewsheds, park uses).

Goal-LU-2.8 New extractive uses that the BSCSG approves, consistent with full CEQA review.

Policy-LU-2.8.1 Require Special Plan and full CEQA review and encourage the consent of the BSCSG for all future extractive uses in the CPA.

1.3 Community Conservation and Protection

a. County Ordinances & Regulations

Issue-LU-3.1 Countywide Ordinances & Regulations. The County of San Diego has four well-defined environmental zones including coastal, upland, mountain and desert (which is the most unique and most remote). County-wide ordinances and regulations are written following a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and are generally not customized to the particular environmental setting, resulting in inappropriate application of County ordinances and regulations in the Plan area.

Goal-LU-3.1 Appropriate application of countywide regulations in the desert environment of the CPA.

Policy-LU-3.1.1 Encourage new and existing codes and ordinances to be flexibly interpreted in the context of their applicability to the Desert Subregion, rather than only in a broad, rigid, countywide context, to allow consideration for local micro climates and characteristics on DPLU interpretations of development techniques and standards.

Implementation-LU-3.1.1

1. Develop, with coordination from the BSCSG, broad guidelines and value statements to guide the flexible interpretation of County regulations in the CPA.
2. Provide guidelines and top-level value statements to DPLU staff and to CPA permit applicants at the time of application, including this Community Plan.

Issue-LU-3.2 Enforcement by County of Codes and Regulations. Due to the isolated geographic location of the Borrego Springs community, along with fiscal limitations, the enforcement of County ordinances and regulations is non responsive; encouraging and aggravating community-character-degrading violations.

Goal-LU-3.2 Consistent, rapid and responsive enforcement of violations of County ordinances, codes and regulations relating to zoning, building, grading, landscaping and lighting issues.

Policy-LU-3.2.1 Identify and pursue the necessary fiscal resources to increase code enforcement presence in the CPA and to provide, to the extent feasible, rapid, consistent and responsive enforcement of its zoning, lighting and building code ordinances and related regulations within the Desert Subregion.

Implementation-LU-3.2.1

1. Review County administration and enforcement of existing zoning, grading and lighting ordinances and building codes within the CPA and put in place strategies to ensure prompt, consistent and effective enforcement to prevent difficult-to-reverse damage

to fragile, non-regenerating desert lands, dark skies and dark environment and viewsheds and neighborhoods.

2. County to investigate providing a resident enforcement liaison (possibly located in Sheriff's substation or at Department of Public Works road station) to work closely with the BSCSG and County personnel on a regular schedule to provide local, "one-stop" multi-disciplinary investigation of and enforcement coordination for zoning, animal regulations, lighting, construction and grading ordinance and regulation violations.

b. Community Design

Local building design themes are mostly inconsistent with historical or natural desert elements. Much of the built environment at present is not what is typically considered to be desert imagery. The built environment reflects imported styles and building techniques, resulting in a lack of identity that bonds with the natural surroundings. New projects, walled communities and residential fencing are being built in a manner that impacts wildlife corridors, natural water flow, and connecting open space. Signage also does not represent the open desert character of the CPA.

c. Exterior Walls and Fences

Issue-LU-3.3 Walls, Fences and Desert Character. Thoughtlessly planned and sited exterior walls and fences set too close to parcel boundaries, even though consistent with County regulations, detract from the open desert character of the CPA and impede natural water flows and animal movements.

Goal-LU-3.3 The preservation of the open desert character of the CPA and the preservation of mobility for native animal species and natural water flows through appropriate fence and exterior wall setbacks and height restrictions.

Policy-LU-3.3.1 Discourage all perimeter fencing of residential parcels in the CPA along all public faces (street and non-street facing borders) of legal parcels, and regulate fence and exterior wall setbacks to include maximum heights above-grade as a function of distance between structure(s) and the nearest lot boundary.

Implementation-LU-3.3.1

1. Develop a formula, approved by the BSCSG, for specifying minimum setback and maximum height of exterior walls (up to six feet for freestanding walls, or up to the eaves of structures) and fences as a function of distance between structures and the nearest lot boundary in the CPA.

2. Revise DPLU procedures for issuing building permits for walls and fences in the CPA.

d. Grading and Landscaping

Due to the oft-cited nature of desert native habitat, grading and landscaping are particularly sensitive issues in the CPA.

Issue-LU-3.4 Lot Clearing. Without clear direction to the contrary, developers and builders unfamiliar with the unique characteristics of the CPA often "clear" lots prior to commencing development, as is routinely done elsewhere. Unfortunately, in the CPA, this results in the needless disturbance and destruction of desert native habitat and does hard-to-reverse damage to community and neighborhood characters by disrupting the continuity of desert lands and desert native habitat.

Goal-LU-3.4 Protection of the topsoil and protection from blowing sand with limited grading or clearing of sites, clearing only the areas minimally needed for the siting and construction of approved improvements.

Policy LU-3.4.1 Minimize grading for the retention of topsoil, protection of erosion and defense from dust created by unprotected land.

Policy-LU-3.4.2 Require, for all development in the CPA, an approved site plan that clearly specifies the areas of any parcel proposed to be developed that are:

(1) Approved for clearing for the siting of approved improvements;

(2) Approved for temporary clearing in order to permit necessary and reasonable access to the site(s) of approved improvements during their development, further, to be re-landscaped in accordance with "Desert Native Landscaping", below; and

(3) Prohibited from being cleared, and which must be protected from disturbance by the builder or developer during development.

Policy-LU-3.4.3 Require that significant desert native habitat species removed during approved clearing be conserved and re-used in site landscaping, and encourage increased enforcement remedies to correct violations.

Implementation-LU-3.4.3

1. Amend the Grading Ordinance to place additional restrictions and standards for the Borrego Springs Subregional Group Area.
2. Incorporate standards into the Landscape Ordinance that address desert specific vegetation and rehabilitation of desert habitat.
3. DPLU to prepare a site plan preparation guide for the CPA that sets forth the requirements of regulations associated with this policy, including specimen site plans, before, during and after photographs.

4. Revise DPLU permit and subdivision application guides to clearly highlight this requirement in the same way as other requirements unique to the CPA so as to give homeowners, builders and developers as much advance notice as possible and as early in their plan development processes as possible to minimize any violations or negative impacts.
5. Require a final inspection of the completed site to ensure compliance with the site plan prior to certificate(s) of occupancy.
6. In regulation requirements, as a penalty for the un-approved clearing of or failure to protect desert native habitat where required per the Site Plan, the retirement to open space use of a similar-size area of undisturbed desert native habitat prior to certificate of occupancy.
7. Prepare, in consultation with local botanists and resource ecologists, a Native Species List of significant, reasonably re-plantable desert native habitat species to be removed, conserved and re-planted during development.
8. Review/modify appropriate County codes and procedures to allow for appropriate prosecution and administrative enforcement including the imposition of fines and penalties for violations of this policy including, as a penalty for the un-approved clearing of desert native habitat, the retirement to open space use of a similar-size area of undisturbed desert native habitat.
9. Substantially lower the cubic-yard threshold at which the County requires a grading permit.

Issue-LU-3.5 Desert Native Landscaping. Private and public lands landscaped with non-native species disrupt and degrade the open-desert character of the community, as well as contributing to the increased consumptive use of water and soil erosion.

Goal-LU-3.5 All landscaping that is visible from the “street” (parcel boundaries) use only non-invasive species and groupings native to the Sonoran Desert, with a preference for those species and groupings native to the Colorado Desert.

Policy-LU-3.5.1 Require an approved landscaping plan for all development and redevelopment for which it requires a building permit, Minor or Major Use Permit, Special Plan, or Tentative Map for all areas outside structures, that requires the use of only those plant species and groupings native to the Sonoran Desert, with a preference for the use of species and groupings native to the Colorado Desert

Implementation-LU-3.5.1

1. Seek funding to prepare a landscaping guide for the CPA that identifies approved native Sonoran Desert species and groupings and also identifies those preferred species and groupings native to the Colorado Desert.
2. Revise DPLU permit and subdivision application guides to clearly highlight this requirement in the same way as other requirements unique to the CPA, so as to give homeowners, builders and developers as much advance notice as possible and as early in their plan development processes as possible to minimize any negative impact.
3. Require a final inspection of completed landscaping prior to certificate(s) of occupancy.
4. Develop a system of fines for violations of this policy.

Issue-LU-3.6 Hardscaping. The use of non-porous materials for hardscaping aggravates run-off issues. The use of asphalt further aggravates heat gain and retention, adversely affecting the environment.

Goal-LU-3.6 Common use of porous, reflective substrates rather than concrete and asphalt for all walkways, driveways, parking lots and hardscaping.

Policy-LU-3.6.1 Permit and encourage, the use of porous, reflective substrates rather than concrete and asphalt for all walkways, driveways, parking lots and hardscaping in the CPA.

Implementation-LU-3.6.1

Revise DPLU Regulations for asphalt and publications and Parking Guidelines to make explicitly clear that decomposed granite is both acceptable and encouraged for use as a finish surface for parking areas and driveways in the desert area.

e Lights and Lighting

The CPA is highly susceptible to light trespass and degradation of its unusually dark night skies and dark night environment, both of which are unique and important elements of community character. Goals and Policies addressing Lights and Lighting are located under *Dark skies and dark environment*, in the Conservation and Open Space Chapter of this Community Plan.

f Construction Standards

Issue-LU-3.7 Desert-Inappropriate Insulation and Roofing. Appropriate building design in hot desert climates relies on suitable active- and passive-cooling techniques that are different from techniques routinely used in colder climates. Heat transfers in the desert are generally in the form of radiant heat gain through the roof and exposed walls from the hot summer sun, rather than conductive or convective heat loss through roofs, walls, doors and windows.

Passive techniques such as shading and ventilation are critical to deflect the effects of radiant energy making summer habitation in the desert comfortable. Current standards do not adequately consider these differences.

Goal-LU-3.7 Buildings that are constructed according to techniques best-suited to our hot, arid desert environment.

Policy-LU-3.7.1 Encourage all residential and commercial construction (both new and significant renovation) within the CPA to meet passive energy efficiency conservation goals by accumulating a number of "efficiency points" in the suitable alternative ways:

- Orienting building forms to maximize positive and minimize negative climatic and environmental effects;
- Incorporating overhangs and permanent shade structures over non-north-facing windows, doors and exposed exterior walls;
- Using thermal massing to reduce temperature fluctuations in interior spaces;
- Using higher R-value roof insulation than is currently required in California, along with light-colored roof surfaces to reduce HVAC loads;
- Limiting overall height of building structures to limit solar exposures; and/or
- Including passive energy efficiency elements in the Landscaping Plan.

Policy-LU-3.7.2 Encourage all residential and commercial construction (both new and significant renovation) within the CPA to meet active energy efficiency conservation goals by accumulating a minimum number of "efficiency points" in the following (and other suitable) alternative ways:

- Using higher efficiency (S.E.E.R.) heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems than specified by California or Federal regulations;
- Using light dimming;
- Installing solar hot-water panels for swimming pools; and/or
- Incorporating solar-electric panels systems.

Implementation-LU-3.7.2

1. DPLU to establish an efficiency point system in consultation with the BSCSG.
2. Create educational materials to inform permit applicants of the system and requirements.
3. Incorporate into DPLU plan check procedures for construction in the CPA.

Issue-LU-3.8 Public / Private Roads and Parking Lots. Asphalt paving for all roads is inconsistent with the character of the CPA and aggravates run-off and drainage issues.

Goal-LU-3.8 Decomposed granite surfaces as an alternative to Public/Private Road Standards within CPA boundaries so that private and lightly trafficked public roads can avoid asphalt paving requirements.

Policy-LU-3.8.1 Encourage an expansion of road standards to expand suitable road material types to maximize permeability, minimize "heat island" effects, while being consistent with community character.

Implementation-LU-3.8.1

1. Revise Public/Private Road Standards to specify decomposed granite as an acceptable road surface within the CPA.
2. Provide for concrete pads at fire hydrants where asphalt has been eliminated.
3. See Implementation Measure LU-3.6.1 (Hardscaping).

Issue-LU-3.9 Multistory Construction. Multistory buildings outside the Village Core detract from community character and environment, specifically sightlines.

Goal-LU-3.9 Multistory buildings located only in the Village Core.

Policy-LU-3.9.1 Restrict structures outside the Village Core area to single-story construction.

Implementation-LU-3.9.1

Review and revise existing building height and story regulations in the CPA to permit only single-story structures outside the Village Core.

Issue-LU-3.10 Facilities Typically Considered Adjunct to Residential Uses. Facilities adjunct to residential uses and typically installed after the granting of a certificate of occupancy, such as pool equipment, HVAC equipment, propane tanks and equipment, satellite dishes, wind turbines, security lighting, electrical power lines, cable and telephone hook-ups, etc., are not required to be appropriately integrated into improvements and are frequently "tacked on" to structures *post-facto* without consideration of the visual blight and noise trespass created thereby. This practice is routine in areas where denser vegetation, proximity of adjoining structures and terrain that provides masking; however, creates substantial nuisances in the unique environment of the CPA.

Goal-LU-3.10 The consideration of adjunct uses as part of the design when granting a construction permit, and that the necessary provisions be required before granting an occupancy permit.

Policy-LU-3.10.1 Require, to the maximum extent feasible, prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy for any new residential construction or reconstruction in the CPA, that all swimming pool equipment, HVAC equipment, propane equipment, satellite dishes, wind turbines, security

lighting, electrical power lines, cable and telephone hook-ups and similar adjunct facilities be suitably planned, sited and enclosed so as to minimize visual blight and noise trespass onto adjoining parcels.

Implementation-LU-3.10.1

1. Develop standards for installation strategies, minimum enclosures and acceptable parcel-boundary noise levels consistent with maintaining the community character of the CPA.
2. Revise DPLU plan check procedures to include the above-defined adjunct facilities.
3. Revise procedures for final inspection prior to granting certificate of occupancy for dwelling units.

Issue-LU-3.11 Sidewalks and Curbing. Lack of subterranean storm drains and street-based stormwater management systems makes standard curbing and hardscape sidewalks unnecessary in the CPA.

Goal-LU-3.11 Desert-appropriate street-side pedestrian pathways within the Desert Subregion.

Policy-LU-3.11.1 Facilitate the establishment of community-specific standards for required and permitted road- and street-side improvements, specifically replacing prevailing County-wide requirements for traditional sidewalks and curbing.

Implementation-LU-3.11.1

Adapt existing countywide standards for sidewalks and curbing to the conditions prevailing in the CPA to eliminate requirements for curbing and allow for desert- and community-appropriate street-side pedestrian pathways for all new development.

g Signs & Signage

Issue-LU-3.12 Lack of Consistent Signage. On- and off-premise signage in the CPA consists of a broad variety of materials, colors and size of components. These elements produce confusion and visual chaos for visitors, for whom way-finding is a bewildering and confusing experience. At the very least, the absence of a unified signage program represents a missed opportunity to enhance community character.

Goal-LU-3.12 Uniform signage that addresses items appropriate to the desert environment including issues of location, design, size, height, bulk, color, materials and type styles.

Policy-LU-3.12.1 Facilitate the establishment of community-specific design criteria for off-premise signage throughout the CPA that will eliminate the inappropriate use of materials, posters, roadside advertising, lighted signs, real estate signs and other elements of visual pollution.

Policy-LU-3.12.2 Facilitate the establishment of a program for on-site signage for businesses and facilities throughout the CPA that is appropriate to the desert environment.

Implementation-LU-3.12.2

1. Use visual graphics and signage as a significant messenger about our values and standards, creating an experience of Borrego Springs character and image.
2. Include, in the criteria, the defined entry points to Borrego Springs and the extent and boundaries of the CPA.
3. Provide valuable wayfinding and orientation aids to newcomers and visitors.
5. Integrate and promote State Park attractions in relation to town.
6. Provide well-defined identification of merchant locations in the Town Center and Village Core business district.
7. Identify signage types that are appropriate to the area, including monument signage, wall-mounted, and pedestal, but not including painted-on signs or vinyl banners.
8. Utilize materials that are indigenous to the area, and when possible, maintain signage in a direct relationship to the group and create a color palate that is compatible with the desert environment.

h. Utilities

Utilities are addressed in the Circulation and Mobility Section under Telecommunications and Energy

i. Agricultural

Issue-LU-3.13 Agricultural Uses. Existing CPA agricultural uses, specifically citrus groves, are inconsistent with known groundwater constraints, and contribute very little in the way of jobs or economic benefit to the inhabitants of the CPA.

Goal-LU-3.13 A mutually-beneficial planned reduction in active agricultural lands in the northerly section of the CPA by providing incentives for conversion to other uses appropriate with current community character and needs, along with the restoration of fallowed and abandoned agricultural lands to productive uses consistent with current community character and needs.

Policy-LU-3.13.1 Encourage, in coordination with the Farm and Home Advisor, the creation of programs to assist farmers to move to less-intensive use.

Implementation-LU-3.13.1

1. Institute a program with the County of Department of Farm and Home Advisor to restore farmlands to desert native habitat in lands adjacent to the State Park.
2. Develop methods of conversion that will allow farmers to change farmlands to other sources of income.
3. Reduce the use of potable water on farms via the use of grey water or treated effluent for irrigation.
4. Investigate methodologies that will make it feasible for farmers to donate lands to conservancies or others who will fallow and restore desert land to the original habitat.

Potential establishment of a Transfer of Development Rights Program is discussed in the Chapter 6, Specific Plans & Special Study Areas.

j Animal Regulations

When the current zoning and associated animal regulations were put in place, the CPA was lumped in with other unincorporated areas of the County as it relates to animal regulations. The governing vision was one of rural, ranch-style living. However, the majority of development has been more-traditional single-family homes rather than ranches.

Unfortunately, and due to the desert character of our community, much of the natural masking of nuisances that may be relied upon to mitigate animal impacts and nuisances in other areas of the County is not available in the CPA.

Issue-LU-3.14 Animal Regulations Inappropriate for Small Lots. Existing animal use regulations are inappropriate for small residential lots in the CPA, creating nuisances in existing residential neighborhoods.

Goal-LU-3.14 The avoidance of adverse impacts and nuisances caused by animals on small lots in residential neighborhoods.

Policy-LU-3.14.1 Require that only lots with sufficient size, adequate shade facilities and vector controls permit the boarding of nuisance causing animals in residential subdivisions.

Implementation-LU-3.14.1

1. Identify and inventory all large animal-related uses existing at the time of adoption of this Plan.
2. Plan clusters of parcels that meet the goal and policy criteria for designation or re-designation for large animal-related uses.
3. Remove designation for large animal-related uses from all other residential-use parcels in the CPA.

k. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Buffer Zone

Issue-LU-3.15 No Planned Transition between the State Park and Community Planning Area. A majority of the land in the CPA is bounded on its outermost edges by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. There is no formal plan in place for thoughtfully managing this transition zone area for the mutual benefit of the Park, private landowners in the transition zone, and the community as a whole.

Goals and Policies to achieve this objective are discussed in Chapter 6, Specific Plans & Special Study Areas.

l. Open Spaces & Sightlines

The primary human experience in the CPA is one of vast, open spaces. Preserving sight lines, a sense of openness and limiting development in areas that are visible throughout large areas of the community are key Community Plan goals.

Issue-LU-3.16 Visual Preservation of Slopes and Hilltops. Hilltops and adjacent slopes are now available for development, even though practically, few hilltops within the CPA have been developed as of the date of adoption of this Plan.

Goal-LU-3.16 Hilltops and hillsides, visible throughout large portions of the CPA, that remain undeveloped through restrictions imposed on future development.

Policy-LU-3.16.1 Restrict development and/or construction of improvements on slopes, ridgelines, mesas, and peaks to only those areas where pre-existing natural grades are less than 10% in any direction. (See also County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Policies COS-12.1 and 12.2.)

Implementation-LU-3.16.1

Revise DPLU slope dependency guidelines for development within the CPA.

1.4 Areas of Change: Development Infill and Intensification

The Borrego Springs community was envisioned by the original developers in the 1940's as a New Town to compete with Palm Springs and other resort communities accessible from Los Angeles, as well as other points in California, Nevada and Arizona. While other post war communities have grown exponentially since the 1950s, Borrego Springs has grown very slowly due to limited access and lack of adequate employment, leaving large gaps in the development pattern. The planned single family residential development requiring substantial infrastructure of roads and utilities resulted in the eventual sale of lots over time due to the increasing demand for second homes. The present result is a lack of actual building of houses on residential developments. Commercial lands were also left vacant.

a Housing Mix

Issue-LU-4.1 Shortage of Senior and Low-to-Moderate Income Housing. The community suffers from a shortage of quality senior and low-to-moderate income housing, particularly in and adjacent to the Village Core and with pedestrian access to it.

Goal-LU-4.1 Development of community compatible and integrated senior and low to moderate income housing in the Town Center outside the Village Core with pedestrian access to jobs and services.

Policy-LU-4.1.1 Encourage the development of community compatible and integrated senior and low to moderate income housing zones in the Town Center outside of the Village Core, sited to integrate pedestrian and alternative transport access to jobs and services in the Village Core.

Implementation-LU-4.1.1

1. BSCSG with DPLU staff and in consultation with the Borrego Village Association to review existing use and density designators in the Town Center area outside the Village Core to identify areas best suited to this use.
2. Redesignate density and permitted uses to create zones that integrate with Village Core and planned pedestrian, bicycle and alternative vehicle circulation elements.
3. Coordinate a system of density bonuses to provide incentives.
4. Identify programs and developers to discuss implementation.

1.5 Community Facilities

a. Public Facilities

Issue-LU-5.1 Public Facilities Locations Not Coordinated. Existing public facilities have been sited and constructed without a unifying community-wide plan, and without regard to likely growth patterns. Changing standards for public safety have rendered existing facilities, specifically emergency medical, fire and paramedic, inadequate to community needs.

Goal-LU-5.1 Public facilities that are coordinated with new growth patterns to provide for the continued health, welfare and safety of CPA residents and visitors.

Policy-LU-5.1.1 Encourage the creation of an interactive procedure for the development and funding of public services in the CPA through the creation of a Community Services Council and increased coordination through the BSCSG representing all public facilities entities in the CPA to provide for coordinated local decision-making and funding.

Implementation-LU-5.1.1

1. Solicit the support of the Borrego Springs Fire District Board in planning for the future space requirements for a community public safety facility that will accommodate fire, police and rescue elements.
2. Encourage the land acquisitions necessary to promote clustered growth of the healthcare industry in the CPA.

2. Circulation and Mobility (CM)

The original plan to provide access to Christmas Circle and the Borrego Valley from Los Angeles and the coastal population centers to the west was via Coyote Canyon. When this access was blocked by state park concerns, the present road was cut into the side of the mountain down Montezuma Grade to access Christmas Circle via Sunset Road. This plan also failed because the lower section of the road had to be relocated and the present alignment was realized down Palm Canyon Drive to Christmas Circle. Where Sunset Road was to be the main access road to the Circle, Palm Canyon Drive now took on that role providing access to the heart of the community in its present configuration.

Christmas Circle was envisioned by our town fathers to be a vibrant town center with a large three-acre park dedicated to the then operational Community Association in the model of the traditional town square. It followed in the vision of the New Town movement of the first half of the century with roads radiating out from the "garden" center and with "grand avenues and boulevards" reaching out to designated activity centers throughout the valley which were to become Rams Hill (Montesoro), the Borrego Springs Resort and Country Club and the DeAnza Country Club.

It was designed in the shape of a circle as was the Hispanic town center or the 'Zocalo' in Mexican villages to the south. Land uses around the center were to be crafted in the model of Scottsdale with a vision for shops on small lots being patronized by our seasonal visitors filling their shopping bags with gifts for Christmas which is the start of the high winter season.

Christmas Circle was to be anchored in the model of the 1950's shopping center design with the grocery store, the bank, the newspaper and whatever else could be garnered to support the Circle with respectable businesses all facing the park. The major streets intersecting the park were traffic controllers but the minor streets were designated as pedestrian shopping streets for the convenience of the general population purchasing items of perhaps other than essential needs in the support of tourism.

Accepting the premise that most utopian plans simply do not work out, the Borrego community is now faced with the need to correct the deficiencies generated by well intended developers that took careful aim and missed.

2.1 Integrated Mobility and Access

The BSCSG and County staff collaborated on the Mobility Element road classifications. Lowering the development intensity in the Desert Subregion produced a reduced need for roads—especially four-lane roads. This road network minimizes costs and environmental impacts when compared to the network that would be required to balance the infrastructure needs of the former General Plan. The road network for the Desert Subregion will operate at an acceptable level of service.

> **Issue-CM 1.1** Although "wayfinding" signage coming into Borrego Springs is generally adequate, signage directing people out of Borrego Springs is entirely inadequate.

Goal-CM 1.1 Signage that clearly directs traffic from the central village to destinations such as Palm Springs, San Diego, Julian and Brawley.

Policy-CM 1.1.1 Encourage "wayfinding" improvements within the CPA.

Implementation-CM 1.1.1

Reestablish a Business District Sign Committee in affiliation with the BSCSG / Chamber of Commerce / Borrego Village Association to continue its review of signage and make recommendations to the County's Department of Public Works.

2.2 Local Road Network

The local public road network is that set of roads serving the community within the defined boundaries of the Village.

Issue-CM 2.1 The local public road network, having evolved over time, requires modifications that facilitate a more effective and safe flow of traffic on city streets, and integrates those streets in the Town Center with bicycle and walking paths.

Goal-CM 2.1 The further development of the Borrego Springs Town Center road network in a manner that continues to thoughtfully minimize the need for traffic control signs and alleviate totally the need for traffic control devices.

Policy-CM 2.1.1 Develop, in conjunction with the BSCSG and Borrego Village Association, local road networks in a manner that thoughtfully minimizes the need for traffic control signs and alleviates totally the need for traffic control devices.

Implementation-CM 2.1.1

Through the inclusion of this objective in the Community Planning document, advise the County, including DPW and DPLU, of our desire for conformance to this ideal.

Issue –CM 2.2 Palm Canyon Drive, the main east-west road in Borrego Springs, was designed by the original developers to be a broad avenue. Its exceptional width, from Montezuma Valley Road to the west and Borrego Valley Road to the east, permits speeds of 50 mph. This span of roadway today services a significant portion of the community's lodging, retail, business, and commercial development. As these components grow with the projected increases in population, auto and pedestrian safety could become imperiled.

Goal-CM 2.2 Palm Canyon Drive from Montezuma Valley Road to Borrego Valley Road constructed in a manner where it is safe for all users of the road, both motorized and non-motorized travelers.

Policy-CM 2.2.1 Encourage, investigate and coordinate with the community methods to increase, to the maximum extent feasible, auto and pedestrian safety in the various business zones through which Palm Canyon Drive passes from Montezuma Valley Road to Borrego Valley Road, including:

- Traffic circles at the intersections of Ocotillo/Country Club and Palm Canyon Drive, and at the intersections of Country Club and Sunset Road; and/or
- Traffic calming techniques to reduce speeds.

Implementation-CM 2.2.1

1. Working with the County DPW, investigate the installation of traffic circles (1) at the intersections of Ocotillo/Country Club and Palm Canyon Drive, and (2) at the intersections of Country Club and Sunset Road.
2. The current width of Palm Canyon Drive, especially from the intersection of Ocotillo/Country Club to the west and Di Giorgio to the east, lends itself to excessive speed through what is essentially a business retail district. Investigate ways to reduce speeds down to 25 mph speed limit through this section of roadway, as well as design, engineer and implement a narrowing of this roadway to allow bicycle and walking paths on the existing roadway right-of-way.

Issue-CM 2.3 Christmas Circle, a highly visible landmark in the center of Borrego Springs, is the epicenter of our community's main roadways. Community growth, village core revitalization efforts, traffic congestion, and parking issues will create both opportunities and challenges. This "roundabout" is an efficient traffic management tool allowing for the free flow of vehicles around the Village Core without the use of traffic signals; however, this free traffic flow creates substantial conflicts with pedestrian access to the community park.

Goal-CM 2.3 A circulation system around Christmas Circle that brings the roads and pathways into balance with pedestrian and automobile uses.

Policy-CM 2.3.1 Encourage traffic calming and other methods to increase public safety for pedestrians and bicyclists into and around the park from adjacent commercial areas in the proximity of Christmas Circle.

Policy-CM 2.3.2 Make it a priority to establish Avenida, Sureste and Noreste as public parking lots to satisfy the on-site parking requirements for adjacent businesses and for general public use.

Implementation-CM 2.3.2

Initiate a traffic calming and traffic circle reengineering study that considers recommendations from the Borrego Village Association and the Sponsor Group as a component of village core design, including the following.

- Traffic calming devices at all four of the primary roads leading into the Circle; Palm Canyon Drive and Borrego Springs Road North and South.
- Lower speed limits around the Circle.
- Handicap accessible crossings at the four primary roads into the park – north, east, south and west.
- Constrict the access to the Circle from the three minor streets – Avenida Sureste, Avenida Noreste and Sunset Road with raised landscaping berms.
- Establish 45 degree diagonal parking on the Circle with a dedicated back out lane for safety.
- Stripe adequate handicap parking around the circle in each of the four quadrants with curb ramps.
- Provide handicap access from the bus stop to the restrooms as required by the ADA.

Issue-CM 2.4 Limited connectivity from Palm Canyon Drive to Country Club has caused the use of parking lots adjacent to Villas Borrego and east of The Mall to be used as streets.

Goal-CM 2.4 Local roads that connect Palm Canyon Drive with Country Club.

Policy-CM 2.4.1 Make it a priority to provide local roads that connect Palm Canyon Drive with Country Club north/south between Villas Borrego and the west end of The Mall.

Implementation-CM 2.4.1

1. The Borrego Village Association in coordination with the BSCSG will include in its Town Center Master Plan development the creation of formal connecting streets.
2. The BSCSG will work with the County DPLU and DPW to design these changes to our local network.
3. Consider the development of a new street between the Villas Borrego and the Mall that would eventually connect to Church Lane to the south and to Verbena on the North to improve North South Mobility.

Issue-CM 2.5 The lack of direct connectivity between the northern area of the Town Center (Cahuilla, high school & middle school, Boys & Girls Club, Children's Center, Senior Center) and Palm Canyon Drive creates traffic congestion and safety considerations on Verbena, Ocotillo and Borrego Springs Road. Pedestrians traveling to and from these locations are walking on unsafe roadways (no walking paths) and experience extended travel times to destinations on Palm Canyon Drive and south.

Goal-CM 2.5 Safe pedestrian routes that connect Cahuilla and Palm Canyon Drive.

Policy-CM 2.5.1 Encourage the reconfiguration of Cloudy Moon and Circle J in our local network to allow extensions to Palm Canyon Drive.

Implementation-CM 2.5.1

1. The Borrego Village Association will include this connectivity in their Town Center Master Plan.
2. Undertake a study of the existing parcels between Circle J and Cloudy Moon and Palm Canyon Drive to determine the feasibility of acquiring the parcels/easements needed to permit this addition to the local road network.

2.3 Fire Access/Egress Routes

Refer to General Plan Goals and Policies

2.4 Local Transit

Local transit – largely bus transportation by definition – for the purpose of transporting people from home to work and back is not a consideration for Borrego Springs that is currently economically feasible. Our community is largely populated by retired seniors, many living here on only a seasonal basis, and families deriving their income from service industry jobs, landscape and pool maintenance, and housekeeping positions. Additionally, the somewhat sprawled nature of our community requires and reinforces the need for automotive transportation.

Issue-CM 4.1 Borrego Springs will feel the impact of traffic congestion and limited parking as the Town Center lodging, retail, business and commercial components grow and prosper. The community should begin to investigate the feasibility of transportation alternatives that will relieve those pressures.

Goal-CM 4.1 Alternative methods of transportation that facilitate movement within the Town Center and minimize the need to dedicate land use to parking as opposed to additional revenue creating economic development.

Policy-CM 4.1.1 Require that additions and modifications to local road networks permit flexibility of transportation modes in future forms of local transit.

Policy-CM 4.1.2 Encourage increased transportation opportunities for alternate methods of transportation for the internal circulation of residents within the CPA, and increased opportunities to connect to regional transportation networks.

Implementation-CM 4.1.2

1. Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to investigate opportunities for funding a limited shuttle system that would serve the Town Center for internal circulation to jobs, retail and services within the CPA.
2. Coordinate with the Borrego Village Association to explore the feasibility of creating a traffic ordinance and pathways for the use of motorized (golf) carts within the Town Center.

2.5 Pedestrian

Borrego experiences minimal pedestrian traffic outside of the Town Center. However, there has been a visible increase in this traffic along its main thoroughfare, Palm Canyon Drive and in the Village Core retail and business district. Future plans are designed to increase pedestrian traffic in the Village Core – that triangular area formed by points at the XL Station, Post Office and Christmas Circle.

Issue-CM 5.1 Pedestrian safety is becoming a significant issue along the Palm Canyon Drive corridor, especially in the Village Core. The exceptional width of Palm Canyon Drive, coupled with permitted speed limits, makes it dangerous, especially for seniors, to cross this road. Pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the Post Office is becoming an issue. With little or no street mail delivery in Borrego, a significant portion of the population travels to the Post Office early each afternoon. The resulting congestion causes people to park on the south sides of County Club and Sunset and walk across the street to the Post Office without the benefit of formal crosswalks.

Goal-CM 5.1 Improvement of pedestrian safety in the Town Center area of Borrego Springs.

Policy-CM 5.1.1 Develop, in coordination with the Borrego Village Association, recommendations and plans for improvement of pedestrian safety in Borrego Spring's Village Core.

Implementation-CM 5.1.1

1. Balance pedestrian circulation in Borrego Springs with vehicular traffic requirements to ensure pedestrian safety and convenience.
2. Install pedestrian crosswalks and walkways, and selectively lower speed limits to increase pedestrian access, mobility and safety.
3. Identify pedestrian streets and pertinent design principles and guidelines (width, improvements, etc.).

Issue-CM 5.2 The lack of formal pedestrian circulation elements in the vicinity of Cahuilla, (high school & middle school, Boys & Girls Club, Children's Center, and Senior Center) and along Borrego Springs Road from Cahuilla to Christmas Circle creates safety risks to pedestrians walking to and from Christmas Circle and this area.

Goal-CM 5.2 Elimination of the pedestrian safety hazards in Borrego Springs with the construction of sidewalks or formal walking paths and crosswalks adjacent to the roadways.

Policy-CM 5.2.1 Analyze, design and install if feasible, sidewalks or formal walking paths and crosswalks adjacent to the roadways in the vicinity of Cahuilla and along Borrego Springs Road from Cahuilla to Christmas Circle.

Implementation-CM 5.2.1

1. The BSCSG, the Borrego Springs Unified School District and the Borrego Village Association should prepare a map of this area with several recommendations to the County DPW for remedy of this inadequate circulation element and associated safety hazard.
2. The Borrego Village Association will include consideration of sidewalks or formal walking paths adjacent to the roadways in its Town Center Master Plan.

2.6 Bicycle and Trails

The Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group has been working to further identify and clarify a system of bicycle paths and equestrian and hiking trails that provide local connections to regional networks defined by the County General Plan, as well as create precise alignments with those trails identified in the existing Bicycle or Trails Master Plans. All of the community trails are non-motorized multi-use trails.

Issue-CM 6.1 The effective use and maintenance of our trails system requires that property owners, both current and future, respect the easements as provided under the plan and cooperate in a non-restrictive fashion.

Goal-CM 6.1 A network of bicycle, hiking and equestrian trails that are compatible with adjoining land uses and reflect the unique character of the community.

Policy-CM 6.1.1 Support and enforce the unrestricted use of easements created for the purpose of the public's use and enjoyment of the multi-use trail system.

Implementation-CM 6.1.1

1. Explore the desirability, feasibility and advisability of creating a system of connected walking paths throughout the valley with easy access from the business center to the State Park and to scenic, natural and cultural sites.
2. Create visible and user-friendly walking and biking corridors along public right-of-ways.
3. Tie-in new construction to existing trail easements.

2.7 Aviation

Borrego Springs is adequately served by its existing County airport, particularly in the context of circulation and mobility. Its location in the far eastern perimeter of the village is appropriate when viewed generally from the standpoint of safety and noise and under normal operating conditions.

Goals and policies for the Airport Land Use Compatibility and Noise Impacts are located under Land Use and Noise Chapters.

2.8 Trip Reduction Strategies

Borrego Springs is a remote, rural desert community whose residents are highly dependent on the automobile for transportation. This mode of transportation is consistent with the strongly senior demographics of the population, and above average outdoor temperatures that, coupled with demographics, discourages other transportation modes.

Issue-CM 8.1 Most residents travel daily to the local post office – there is no residential mail delivery in Borrego Springs – and often use that travel to accomplish other tasks away from home. In addition, the number of people who travel away from the community by automobile for shopping and recreation related reasons is significant.

Goal-CM 8.1 Reduce the amount of auto travel to and from the Town Center, as well as the number of trips to adjoining communities for shopping purposes.

Policy-CM 8.1.1 Encourage heavily populated residential "bedroom communities" such as Roadrunner, Montesoro, and de Anza Estates, within Borrego Springs to develop shuttle van services in the community.

Implementation-CM 8.1.1

1. Encourage high density developments to form car pooling arrangements or van shuttle services for their daily Post Office trip.
2. Identify and establish those additional retail businesses required by the community to further alleviate the need for travel to adjoining communities for goods and services.

2.9 Parking

Parking issues in Borrego Springs are largely related to existing and potential development in our central business district, and particularly in what we would consider to be our Village Core, where excessive parking requirements will create an abundance of unnecessary parking. Existing developments in the central business district were required to include on-site parking in excessive amounts. Parking lots adjacent to The Mall and The Center, our two major existing retail & business centers, are seldom used to their capacity and more often serve as city streets than parking lots. These same mandatory on-site parking requirements should not be imposed on new development in the Village Core area.

Issue-CM 9.1 The vision for successful revitalization and economic development of the Village Core includes a high density of retail shopping accessed and linked by pedestrian pathways. Excessive amounts of on-site parking severely limit density, and expansive parking areas discourage comfortable foot traffic.

Goal-CM 9.1 Increased density of retail and business use of our central business district while at the same time redesigned attendant infrastructure to accommodate pedestrian friendly access.

Policy-CM 9.1.1 Permit retail and business development in the central business district to meet reasonable parking requirements with a combination of on-site and off-site parking.

Policy-CM 9.1.2 Develop community specific parking standards for the Town Center Special Study Area, including allowing limited or no on-site parking in the Town Center.

Implementation-CM 9.1.2

1. Study areas adjacent to the central business district and village core and identify possible locations for off-site parking.
2. Work with the County to establish general public parking on Avenue Nordeste and Avenue Sureste adjacent to Christmas Circle.

2.10 Infrastructure and Utilities

All communities must strive to provide the resident population with a utility infrastructure essential to the enjoyment of their daily lives, and compatible with their surrounding environment. As time passes and technology evolves, this infrastructure requires review and, if necessary, change. Optimum solutions to community needs must be identified and assessed for achievability.

a. Water

The Borrego Water District (BWD, District) was established in 1961 in order to protect groundwater resources in the Borrego Valley. In December 1979, the latent powers of the District were activated by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in an effort to provide water and sewer services to the Rams Hill Development. The project area was subsequently annexed to the District in September

1980. The BWD today encompasses approximately 45 square miles of the Borrego Valley.

Issue-CM 10.1 The community presently depends on pumping groundwater from a sole-source aquifer, which is being over drafted at a rate of approximately 15,000 acre-feet per year. Those uses dependent on the Borrego Aquifer include agricultural activities (70%), golf courses (20%) and domestic (10%). Continued overdraft of the aquifer will result in water shortages at some point in the future.

Goal-CM 10.1 A capacity in the Borrego Aquifer that supports continued domestic and recreational demand in Borrego Springs and development of options to augment the water supply to create a sustainable/renewable supply for the community.

Policy-CM 10.1.1 Analyze the capacity of the existing groundwater aquifer and develop programs to create sustainable supplies of water for the projected build-out of the community.

Policy-CM 10.1.2 Create incentives for golf courses to decrease turf areas and convert those areas to desert landscape with less water use.

Policy-CM 10.1.3 Prohibit the approval of any new agricultural, golf or other water intensive activities in any area overlying or tributary to the Borrego Aquifer.

Policy-CM 10.1.4 Request, upon achieving a sustainable supply of water for the domestic water use in the CPA, the adjudication of the aquifer to insure that future use does not continue to overdraft the aquifer except in times of drought, thus protecting the elements of the local environment dependent on the aquifer in its diminished capacity.

Implementation-CM 10.1.4

1. Use the results of the US Geological Survey and California Department of Water Resources study to ascertain the approximate length of time the community can rely upon the existing aquifer given its current uses and the projected growth in the CPA.
2. Consider implementing the Integrated Water Resources Management Plan which contains plans for augmenting the existing domestic supply through various options, most of which will require cooperation with adjacent water supply agencies.
3. Conduct a Financial Plan and Rate Design Study to determine options available to the community to raise the funds necessary to augment the water supply and to assess the cost of the improvements among those who benefit from the implementation of the Integrated Water Resource Plan.
4. Continue aggressive, multi-faceted water conservation programs to reduce existing agricultural, golf course, commercial and residential use.

b. Sewer/Septic

In January 1986, LAFCO approved the Townsite Sewer project which involved the annexation to the Borrego Water District of 2,177 acres under a latent powers proposal to extend sewer service to over 2,000 acres in Borrego Springs. The sewer service uses existing treatment facilities located at Montesoro (the former Rams Hill development). Service is provided to a portion of the community via a sewer line extending from the Montesoro treatment plant approximately 7.2 miles north along Borrego Valley Road, and west along Palm Canyon Drive to Montezuma Valley Road.

Issue-CM 10.2 Borrego Springs is a community whose residential sewerage needs are primarily met through the use of septic systems. The majority of the commercial facilities are served through the Townsite Sewer, and the Montesoro development is also serviced by sewer lines which transport the sewage to the Montesoro Wastewater Treatment Facility located in the southeast portion of the CPA. The heavy dependence upon septic systems poses the risk of contaminating the sole source aquifer, while also decreasing the amount of water that is available for treatment and reuse in the community.

Goal-CM 10.2 The reuse of wastewater effluent, which minimizes the need to use of septic systems to meet residential sewerage needs.

Policy-CM 10.2.1 Require all new major subdivisions to construct sewer collection systems, and to connect to the sewerage collection system if within 2,000 feet of the nearest sewer main line. Additionally, require all existing homes to connect to the sewer system when their existing septic system fails and they are within 200 feet of a sewer main line.

Policy-CM 10.2.2 Coordinate with the Borrego Water District to prepare a Sewer Master Plan for the community to identify the costs and benefits of sewering the area, and to include recommendations for the implementation of the sewering program to include improvement districts, new development standards, grants and other mechanisms available to realize the goal of sewering the community.

Implementation-CM 10.2.2

1. Work with San Diego County to adopt the same sewerage development policies as adopted by the Borrego Water District; specifically that all new major subdivisions shall construct sewer infrastructure, whether sewer lines are immediately available or not, in order to reduce the cost and disruption of eliminating septic systems and using sewers in the future.
2. Develop plans for improvements to the wastewater treatment facility that will treat the sewerage to a level which is acceptable for irrigation upon open space areas such as golf courses.

c. Storm Drainage and Flood Control

Storm drainage and flood control activities in the CPA are primarily the responsibility of San Diego County. The Borrego Water District has responsibility for the maintenance of the flood control facilities associated with the Montesoro development.

Issue-CM 10.3 Flood control is minimal in the area, as major events occur on a low frequency. However, they pose tremendous potential for damage due to the lack of control structures, ill defined drainage channels and pathways, and disruptions of the floodway, conditions making it difficult to ascertain if the next flood will impact existing improvements and/or infrastructure.

Goal-CM 10.3 Adequate storm drainage that minimizes impacts on existing improvements and infrastructure.

Policy-CM 10.3.1 Initiate and maintain adequate flood control planning and implementation through the County of San Diego.

Implementation-CM 10.3.1

1. Seek approval for the preparation of a Flood Control Study for the Borrego Springs area with funding from the County and other interested governmental agencies.
2. Study and propose shorter-term, localized-area flood control programs for residential structures clustered in neighborhoods built prior to the current County requirement for parcel- and structure-specific flood hazard abatement, which structures are now disproportionately exposed to flood risks as a result.
3. Require on-site storm water retention for large developments in accordance with County of San Diego Low Impact Design Standards.

d. Energy – Natural Gas & Electricity

Borrego Springs does not have access to natural gas, and relies entirely on San Diego Gas & Electric for its electric power. As a low desert community, electric power used for residential and business lighting is less of a consideration than the need for heating and air conditioning. Temperatures during summer days can exceed 120 degrees F and fall to below 20 F degrees during winter nights.

Issue-CM 10.4 Extremely high outdoor summer temperatures and the high cost of electricity have a significant negative economic impact on the community. Borrego Springs remains a seasonal business and residential community – tourism that peaks in March of every year drops substantially during the June thru October timeframe, and nearly 50% of our residents live in other cooler locations during the same period. Many businesses close during the summer months as they cannot operate profitably with low demand and excessive electrical (A/C) costs. The service reliability from SDG&E is poor, especially during the summer peak season. A close look at the facilities and distribution systems associated with electric utilities in the Valley show an emphasis on low-cost engineering and technology over compatibility with the natural ecosystems.

Above-ground utility poles interrupt our panoramic views and are highly susceptible to damage in high winds, often disrupting service during storms.

Goal-CM 10.4 Establishment of long term electrical utility for the creation of a localized solar power and distribution system and generate sufficient energy to satisfy local demand via photovoltaic systems.

Policy-CM 10.4.1 Encourage the activation of latent powers of the Borrego Water District to establish and operate an electrical utility for a localized solar power and distribution system.

Implementation-CM 10.4.1

1. Create a "New or Renewable Energy" task force for the exploration and implementation of new local energy sources.
2. Establish a forum of community stakeholders to advise and support the development and siting of new energy facilities in the Borrego Springs CPA with an emphasis on pre-existing agriculture lands in the north part of the Valley.

e. Landfill

The local landfill is owned and operated by Allied Waste and their subsidiary, San Diego Landfill Operators. It currently uses 19 acres of a 40-acre site, and is operating under a 1973 permit from San Diego County allowing the landfill a cap at 50 tons of garbage per day. Occasionally in the winter time they will reach the cap and have to close for the day. The landfill can accept garbage from many regional communities, and some of the Borrego Valley residential garbage is transported to El Centro for dumping. There are no current plans for expansion of the active landfill area.

Issue-CM 10.5 The Landfill operates on a very limited schedule – 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM Tuesday through Friday – and with extremely high fees, so high in fact that use is essentially discouraged. Limited access and high fees encourage "desert dumping", especially by local landscapers. Other working people are not able to visit the site by 2:00 in the afternoon and have no access on weekends. Safe access generally requires truck or a four-wheel drive vehicle as most dumping target areas can only be reached by driving through deep, soft sand, a significant problem especially for our predominant senior demographic.

Goal-CM 10.5 A community landfill that can be safely accessed and operates on a schedule that is convenient for all users, including working people.

Policy-CM 10.5.1 Encourage the Borrego Springs Landfill to have sufficient operations so as to allow for more adequate hours of operation and for the creation of safer paths of travel within the landfill.

Implementation-CM 10.5.1

1. Review the possibility of operating the landfill on certain weekdays from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and to remain open on Saturdays at least one-half day.
2. Explore methods of capitalization (plant waste pre-grinding, for example) that would reduce the cost to the consumer of processing waste at the Borrego Springs Landfill.
3. Water down and compact internal travel paths so they can be safely used by a passenger vehicle without four-wheel drive.

f. Telecommunications

Telecommunication typically involves the use of electronic transmitters such as the telephone, television, radio or computer. Borrego Springs is located in a valley surrounded on three sides by mountains that often block the effective transmission of radio and cell phone signals and, in certain locations, prohibits line of sight reception of satellite signals. Telephone transmission lines have only recently been undergrounded under a program that calls for a set amount of existing transmission line undergrounding each year.

Issue-CM 10.6 Telecommunications lines in Borrego Springs are now mostly routed via above-ground poles and are significantly affected by exposure to high absolute temperatures, large day/night temperature swings, and persistent high winds, leading to degraded service and significant service disruptions.

Goal-CM 10.6 Undergrounding of all terrestrial telecommunication lines in the CPA, both customer service connections and utility lines, by the year 2020.

Policy-CM 10.6.1 Require that all new or replacement terrestrial telecommunications lines in the CPA, exempt the replacement of partial portions of existing line segments for the purpose of making immediate repairs, be installed and routed underground.

Implementation-CM 10.6.1

1. Alter DPLU scoping and plan review/check procedures to ensure that CPA applicants are informed of this requirement as early in the application and planning process as possible.
2. County to coordinate a program of undergrounding of trunk lines by affected utilities.

3. Conservation and Open Space (COS)

3.1 Resource Conservation and Management

Borrego Springs, a "Village in a Park," is a widespread, rural community set like a gem within the second largest state park in the United States. Most residents hold the idea of conservation, quality of life, open space and sweeping vistas close to their hearts. Balancing the needs of residents, visitors and businesses, including agriculture, with the conservation of natural and cultural resources is one of the premier tasks of the Borrego Springs Community Plan. The long-term viability of the single-source supply of water has been the number one issue for community groups since the early 1990s. Resolution of the aquifer overdraft will forge the future of the community of Borrego Springs.

In July 2009, Borrego Springs became the second, worldwide "International Dark Sky Community" and the first in California. Throngs of visitors venture to Borrego Springs and the nearby Anza-Borrego Desert State Park from all over the world to experience the natural desert landscape and the astounding clarity of the desert's night sky.

Desert wildlife is commonly observed throughout the Borrego Valley as they travel through the yards and roadways of the community. Coveys of quail, flocks of white-winged doves, roadrunners, Cooper's hawks, jackrabbits, coyotes, bobcats and a variety of amphibians and reptiles are frequent visitors in the residential areas of the town. Even bighorn sheep and mountain lions find their way through the fringes of our valley, crossing from one mountain range to another, dependent upon open spaces and movement corridors.

Challenges to our community are headlined by issues such as the major water overdraft from our finite aquifer, reduction of consumptive agriculture by equitable methods, development of alternative energy sources to power our town, the preservation of our dark skies and retaining the high quality of life for our residents and visitors, present and future.

a. Agricultural soils and production

Borrego Valley has long been attractive to the agricultural industry. Early interests brought the growing of cotton, gladiolas, alfalfa, and grapes to the Valley. By the mid-1960s the primary crops turned to grapefruit and lemons, then later in the 1970s evolved to landscape species such as palm and olive. The climate of the desert, along with very inexpensive land and the perception of readily accessible ground water caused the agricultural ventures in Borrego Valley to grow and sometimes prosper.

Approximately 4,000 acres in the northern part of Borrego Valley have been converted to the growing of grapefruit, grapes, palm trees and lemons since the 1940s. The groundwater pumping for intensive agriculture has drawn the water table down at an average rate of about two feet per year for about sixty years, causing the pumping to become all the more expensive and the quality of the water to become more problematic as the well depth increases and the use of fertilizers and pesticides is prolonged.

Issue-COS 1.1 Agricultural water use is overdrawing the finite groundwater basin beneath the CPA, altering natural habitat and systems.

Goal-COS 1.1 Incremental reductions of agricultural production in the Borrego Valley over the next 20 years while protecting the rights of farmers and the continued environmental health of the Borrego community.

Policy-COS 1.1.1 Encourage a reduction in the production of citrus crops and palm trees to manageable levels or their replacement with low to very low water consumptive crops.

Implementation-COS 1.1.1

1. Implement programs that allow farmers to convert farms from citrus and palm trees to crops that rely on low to moderate water use.
2. Develop methods of conversion that will provide incentives for farmers to change farmlands to other sources of income including limited development.
3. Investigate methods that will make it feasible for farmers to donate lands to conservancies, a local land trust, or others who will fallow and restore desert lands to natural habitat.
4. Regulate the use of fertilizers in agriculture and on golf courses to reduce pollutants entering the water system.

b. Plant and animal habitats and wildlife corridors

Borrego Springs is located in a desert valley in the rain shadow of the Peninsular Mountain Ranges. The community is surrounded by the 600,000-acre Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The diverse terrain supports a wide variety of native plant and animal species on surrounding lands. Many species of plants and animals are listed as State and Federal Endangered Species. Open space and unimpeded movement corridors are essential to the long-term health of many species of wildlife.

One of the native animals of particular note is the Peninsular bighorn sheep, which inhabits the steep slopes, deep canyons and the alluvial fans of Borrego Valley and the nearby state park. Bighorn sheep attract wildlife enthusiasts in large numbers to view these rare mammals in areas such as Borrego Palm Canyon, Coyote Canyon, Montezuma Grade and Yaqui Pass. They are observed crossing the Valley in places such as Indian Head Ranch near Henderson Canyon, the Vern Whitaker Horse Camp near the mouth of Coyote Canyon, and have even been seen crossing Di Giorgio Road near the Santiago Estates Mobile Home Park. Large numbers of Bighorn Sheep rely on the steep slopes of Coyote Mountain, Indian Head Peak, and Dry Canyon to safeguard their lambs during early spring, and frequent the deep canyons west of the Borrego Valley for reliable water sources in summer.

Residents of Borrego Springs enjoy the close proximity of wildlife near their homes and throughout the Valley as they travel to the town center to conduct business. Many residents maintain feeding stations for birds and are protective of their local wildlife. Antelope ground squirrels, quail, doves, roadrunners and cactus wrens are well known

to most Borrego Springs residents. The howl of coyotes is a common accompaniment to the dark skies of the desert. Open spaces between homes and businesses, preservation of intact native plant communities, and natural drainage patterns are all vital to the health of our native animals and plants.

Grading restrictions need to be tightened and enforced to protect our community from experiencing continued grading of commercial projects, residential lots and golf courses. Grading needs to be restricted to the footprint of homes, commercial buildings and other developments (see Land Use Chapter, policies under Issue LU-3.4). Enforcement needs to be consistent and stringent to curtail the grading of entire parcels prior to construction of homes and businesses. Grading of entire parcels leads to rapid wind and water erosion, unsightly scars on the lands and a reduction of native plants and natural habitats. Native plants are essential to the retention of desert soils, wildlife corridors and natural wind breaks.

Issue-COS 1.2 Development threatens and fragments plant and animal habitat and propagation and movement corridors.

Goal-COS 1.2 Protection and maintenance of natural habitats and corridors within the Borrego Springs CPA that will ensure the continued health and well being of plant and animal species that are native to the desert environment, preserving the natural biodiversity of native flora and fauna.

Policy-COS 1.2.1 Require development to minimize impacts to plant and animal habitat and to maximize the retention of propagation and movement corridors.

Policy-COS 1.2.2 Retain native plants in place, which require no additional water, to hold down the soil, and which prevent erosion, flooding and wind-borne dust and sand.

Policy-COS 1.2.3 Prohibit development from clear-scraping property for home construction to ensure that a certain percentage of the property, depending on the size of the lot, is left in its natural state (after the footprint of the house is included). Replace Ocotillo and native cacti plants.

Policy-COS 1.2.4 Retain the natural desert appearance of neighborhoods through curbside use of native plants.

Policy-COS 1.2.5 Preserve existing wildlife and vegetation corridors through neighborhoods and establish corridors in plans for new neighborhoods.

Policy-COS 1.2.6 Evaluate impact of extensive fencing as it relates to wildlife corridors, developing limits on the use of fencing.

Policy-COS 1.2.7 Limit turf and imported plants and retain the desert's natural light-colored, porous substrate--rather than dark asphalt—in order to maintain the community's low rate of humidity.

Policy-COS 1.2.8 Retain native vegetation in order maintain the CPA's overall low humidity.

Policy-COS 1.2.9 Limit use of exotic plants known to be invasive, as they often out-compete native species. African fountain grass, Cape marigold, tamarisk and other highly invasive species should be avoided in residential and commercial planting.

Policy-COS 1.2.10 Promote use of native plants in the Village Core to reinforce our community's desert ambiance and complement the surrounding desert environment.

Policy-COS 1.2.11 Identify areas of particular vegetative significance; link these areas to a future valley-wide foot trail system.

c. Scenic resources and highways

In desert country, the resources of quiet, uninterrupted vistas and brilliant night skies are the signature of healthy communities and landscapes. Disturbance of the skyline, silhouettes of towers, power-lines, telephone poles, "cut and fill" road scars, "security" lights, agricultural burning and dust from off-highway vehicles during busy holidays are all impacts to the scenic quality of Borrego Valley and the surrounding State Park. Construction of highways on the steep slopes of our desert mountains has left our views scarred forever, but will hopefully lend a lesson for any future large-scale construction project which can negatively impact the views and vistas in the area.

Issue-COS 1.3 Human infrastructure in the CPA inevitably impacts scenic vistas.

Goal-COS 1.3 Scenic vistas maintained throughout the CPA for the enjoyment of visitors and residents in a natural environment.

Policy-COS 1.3.1 Require that physical impacts to the scenic vistas within the CPA be minimized to a level that does not create visual blight or degrade upland landscapes.

Policy-COS 1.3.2 Discourage new energy transmission towers within the CPA.

Policy-COS 1.3.3 Prohibit wind turbine power generation towers in areas where viewsheds would be adversely impacted.

Policy-COS 1.3.4 Develop methods to encourage builders and developers to fully consider the effects of their actions regarding clearing, grading, hardscape, walls and fences and landscape on current and future viewsheds and view corridors.

d. Surface, groundwater, and watersheds

The Borrego Valley Aquifer is a finite source of natural water, much of which has been present as groundwater for thousands of years. The amount of groundwater pumping in the Valley since the inception of agriculture has overwhelmed the amount that is naturally restored to the aquifer each year. Estimates for total groundwater consumption on an annual basis range from 15,000 acre feet per year to well over 20,000 acre feet per year. Estimates of the natural replenishment of the aquifer usually range around 4,000 acre per year, although this figure needs to be further analyzed.

The estimate of 4,000 acre feet per year recharge could be greatly reduced during drought episodes and so may not be a reliable estimate to work from in the long-term. It has been estimated in recent years that residential and local business use of groundwater approximates that which is restored by annual rainfall. This means that all water use by golf courses and large-scale agriculture is in excess of what the natural resources of the Valley can restore. This imbalance needs to be addressed and rectified.

The watersheds providing water runoff to the CPA are important resources, protected mostly by the surrounding Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Coyote Canyon watershed provides the highest volume of natural water runoff into the Valley, followed by Borrego Palm Canyon, Henderson Canyon and Tubb Canyon. The State Park has enhanced water volume in Coyote Canyon and Palm Canyon by eradicating massive quantities of the non-native tamarisk trees. Water quality is also enhanced by the preservation of large areas of the watersheds feeding Borrego Valley. Threats to water quality occasionally present themselves and residents of the Valley need to remain vigilant. The most recent large-scale threat came in the form of a proposal to build a solid waste disposal site on the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation in the upper reaches of Borrego Palm Canyon, above the State Park. This proposal was defeated, but presented a real threat to groundwater quality in Borrego Springs.

Surface flow of streams entering the Valley, such as Coyote Creek, Palm Canyon Creek and Tubb Canyon can be impacted by the overdraft of the Borrego Valley Aquifer. Streams cannot meander far out into the valley if the aquifer has been depleted beneath them. The streams will quickly seep into the subsurface if the ground beneath them is not saturated at the canyon mouths. This impacts the amount of riparian vegetation near the canyon mouths and can negatively impact the growth of native fan palms, willows, mesquites and cottonwoods that normally inhabit desert canyons.

Issue-COS 1.4 Continued overdrawing of our sole-source aquifer threatens the viability of the CPA and desert ecosystem.

Goal-COS 1.4 A sustainable supply of water, ending the current overdrawing of the Borrego Springs sole-source aquifer.

Policy-COS 1.4.1 Encourage and develop methods for CPA groundwater system human withdrawals to be less than or equal to replenishment amounts on an average ongoing basis.

Policy-COS 1.4.2 Prohibit the construction of any new golf courses in the CPA, unless an alternate water source, such as recycled water is made available.

Policy-COS 1.4.3 Encourage xeriscape landscaping in residential and business developments.

e. Mineral resources

The need for sand and gravel during periods of rampant construction in the Southern California region has led to the development of mining for these resources in the local area. Recovery of the landscape and native plants takes centuries. A measured, permitted system of mineral extraction needs to be well thought out, and the County needs to increase its enforcement to stop permanent damage to the Borrego Springs landscape.

Issue-COS 1.5 Insufficiently regulated mineral extraction coupled with minimal and ineffective enforcement in the CPA.

Goal-COS 1.5 Protect mineral resources in the CPA effectively from illegal or improper extraction.

Policy-COS 1.5.1 Require that all mineral extractions in the Borrego Valley undergo full environmental review and public noticing.

Policy-COS 1.5.2 Encourage strict enforcement of illegal mineral extraction activities in the Desert Subregion. (New to support Implementation).

Implementation-COS 1.5.1

1. Work closely with the County DPLU to assure that all County Codes relative to mineral extraction and grading are strictly enforced.
2. Focused enforcement on mineral extraction needs to be prioritized to alleviate such long-term impacts as presented by illegal sand and gravel extraction.

f. Air quality

Since viewsheds and unending vistas are such a vital part of the high quality of experiences for residents and visitors; the purity and visual quality of our air is critical. Borrego Valley is a relatively closed basin which can trap air masses against the adjacent 6,000 foot mountains.

On a score of days per year, low quality smoggy air spills over the rim of the mountains through Coyote Canyon from Riverside and Los Angeles. More dramatic are the recent low quality air events caused by the high number of off-highway vehicles during busy holiday periods such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, President's weekend and the two to three weeks of Spring Break. On several recent weekends the entire Borrego Valley was heavily impacted by the airborne dust raised by thousands of off-highway vehicles to the east and southeast in the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area and the Imperial Valley. These events were made more severe by east winds, causing air quality to be reduced to such an extent that Font's Point and the Santa Rosa Mountains could not be seen from the center of Borrego Springs. These events occurred during the busiest weekends of the year, when all local hotels, motels, inns and campgrounds are booked full. Golf courses are at their busiest; visitors are touring local businesses, eating in restaurants and hiking local trails, yet are impacted by extremely poor air quality.

Agricultural burning is relied upon to reduce the heavy levels of slash caused by tree trimming, palm frond grooming and the removal of wind-damaged trees. Burning is permitted by CAL FIRE and the Borrego Springs Fire Department during the winter and spring months, but heavy smoke often fills parts of the Valley. When burning coincides with holidays or busy tourism periods, the impacts of smoke can be profound.

Issue-COS 1.6 CPA air quality is often compromised by dust from grading, fallowed agricultural lands, smoke from agricultural waste burning and dust from off-road recreational vehicle use in and near the CPA.

Goal-COS 1.6 A high level of air quality throughout the CPA maintained as an issue of good health and to ensure a quality experience for visitors and residents alike.

Policy-COS 1.6.1 Identify and eliminate contributing factors associated with poor air quality throughout the basin, including those regional programs associated with reducing the growing carbon footprint.

Policy-COS 1.6.2 Preserve and protect native soils and soil crust in their natural state to the greatest extent possible to prevent wind blown sand, which degrades air quality and visibility.

Policy-COS 1.6.3 Monitor future plans for the Salton Sea, because of wind blown sand and chemical particulate matter that would settle into the Borrego Valley and during certain atmospheric conditions, the odor from the Salton Sea negatively affects Borrego's air quality.

Policy-COS 1.6.4 Design and encourage future transportation systems and methods that reduce air pollution.

Implementation-COS 1.6.1

1. Reduce wind-blown dust pollution by more effective grading ordinances, which will be enforced by the County
2. Through a local land trust, implement methods to restore fallowed farm land to prevent wind-blown dust.
3. Replace vacated farm fields with restored desert habitat to reduce air pollution caused by blowing sand.
4. The Borrego Springs Fire Department should restrict agricultural burning in coordination with this policy.
5. Investigate establishing a limit on the total number of off-road riders during pollution periods to reduce future levels of wind-blown sand and air pollution in the Borrego Valley caused by off-highway vehicle use on adjacent land, including lands managed by OWSVRA and BLM.
6. Install air quality monitoring stations within the Borrego Valley to detect poor air quality episodes and to pinpoint the sources of the poor air quality. Upon detection and determination of sources, work to restrict or alleviate such activities.

g. Dark skies and dark environment

In July 209, Borrego Springs became the second, worldwide, “International Dark Sky Community” and the first in California. Throngs of visitors venture to Borrego Springs and the nearby Anza-Borrego Desert State Park from all over the world to experience the natural desert landscape and the astounding clarity of the desert’s night sky. The tendency of city dwellers when they move to the backcountry is to illuminate their property and residences. The Dark Sky Initiative will help educate Borrego Springs’ residents and new arrivals to the benefits of preserving the night sky resource of our desert community.

A goal of this initiative will be to educate individuals and organizations and create ways to encourage them to fully consider the effects of their plans and actions relative to outdoor lighting throughout the Borrego Valley. Actions will include consideration of light fixtures, bulb selection and location of lighting, orientation of fixtures, timer settings, motion detectors and actual need for lighting. Studies have shown that 30 percent of all lighting in the U.S. actually points out toward space, illuminating trees, buildings and signs.

An educational program will be instituted in Borrego Springs regarding lighting needs, ways to reduce residential and business lighting, conserving energy, re-directing existing lighting to reduce light pollution, and ways to avoid unnecessary use of so-called security lights and driveway lighting in residential areas.

Issue-COS-1.7 CPA Highly Susceptible to Light Pollution. The CPA is highly susceptible to light trespass and degradation of its unusually dark night skies and dark night environment, both of which are unique and important elements of community character.

Goal-COS-1.7 Limit the degradation of the dark night sky and dark night environment.

Policy-COS-1.7.1 Establish and enforce a set of lighting standards specific to the CPA to conserve and protect the unique dark sky and dark environment.

Goal-COS-1.8 New and retro-fitted exterior lighting contributes to conserving the dark sky and dark environment of Borrego Springs.

Policy-COS-1.8.1 Ensure that all new and retrofitted exterior lighting fixtures and systems use indirect lighting and source shielding to eliminate light “spill”. Institute a CPA-wide program to eliminate existing instances of light trespass, with the exception of emergency lighting.

Policy-COS-1 Require, to the extent feasible, shielded fixtures in all private and public street and parking area lighting to substantially confine illumination to the lighted area.

Goal-COS-1.9 Protection of all properties from future light trespass by exterior lighting from adjoining properties.

Policy-COS-1.9.1 Require shielding for all new and retro-fitted exterior light fixtures such that no ray of light exiting an exterior lighting fixture directly from its light source falls outside the boundaries of the legal parcel on which the fixture is situated.

Policy-COS-1.9.1 Limit the maximum night-time intensity of light reflected from any surface of any land, improvement or structure.

Policy-COS-1.9.1 Restrict landscape lighting that is not directed downward towards landscaping

Implementation-COS-1.9.1

1. Revise the San Diego County Lighting Ordinance to protect and enhance the dark sky and dark environment resources by establishing standards on the installation of all new light fixtures within the CPA to limit intensity, glare, light trespass and degradation of dark sky and dark environment from exterior and landscape lighting, including consideration of the addition of a Borrego Springs Lighting Standards addendum to acknowledge the Dark Sky Community designation.
2. All exterior fixtures (with certain exceptions for low-wattage and decorative fixtures) be shielded and emit light in such a way as to confine substantially all light rays emerging from the fixture to fall within the boundaries of the legal parcel on which the fixture is installed.
3. Establish maximum surface light intensity levels to limit dark sky and dark environment degradation through reflection.
4. Require frosted lamps wherever unshielded fixtures may be permitted.
5. All unnecessary commercial, agricultural and residential outdoor illumination is reduced or eliminated.
6. Commercial uses for nighttime lighting are defined and limited in intensity, hours of use and size of lighted areas.
7. Retrofit all existing public street and parking area lighting with shielding.
8. Create a program to assist private owners to shield existing street and parking area lighting.
9. Develop DPLU regulations specifying that all exterior fixtures (with certain exceptions for low-wattage and decorative fixtures) be shielded and emit light in such a way as to confine substantially all light rays emerging from the fixture to fall within the boundaries of the legal parcel on which the fixture is installed.

10. Institute a CPA-wide program to identify and eliminate existing instances of light trespass, with the exception of emergency lighting.

11. Institute an education and enforcement program for sources of glare and light trespass.

3.2 Parks and Recreation

a. Park needs, locations and facilities

Issue-COS-2.1 Christmas Circle Park sits at the nexus of major access roads, S-22 and S-3. It has the only easily accessible public restroom facilities, recently upgraded to meet minimal A.D.A. requirements. Christmas Circle is the focal point for many community gatherings, activities and events, including Borrego Days Desert Festival, the Circle of Art and the weekly Farmer's Market. The County has allotted Community Enhancement Funds (CEF) for park improvements and maintenance. However, the funds must be reallocated each year. There is no on-going funding stream for the maintenance and operations of this central public park. (See Figure 3 on page 71 for conservation areas, open space and parklands in Borrego Spring area)

Policy-COS-2.1.1 Encourage regular annual funding be secured for the maintenance and operation of Christmas Circle Park, as well as support of a redesign to reduce water use and anchor the downtown business core.

Implementation-COS-2.1.1 Within the framework of a special study area consider the future possibility of assigning an agency (or District) the responsibility of operating and maintaining Christmas Circle Park.

Issue-COS-2.2 In May 2000, San Diego County purchased a 16-acre parcel along Church Lane and Country Club designated for a community park. However, this park has not been developed because there is no local entity in Borrego Springs responsible for parks & recreation and no agency, funding or people to manage maintenance and operations for a park of this size.

Goal-COS-2.2 Funds and agency support for facility development, operations and ongoing maintenance of community park property.

Policy-COS-2.2.1 Encourage additional funding to supplement County park funds and developer fees to be used for facility development and encourage support through establishment of a park district or other method for continued operations and maintenance.

Policy-COS-2.2.2 Coordinate with Borrego Springs in the implementation of park development and maintenance.

Implementation COS-2.2.2

1. Identify and designate responsible agency (or District) with funding capacity to lead the design and development of the community park land.
2. Identify and designate responsible agency (or District) with funding capacity to operate and maintain the community park.

Issue-COS-2.3 There is a community need for a memorial park and cemetery. The nearest cemeteries are located in Brawley, Indio and Escondido.

Goal-COS-2.3 Facilitate the provision of a memorial park and cemetery for the families of Borrego Springs.

Policy-COS-2.3.1 Investigate locations and funding methods to assist the community to develop a memorial park and cemetery.

Implementation-COS-2.3.1

1. Work with the County, Borrego Water District, community planning/sponsor groups, civic organizations and churches to plan, develop and maintain a memorial park and cemetery.
2. Consider sites in the vicinity of churches within the community as appropriate sites for a memorial park/cemetery.

Issue COS-Facilities The Senior Citizens Center in Borrego Springs is maintained by both public and private funding. A hot-lunch program and Meals-On-Wheels are among the services provided by the Senior Center. The Children's Center is a non-profit, licensed daycare and early education facility with operational support coming primarily from user fees, donations and profits from a Thrift Shop operated by the center. The non-profit Boys & Girls Club and Badlands Skateboard Park are located near to the Borrego Springs High School and Middle School. Many students walk from the schools to the Boys & Girls Club after school. We have a Little League ballpark facility, the Burnand Field, located across the street from the High School and adjacent to the Children's Center property. Recent additions of fields, fences, new restrooms and refurbished snack bar were made possible largely through private donations. The facilities are operated and maintained by volunteers and donations. There is a lack of safe, established pedestrian circulation among the above facilities. Policies addressing this are located in the Circulation section.

b. Park acquisition, development, and improvements

The best areas for the annual wildflower bloom in the Borrego Valley present a wide array of native annual plant species, including dune primrose, desert sunflower, sand verbena, popcorn flower, fiddleneck, desert lupine and the desert lily. Shrub and cacti species of note during the spring flower show include brittlebush, chuparosa, ocotillo, numerous cactus species, desert indigo and desert senna. The most notable flower fields are found along Henderson Canyon Road, Bighorn Road, DiGiorgio Road, Borrego Valley Road, east Palm Canyon Drive and Pegleg Road. Local residential

roadsides can also be spectacular with blooms, including Ocotillo Circle north to De Anza, Borrego Springs Road and Tilting T and the Borrego Sink area.

Issue-COS-2.4 A substantial amount of prime wildflower habitat is currently unprotected and in private hands.

Goal-COS-2.4 Conversion of existing unprotected wildflower habitat to protected, dedicated open space use.

Policy-COS-2.4.1 Make it a priority to acquire unprotected wildflower habitat lands and convert them to protected, dedicated open space.

Implementation-COS-2.4.1

1. Identify and inventory all unprotected wildflower habitat lands in the CPA.
2. Acquire and retire to open space, when feasible.

c. Opportunities for the joint use of schools and other public facilities for park and recreational uses

Issue-COS-2.5 The Borrego Springs High School swimming pool is not sufficiently available to meet community needs.

Goal-COS-2.5 Increased hours for public use of the High School swimming pool, especially during hot summer months.

Policy-COS-2.5.1 Coordinate with the Borrego Unified School District to increase the availability of the Borrego Springs High School swimming pool to meet community needs.

Implementation-COS-2.5.1

1. Investigate appropriate County park and recreation funds to potentially assist in supporting additional open hours at the high school pool during summer months.
2 Joint-agreement negotiated for additional funding for extended pool operations during summer.

d. Commercial recreation facilities

Several nine and 18-hole golf courses are open to the public: Road Runner Club (9), The Springs (18), Club Circle (9) and Borrego Springs Resort (18). Private golf courses include De Anza Country Club (18) and Montesoro (Ram's Hill) (18 x 2 courses). Some of these developments have exercise rooms and tennis courts open to guests, residents or on a monthly or annual membership basis. There is one commercial horseback riding facility. There is a private commercial desert tour company operating in Borrego Springs, which has a concession contract to operate within the State Park. Otherwise there are no commercial recreation facilities, including movie theater, bowling alley, bike rental, jeep rental, mini-golf, water park or gym/weight room open on a drop-in basis without membership.

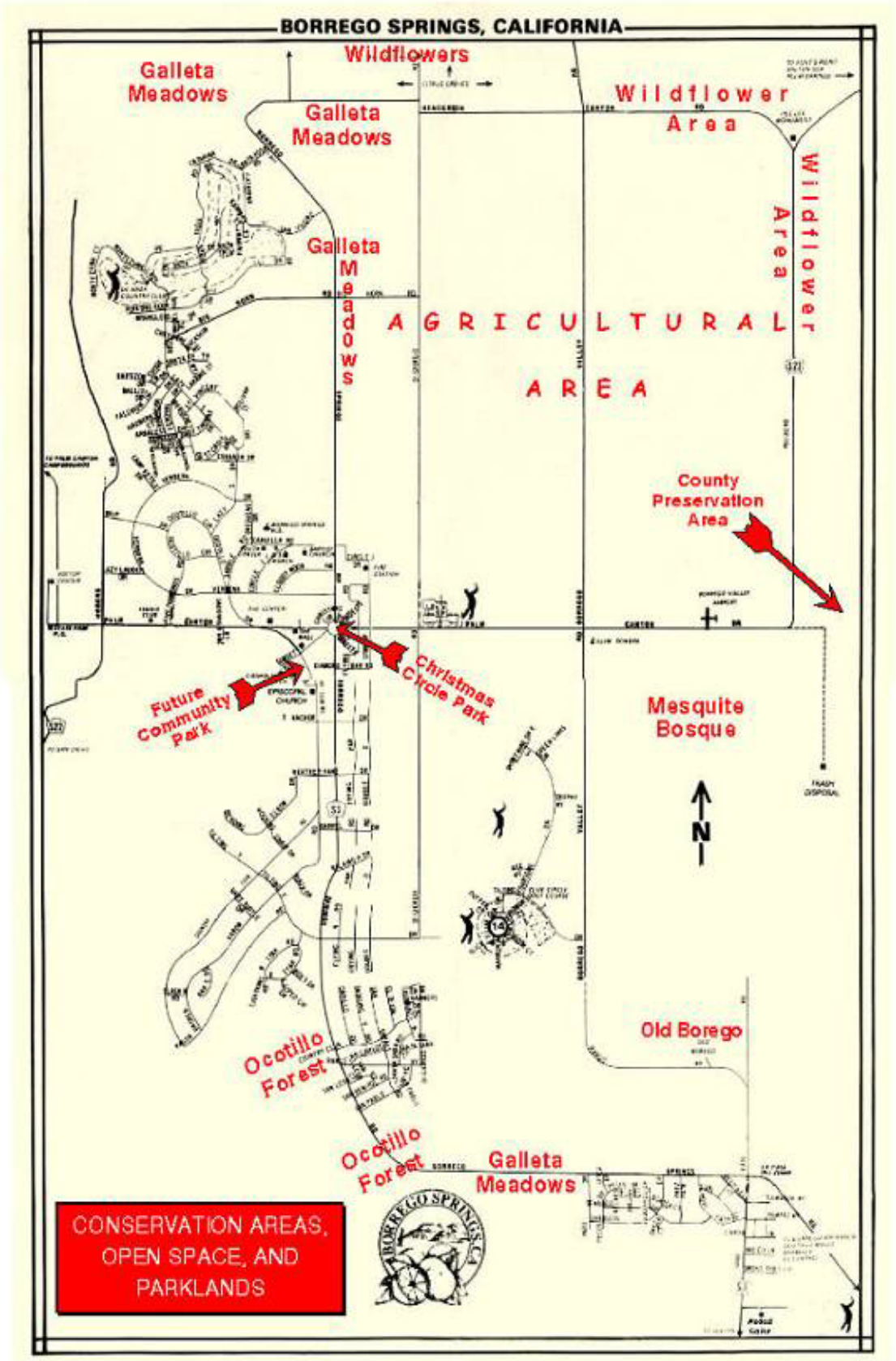

Figure 3: Conservation Areas, Open Space and Parklands

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3.3 Community Open Space Plan

a. Trail System

We have an integrated equestrian/pedestrian trail system, the Community Trail System, which links with the federally-designated Sea-to-Sea, California Riding and Hiking Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail (See Figure 4 on page 75).

b. Privately-owned Open Space

Large parcels of privately owned open space throughout the Valley, collectively known as Galleta Meadows, are owned by Dennis Avery, who allows public day and overnight use. Mr. Avery has recently commissioned a series of life-sized metal sculptures of prehistoric animals placed throughout the Valley on the Galleta Meadows property. The exhibit has generated interest on the part of visitors who tour valley roads to view the sculptures.

c. Public Art

Goal COS-3.1 Public art that enhances the wildlife and natural habitat of the Borrego Valley.

Policy COS-3.1.1 Encourage the development of appropriate public art installations in the Borrego Valley with regard to artistic materials, sitting and compatibility with desert habitat.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Development and developable land within the Borrego Springs area overlay significant cultural resources. Hundreds of Native American sites, including seasonal village sites and food gathering areas have been documented or exist without documentation throughout the Borrego Valley. Development encroaches on cultural and historical sites and structures. Private land ownership makes it difficult to preserve our cultural history (both prehistoric and historic) for the present and future.

Native American sites exist in locations such as the Borrego Sink, where the mesquite bosque was an important food gathering site to the nomadic natives for thousands of years. Other areas where cultural resources can be easily observed are in the dune areas of the northern and eastern Borrego Valley and the desert scrub flats along Di Giorgio Road north of Santiago Estates. Numerous sites are found at the base of the mountains from Palm Canyon to Tubb Canyon and south to Glorietta Canyon, as well as along the edge of the Valley along the base of Coyote Mountain.

Issue-COS-4.1 A substantial number of cultural artifacts are in the areas located generally east of Borrego Valley Road in the vicinity of the Mesquite Bosque, the Borrego Badlands and the Borrego Sink.

Goal-COS-4.1 The identification and conservation of Borrego Valley cultural resources including archaeological, paleontological, historical and biological components.

Policy-COS-4.1.1 Coordinate with appropriate agencies for the protection of cultural and biological resources throughout the Borrego Springs CPA.

Implementation-COS-4.1.1

1. Develop a joint relationship program with the County of San Diego Park and Recreation Department for the expansion of the County preservation area located in the east valley in the vicinity of the Badlands.
2. Valuate the historic context of the area in the preservation of historic sites such as Old Town Borego and the De Anza Trail.
3. Identify and preserve archaeological and paleontological sites throughout the Borrego Valley as a research center.
4. Establish a Historical Society for the Borrego Springs CPA dedicated to the preservation of the architectural context of the original settlements.

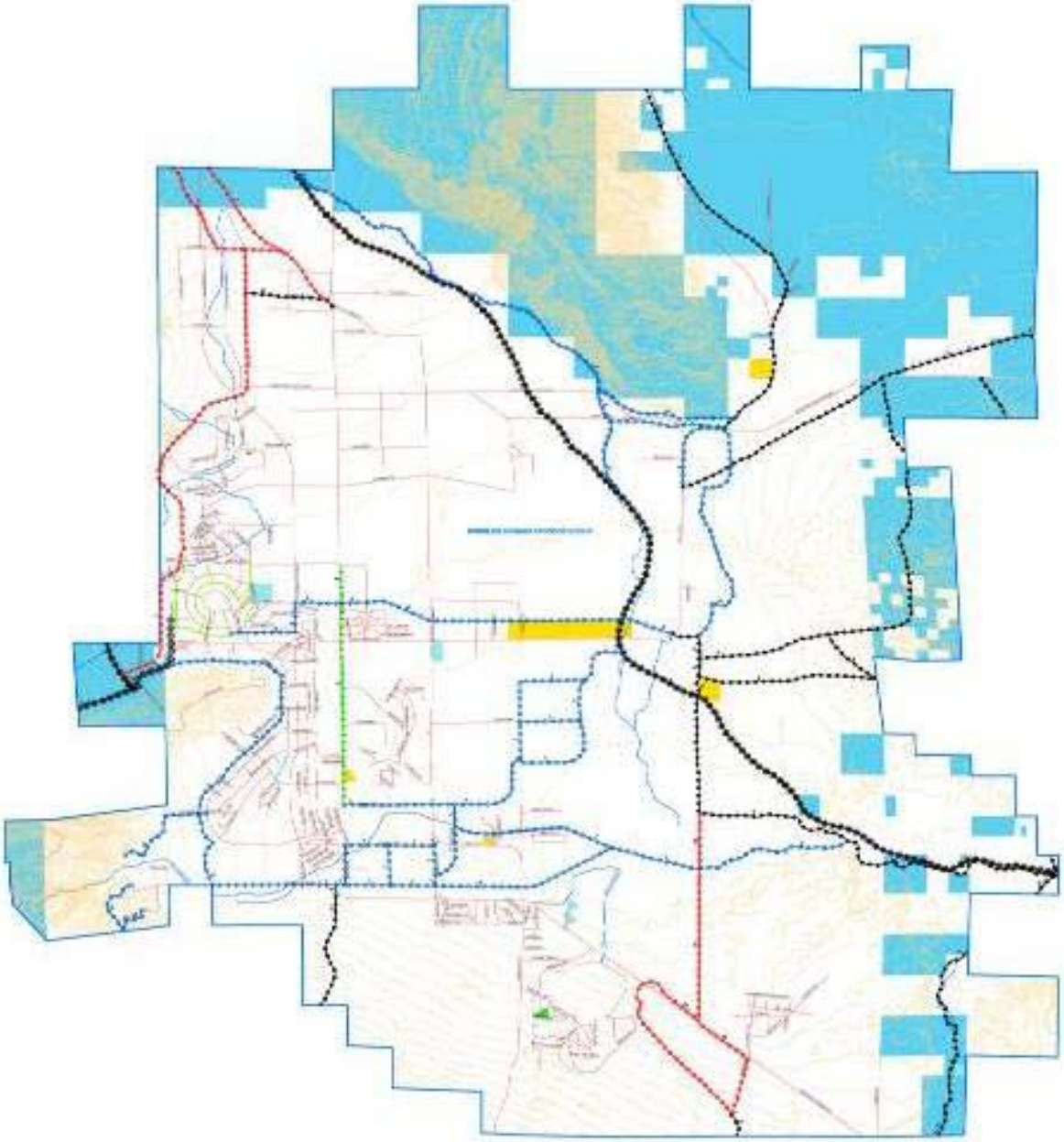

Figure 4: Trail Map

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4. Safety (S)

The Borrego Springs CPA is potentially subject to a number of natural disasters including earthquakes, flooding, fires and other major safety concerns. The agency responsible for coordinating the response to these types of events is the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services.

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the overall County response to disasters. OES is responsible for alerting and notifying appropriate agencies when disaster strikes, coordinating all agencies that respond, ensuring resources are available and mobilized in times of disaster, developing plans and procedures for response to and recovery from disasters and developing and providing preparedness materials for the public.

OES staffs the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (a central facility which provides regional coordinated emergency response) and also acts as staff to the Unified Disaster Council (UDC), a joint powers agreement between all incorporated cities and the County of San Diego. The UDC provides for coordination of plans and programs countywide to ensure protection of life and property.

Locally, the governmental institutions playing the largest role in safety response are the Borrego Springs Fire Department (BSFD), the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol and the law enforcement arm of the Anza Borrego Desert State Park.

4.1 Hazards/Risk Avoidance and Mitigation

a. Seismic and geologic risks

The Coyote Creek fault is an extension of the San Jacinto Fault extending from the northwest trending to the southeast extending into the Sea of Cortez. The Coyote Creek fault is a strike-slip fault with two locations in the Borrego CPA. The fault is located along the base of Coyote Mountain in Coyote Creek and in the Clarks Lake basin. It last faulted in 1968 in the general location west of the Badlands. The San Jacinto Fault is active with a magnitude potential of 6.5 to 7.5.

b. Flooding

With few exceptions, the entire Borrego Valley is subject to flooding from stormwater flowing from the mountain regions in the west down alluvial fans and across the community draining easterly to the Borrego Sink. Runoff from storms in this area has the potential to convey large amounts of debris from the upper watershed to the lower areas of the alluvial fans in and near the Borrego area. Debris flows of this nature present one of the most hazardous and unpredictable types of flooding. The basis for flood control is the standard 100-year event as mapped on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which is regulated in the community via the County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Regulations. The County Ordinance and the NFIP Regulations have specific requirements and restrictions that apply to development within mapped areas of alluvial fans. Due to the potential hazards, and other

restrictions for development, proposed development in this area requires safety related drainage measures above and beyond what would normally be anticipated within other areas of the County.

Currently-acceptable safety-related drainage measures required for development in the Borrego Springs area impose substantial cost and site planning burdens on individual property owners and also create substantial planning, policy, and design considerations for structures in concentration, such as in the Village Core business area, with resulting negative impacts on area commercial revitalization. The County recognizes this impact to the community and is active in national dialogues to explore alternative approaches that are protective of human life and property but less-burdensome. However, due to the risk associated with alluvial fan flooding, including debris flows, as well as their unpredictability, relaxation of standards is not anticipated and alternatives such as master drainage improvements are currently deemed to be cost prohibitive for communities like Borrego Springs. The County is also engaged in efforts to provide guidance that makes the process for building under these regulations clearer and easier to follow.

c. Wildland fire/Urban fire

The Borrego Springs CPA is not located in the Wildland Fire Zone as defined by California Fire (CFD) whereas neighboring communities such as Julian are so defined. The impact on the desert communities therefore is minimal since the plant communities do not contribute to wildfires with the occasional exception of grass fires in the agricultural areas. Borrego is impacted to the extent that firefighting personnel and equipment can be called to adjacent communities to assist in wildfire suppression.

d. Toxic and hazardous materials

Hazardous materials do not create a serious problem for the Borrego Springs CPA with the exception of residual pesticides remaining in the older agricultural areas that are fallowed. This may create a clean-up requirement for the adaptive re-use of those areas previous exposed to chemicals. The issue is not believed to be a critical hazard. Farmers continue to utilize pesticides as controlled by the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture.

4.2 Emergency Preparedness and Response

Because of the remote nature of the Borrego Springs CPA, it is likely that initial response will depend primarily on the capabilities of local responders with one of their most important tasks being to assess the damage and continuing danger posed by the event, and coordination with County authorities to direct appropriate resources to the area to protect and preserve the public's safety and welfare.

Issue-S-2.1 Although documents are in place detailing a response from safety infrastructure at the "30,000 foot" level, at issue is the actual preparedness of our community at "ground zero" and our ability to respond to the immediate needs of our citizens in the event of a major natural disaster.

Goal-S-2.1 A prepared community at the "citizen level" to respond during the first few hours and days of a major natural disaster.

Policy-S-2.1.1 Encourage the development of a coalition of the Borrego Springs Fire Department, Borrego Water District, the Medical Center, and Borrego Springs Unified School District to identify and train a community Disaster Response Task Force that, working with local and County responder networks, will design and stand ready to implement a local "first response".

Implementation-S-2.1.1

1. Ensure that local agencies have a plan to respond to emergencies to ensure the safety and health of the community. Such plans at a minimum should include those responsible for coordinating local efforts and communicating the needs of the community to outside authorities.

2. Sponsor community-wide emergency preparation/response exercises to test the readiness of the community to react to the emergency events it may face.

3. Hold meetings on a semi-annual basis among those agencies identified in Borrego Springs as having a role in emergency response to discuss any updates needed for the emergency response measures critical to the community's health and safety.

4. Hold annual meetings with the San Diego County OES to insure that the County plan is consistent with the needs of the community.

5. Implement a plan to use local broadcast facilities to relay local disaster information to citizens.

5. Noise (N)

The extremely low ambient noise levels in the Borrego Springs CPA are a key element defining our community character and appeal as a tourism destination. Maintaining a quiet environment in the Borrego Valley is critical to a person's right to enjoy life and property as well as to our economy. Unwanted noise is detrimental to the public health and safety of the community for residents and for seasonal visitors who travel to the Valley to benefit from the quiet desert environment. Continuous and incidental noise both have the potential to seriously disrupt the peaceful enjoyment of local flora and fauna in their relationship to the fragile native landscape.

5.1 Noise Sources

Noise is generated in the CPA from a number of sources most generally on an incidental basis. There is no continuous source of noise that serves to deteriorate the local environment other than intermittent road noise along the arterials that carry traffic to and around the community. This source is not considered to have a serious impact on public health and welfare.

Intermittent noise sources around the CPA include: (a) commercial trucks, (b) aircraft aerobatics and (c) construction activities.

a. Trucks

Trucks driving down Montezuma Grade along Highway S-22 generate noise as they are forced to decelerate to maintain control of their vehicles especially when loaded. Noise is projected into the Valley via the amphitheater effect, with sound reflected from canyon walls onto the valley floor below. Trucks traveling along Palm Canyon Drive, particularly in the early hours of the morning, can be heard for miles around against the extreme quiet. Compression brakes, in particular, are a significant noise nuisance.

Issue-N-1.1 Truck operation in the CPA and particularly on S-22 is a significant source of noise nuisances, further aggravated by the use of compression brakes and operations between the hours of 8:00 pm – 7:00am.

Goal-N-1.1 Truck operations that are limited to day and early evening times, where the need to use compression brakes in valley floor portions of the CPA is eliminated.

Policy-N-1.1.1 Encourage limited hours of operation of non-emergency vehicles in excess of 26,000 pounds G.V.W. in the CPA to 7:00 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.

Implementation-N-1.1.1

1. Study appropriate locations for signage.
2. Install signage and coordinate targeted enforcement for violations.

Goal-N-1.2 Diverted noise-producing commercial truck operations away from Montezuma Valley Road and Yaqui Pass Road.

Policy-N-1.2.1 Encourage the routing of commercial truck traffic to and from Borrego Springs via Borrego Springs Road from State Route 78 in the southeast and via the Borrego-Salton Seaway S-22 in the east, and divert it away from Montezuma Valley Road S-22 and Yaqui Pass S-3.

Implementation-N-1.2.1

1. Determine appropriate locations for truck-routing signage.
2. Alter information at appropriate state and county agencies to reflect the policy.
3. Conduct an educational campaign on the policy for identifiable routine commercial truck operators in the CPA.

b. Aircraft

Aircraft engaged in aerobatics in and around the County Airport project exceedingly loud noises that fluctuate in irritating patterns that are audible throughout the valley on an incidental basis. Pilots take advantage of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved “Aerobatics Box” adjacent to the airport. The proximity to the Borrego Springs Elementary School makes this activity sensitive if conducted during school hours or when children are on the school grounds. The noise from this activity can be heard miles from the airport, particularly in light- or no-wind conditions.

Issue-N-1.3 The aerobatic activities occurring in the aerobatic box at the County Airport benefits pilots while creating a general nuisance throughout a large portion of the CPA, whereas enforcement is a key problem that turns this aviation resource into a nuisance.

Goal-N-1.3 Aerobatic activities that operate with respect to the community of Borrego Springs.

Policy-N-1.2.1 Encourage increased compliance and enforcement of FAA policies affecting the aerobatic box and increased communication between pilots, airport managers and citizens to resolve concerns.

Implementation-N 1.2.1

1. Increase enforcement efforts, as feasible, to decrease problems with aerobatics activities.
2. Have regular communication with residents to express concerns with aviation noise.
3. Consider the selection of an alternate location for the aerobatic box away from human habitation.

Issue-N-1.4 Noise Impacts on Residential Uses. Noise in the desert is a significant disturbance to the character and experience of the community. The County Airport is a significant source of noise nuisance, particularly with the continued existence of a FAA-approved and supported "aerobatic box" there. Further, Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) standards applied elsewhere (see California Code of Regulations. Airport Noise Standards, 21 CCR 5000-5037) to separate airport-related and other uses are inappropriate for the CPA, where extremely-low ambient background (uncorrelated) noise levels and lack of traditional noise masking elements (terrain, vegetation) are inherent assumptions in such standards, which are not stringent enough to prevent significant noise nuisances under the conditions prevailing in the CPA.

Residential-use lands are now sited within adverse impact of the noise nuisances created by uses at the County Airport, and current CNEL standards, such as those used in the County Airports Master Plan, are not adequate to provide sufficient separation and isolation in the CPA.

Goal-N-1.4 All future residential development and construction of dwelling units are either outside the range of noise nuisances from uses at the County Airport or any adverse noise impacts are adequately mitigated.

Policy-N-1.4.1 Continue to coordinate with the San Diego Regional Airport Authority to require any development adjacent to the Airport is compatible and require disclosures to property owners within the airport influence areas.

c. Construction

Construction activities in the community generally create limited impacts. Issues common to development include trucking noises and use of equipment. Building sites are generally isolated due to the low density of the Borrego Springs CPA where construction projects are generally small and residential in scale. However, low ambient noise levels and desert heat combine to promote early-morning construction-related nuisances.

Issue-N-1.5 Construction activities routinely commence outside (usually before) times approved in construction permits so as to "beat the heat", creating noise nuisances during periods of extremely-low ambient noise and residential sleeping periods.

Goal-N-1.5 All permitted construction activity that complies with the time restrictions established by the County DPLU and that those time restrictions consider conditions in the CPA.

Policy-N-1.5.1 Restrict construction permit work times consistent with conditions prevailing in the CPA and alert permit applicants that they may not commence or continue construction work outside of permitted hours.

Implementation-N-1.5.1

1. Change procedures to call specific attention to this area for applicants.
2. Advise applicants of the fines and penalties that may apply to violations.
3. Coordinate targeted enforcement at various times throughout the year, and particularly in summer months.

5.2 Noise Standards and Mitigation

Issue-N-2.1 Preserving Low Ambient Noise Levels in the CPA. Planned move to mixed-use (commingled commercial and residential uses) in the Village Core will likely raise new noise nuisance issues that may not be adequately addressed through the application of existing, countywide standards for noise levels in connection with performance zoning and greater infill throughout the CPA.

Goal-N-2.1 Future mixed use and/or infill applications that do not aggravate existing or cause new noise nuisances.

Policy-N-2.1.1 Study and potentially adopt a set of noise standards specific to the conditions prevailing in the CPA.

Implementation-N 2.1.1

1. County to review existing noise standards with BSCSG as they would be applied to future mixed-use and infill applications.
2. Adopt, with the approval of the BSCSG, any needed revisions to these standards to accommodate: a.) the unique low ambient noise levels now existing within the CPA and b) the potential adverse effects of new noise sources on community character.
3. Apply adopted standards to all new development in the CPA.

Issue-N-2.2 Facilities Typically Considered Adjunct to Residential Uses. Noise-producing facilities adjunct to residential uses and typically installed after the granting of a certificate of occupancy, such as pool equipment, HVAC equipment, etc., are currently not required to be appropriately integrated into improvements, and are frequently “tacked on” to structures *post-facto* without consideration of the noise trespass created thereby. This practice, routine in more densely-vegetated areas where high ambient noise levels, proximity of adjoining structures, and terrain provide masking, creates substantial noise nuisances in the unique environment of the CPA.

Goal-N-2.2 Consideration of adjunct uses to an approved design that minimize any additional noise nuisance issues.

Policy-N-2.2.1 Require, prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy for any new residential construction or reconstruction in the CPA, that all swimming pool equipment, HVAC equipment and similar noise-producing adjunct facilities be suitably planned, sited and enclosed so as to prevent noise trespass onto adjoining parcels.

Implementation-N-2.2.1

1. Develop standards for installation strategies, minimum enclosures, and acceptable parcel-boundary noise levels consistent with maintaining the community character of the CPA.
2. Revise DPLU plan check procedures to include requirements of Policy-N-2.2.
3. Revise procedures for final inspection prior to granting certificate of occupancy for dwelling units to ensure all facilities have been completed as planned and approved.

6. Specific Plans & Special Study Areas

6.1 Borrego Valley Farmlands (SS-BVF)

a. Background

The Borrego Valley Farmlands (Farmlands) are located in the northerly portion of the CPA and consist of approximately 4,000 gross acres (3,000 net acres) of generally citrus producing crops. The Farmlands began production in the 1930s growing table grapes and a few other seasonal vegetables with citrus introduced in the early 1960's. By the mid 1960's, with the advancements of the United Farm Workers Union, growing and shipping of table grapes from this remote location was no longer economically viable. After the DiGiorgio Farms fallowed its vineyards, the small portion of land devoted to the growing of citrus continued with increasing capacity, now growing lemons, grapefruit, oranges, palms and other crops.

The crops are irrigated by water wells located on the lands being farmed. Current pumping information is sparse, though some of the local farmers do share their well data with Borrego Water District (BWD). It is widely held that the static groundwater levels in the area are presently in the 200-300 foot range. Initially wells in this area produced water from as shallow as 40 to 50 feet in depth.

The aquifer is replenished primarily from the Coyote Creek flow coming from the Collins Valley to the north. Coyote Creek runs year-round in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and supplies water to the Borrego Valley sub-flow migration. During the infrequent seasonal rains, surface flows sometimes reach the valley floor, making their way to the Borrego Sink which is the terminal catchment basin in the area. These infrequent flows sustain the Borrego Sink eco-system.

b. Agricultural Use

Water is pumped up to the Farmlands via private irrigation wells on the farms. BWD has groundwater management rights providing potable water for use by the residents of Borrego Springs. However, the BWD has no authority over the water consumption of the farm business due to the provisions of existing state laws. Farmers are free to extract water from the aquifer in any quantities that are deemed appropriate for a beneficial purpose.

In the 3,000 net acres of the Farmlands, farmers consume in excess of 10,000 acre feet (AF) of water each year based on a consumptive rate of 3.85 AF/A (acre feet per acre). Visually, this can be represented as a football field full of water to a height of about two miles; and that is every year. Water meters are installed on some private agricultural wells for monitoring, but many farmers do not allow access to their water wells, making rates of consumption estimates only.

c. Residential Uses

For purposes of comparison, residential dwelling units in the CPA consume something less than 1.0 AF/Y (0.95 AF/Y). If you assume that a house typically sits on one acre of land, which is common in Borrego, simple math shows that the Farmlands consume

four times more water than residences. Private agricultural irrigation accounts for most of the Borrego Springs consumptive rate factor. Essentially, residential uses consume about 25 percent of the water per acre that farms consume.

d. Concerns

Given the rate of consumption of water in the CPA by farmers, golf courses and residential uses, the aquifer is being over-drafted (or mined) at the approximate rate of 13,000 AF/Y. Several studies performed over the past 30 years place Farmlands irrigation as using 70 percent of the water pumped annually from the single-source aquifer, with golf course irrigation using 20 percent of the water, and residential/commercial uses accounting for 10 percent of the area usage. The BWD is presently working with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to update information of the water volume that is remaining in the Borrego aquifer. This information may not take into consideration other variables such as climate change or recent increased farm production.

e. Special Study Area

The special study area consists of citrus groves north of Henderson Canyon Road (with some land cultivated in palms to the south of Henderson Canyon Road) and east of the Indian Head Ranch community, bordered on the far eastern side by Highway S-22. The lands are alluvial with elements of fine sand and silts.

f. Issue

The issue has to do with the competing interests for water in the Borrego Valley. If there is no long-term, sustainable water source, the community cannot continue as a province of human habitation. Formal recognition of the CPA's rapidly declining water source will end the viability of the community's tourism and second home-based economy, erode the viability of the surrounding State Park operation to serve its 700,000 visitors each year and put the community as a whole into a serious state of economic and social decline.

Even while the BWD explores options and programs to provide a sustainable water supply for the domestic users it serves, it is clear that the maintenance of existing agricultural land uses in the Farmlands area will continue to overdraft the aquifer and significantly degrade the activities and the environment of the CPA.

Therefore, this study has to do with the production of citrus as a significant agricultural crop versus the need for other uses. Given the argument that there is no overriding need to provide for more residential occupancies in the Borrego Valley, there is also no overriding need to produce citrus in the Borrego Valley since the produce is readily available from other sources such as Florida, Texas or South America where water is plentiful. The argument comes down to the value of production and the profits associated with farming versus the need and cost for potable water for the community as a whole and the maintenance of the local environment to the extent it is dependent on the aquifer as a long-range objective.

g. Valuation

Farmers have a well-established right to extract water from the aquifer based on state law and will likely continue to farm until such time as farming becomes unprofitable or the value of the land becomes greater for another use. The profitability of farming is based on the value of the crop as it varies widely from season to season making it difficult to assign a stable value per acre. Since the Farmlands have been degraded environmentally to the extent that the desert habitat has been eliminated, the lands would have to be restored for residential development.

h. Replanting

Before replanting a new crop of citrus in the Farmlands, a farmer has to evaluate a host of considerations. These include factors such as out-of-area competition from South America, increasing pumping costs, labor, frost potential, the varying value of harvested crops, trucking costs, insect infestation, re-drilling deeper wells and the presence of a continued reliable source of water for irrigation.

i. Strategic Plan

Assuming that the farmers would be willing to sell their land if the value of the land exceeded the net present value of the crop for the life span of the grove, a conversion from farming to housing could materialize on an incremental basis. There is no present demand for more land for subdivisions, with hundreds of acres of subdivided land standing vacant and another 3,000 acres of land in the development pipeline. There is a net present value in the water consumed by the farms.

The groundwater policies of the County of San Diego and of the BWD are founded on the conversion of the Farmlands into uses that are less water intensive through development mitigation requirements.

j. Methodology

Citrus groves have a productive life expectancy of approximately 35 to 40 years. If a method can be implemented to encourage farmers not to replant old groves, all citrus would be removed from the CPA in 35 to 40 years simply through attrition.

A key issue is establishing a mechanism whereby farmers may realize a fair market value not to replant old groves. Expenses associated with planting new groves are substantial and sometimes constitute a risky investment. There are several strategies under development and review by both the County of San Diego and the BWD to create market incentives that would provide for the conversion of the Farmlands into land uses that require substantially less water (i.e. residential development).

Using the residential development conversion scenario will require the cooperative participation of the County of San Diego to formulate land use ordinances that provide for additional density in the Farmlands to create more interest by the development community in purchasing the farms and converting them to environmentally sound, low water use conservation subdivision developments. This could be accomplished by requiring clustered, shared resources development, resulting in the restoration of substantial lands to desert native landscape, while creating single and multi-family residential “villages” in the Farmlands with small lot size and significant open space

dedications (thus limiting water use). These housing units would meet the needs of the anticipated growth in retirement, small foot print and second-home type housing.

k. Vision

It is the responsibility of the community planning process to identify significant problems in the community structure (things that don't work). Eliminating groundwater depletion is fundamental to the continued life and prosperity of the community of Borrego Springs.

While complete groundwater depletion may or may not be imminent, a plan must be developed to resolve the issue within the time frame of the Community Plan over the next 20 years.

It is the vision of the community to reduce farmland – at no penalty to the farmer – by facilitating the purchase of Farmlands so that the water depletion issue can be brought to a manageable level. The community views these issues as not just "water" issues, but also as fundamental "land use" issues.

l. Study Elements

The following items are potential elements to be studied:

1. Use DiGiorgio Road as the primary access road to the Farmlands and to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park beyond.
2. Allow for east-west lateral roads accessing DiGiorgio Road dead-ending in cul-de-sac configurations into the Farmlands.
3. Create a significant State Park access at the north end of the Farmlands.
4. Use the existing SDG&E utility distribution facilities for electric energy.
5. Establish higher density land uses along DiGiorgio Road and Henderson Canyon Road as an incentive for property owners to convert those lands early in the process - available only through the Special Plan process.
6. Identify very low densities in conjunction with State Park adjacencies for estate homes or for dedications to the State Park and other conservancy organizations.
7. Expand the Indian Head Ranch development to the east into the farmlands as estate homes along Horse Camp Road.
8. Identify non-agricultural lands with sensitive habitat adjacent to the State Park that may be set aside as conservancy lands.
9. Use the methods associated with the Conservation Subdivision Program and Low Impact Design to create developments appropriate to the desert habitat.
10. Use restoration funds available from local, state and federal farmland restoration programs for habitat restoration along State Park boundaries.
11. Implement a program for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) that would apply to environmentally sensitive lands or lands identified as having a high level of environmental quality that could be traded for environmentally degraded agricultural lands through the use of an equity mechanism to

encourage development into the Farmlands and for the preservation of sensitive desert lands elsewhere in the CPA.

12. Plan mobility to encourage alternative transportation to connect Farmlands to the Village Core area.
13. Consider retention of border citrus near roadways to hide fallow land or solar installations and to improve air quality.
14. Require the removal of tamarisk trees and root systems at time of development.
15. Create a model of a self sustaining eco-village generating its own power, collecting its own water, re-using its own waste and generating its own food with direct access to one of the greatest state parks in the United States at a new level of eco-tourism for the Borrego Valley.

6.2 Economic Development & Vitalization (SS-EDV)

a. Background

Economic development is a key issue for Borrego Springs. It's been ten years since the last commercial building projects and our 50-year old downtown is in need of revitalization.

For San Diego County, Borrego Springs is a true diamond in the rough and completes the "magic triangle" of the County's natural attractions– seashore, mountains and desert. There is an enormous opportunity here to expand the potential to attract new visitors and adventurers – those seeking to explore not only the nation's largest desert state park, but the many other attractions the desert offers, such as golf, tennis, wellness, astronomy, hiking, biking, history, birding and earth and natural sciences education.

However, in spite of coordinated efforts to develop Borrego Springs in the mid-1950s, further plans to promote economic development languished until 2001, when San Diego County made a grant to the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce to contract for a professional marketing survey and report. The resulting Chandler, Brooks and Donahoe Report was released in the Fall 2001, and for a number of reasons, languished on the shelf until 2005. In 2005, the Chamber recruited a sub-committee of leading citizens, the Borrego Business Think Tank, to study the report's recommendations and put them in place.

In 2007, under the direction of the Think Tank, the Chamber of Commerce applied for and was awarded a $50,000 San Diego County Community Project Fund Grant to begin planning vitalization recommendations from the Brooks Report. The grant also included start-up costs for the Borrego Village Association (BVA), a non-profit organization with the specific charter to catalyze the development of Borrego Springs' central business district.

The BVA has identified that the potential for economic development goes hand-in-hand with a new focus and emphasis on town vitalization to attract the visitors and seasonal residents that will support a stronger business base.

b. Current State

Borrego Springs currently lacks the year-round population, visitor base and infrastructure to support the critical mass needed to maintain existing businesses and encourage new business opportunities.

Business here is highly seasonal. The most active months are October through May, when tourists and seasonal residents make the town bustle. June through September can be very hot, tourist and visitor traffic thins significantly, and some business owners shutter operations. However, the climate is similar to that in neighboring Palm Springs, which remains active during summer months. Business in Borrego Springs' summer and "shoulder months" (October and May) has the potential to increase significantly.

Plans have recently been announced for a new retail building within the Village Core -- our first in more than a decade. It will house Borrego Outfitters and Gourmet Outfitters, two very popular Borrego Springs businesses currently located in the Mall. This

demonstration project along with the planned development of the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association **(**ABDNHA**)** museum and educational campus and other planned rehabilitation of the existing village businesses is anticipated to anchor the downtown vitalization effort.

Borrego Springs' residential base is expected to grow because of its desirability as a retirement community and as a location for second homes in a temperate, healthy, beautiful and safe environment, surrounded by parklands.

Currently, a number of significant housing developments are in the works, including:

- Montesoro, a high-end golf course community with 200 homes built and another 150 planned;
- Road Runner Club/The Springs expansion, with 21 homes built and another 226 planned;
- AMG developments with 200 condominiums and 530 single family homes planned;
- Yaqui Ranch with 300 homes planned;
- Country Club Estates, with 147 homes planned.

c. Economic Opportunities

Business potential exists in Borrego Springs largely because the business base has been undeveloped to date. While a basic grocery store, hardware store, pharmacy and several restaurants currently serve the community, there are numerous opportunities to provide expanded products and services currently only available 90-minutes away (San Diego, Palm Springs or El Centro).

Target customers:

- Full time, year-round residents;
- Part timers with second homes, along with winter "snowbirds" and regular "weekenders" from San Diego, Los Angeles and Riverside Counties;
- Overnight visitors, including "regulars" who return multiple times every season; and
- "Day trippers" from surrounding urban centers on outings to enjoy the scenery, clean air and small town atmosphere.

Other significant business opportunities are in serving active, health-oriented visitors, such as bicycle shops, roller blade rentals and a variety of wellness related spas, practitioners and treatment facilities.

Borrego Springs offers a particularly desirable location for family or proprietor-owned business, including quality schools, an active civic environment, thriving arts community and healthy and safe small town living.

While the town is not well suited for heavy or light industrial development due to our relative isolation from established supply chains, there is potential economic benefit in the health care sector, especially if a small hospital/medical “campus” is opened.

Agriculture, a primary economic engine of the past, no longer contributes in any significant measure to the current local economy.

d. Park Visitation and Tourism – Our Primary Economic Driver

The 700,000 to 1,000,000 annual visitors who come to explore the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park from all around the globe now drive our local economy. They frequent local shops and restaurants and support nine lodging venues with a variety of accommodations, from the new ultra-luxury Borrego Ranch Resort and Spa to budget-friendly motels. Others:

- 350 hotel and motel rooms (budget-conscious to luxury);
- 120 RV spaces, with another 365 planned at RV Resort, The Springs at Borrego;
- 65 tent sites and 57 full-hookup RV campsites associated with the State Park; and
- More than 70 vacation rental homes and condominiums.

However, the overall lodging occupancy rate in Borrego Springs hovers below 50 percent, in stark comparison to the California statewide average occupancy rate of 70 percent.

To help grow our tourist-based economy, the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce is launching an ambitious online marketing program, *TourismBorrego*, founded by four Borrego Springs’ lodging properties to identify marketing strategies to attract more visitors to Borrego Springs.

TourismBorrego managers are working closely with the California Tourism & Travel Commission (CTTC) and the newly created California Desert Visitors Association. Our goal is to qualify for CTTC marketing dollars to help us grow and support the Borrego Springs brand. *TourismBorrego* is set to launch its new website, logo and tagline in early 2009. However promoting Borrego Springs to new visitors and residents is just part of economic development. The other part is what they see and experience once they get here.

Two major, well-established non-profit educational organizations, the Anza-Borrego Foundation & Institute (ABFI) and the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA), offer hundreds of programs, tours, walks, talks and special events that attract and serve tourists. Newsletters and calendars of events are sent to thousands of members nationally and world-wide. Tourist and desert information is available on their web sites and in a number of foreign languages.

ABDNHA operates the Borrego Desert Nature Center, an anchor for tourism in the center of town, currently serving approximately 25,000 annual visitors with information, a retail museum shop and members’ headquarters for activities, outings and events. Through donations and purchases, ABDNHA has acquired 19 contiguous lots (approx.

2.5 acres) on the north edge of Christmas Circle in the center of town for a planned Borrego nature and history center and educational campus. The ABDNHA project has the potential to attract a large number of tourists into the heart of Borrego Springs, offering a major attraction for returning and overnight visitors, as well as attracting new businesses to the surrounding area.

Borrego Springs has also become the second worldwide, International Dark Sky Community, as of July 2009, which will assist with publication and draw of customers to the Borrego Springs Market. Borrego Springs is the first International Dark Sky community in California.

e. Economic Development and the Role of Vitalization

Borrego Springs' primary business and commercial corridor is Palm Canyon Drive (S-22), from Montezuma Valley Road in the west to DiGiorgio Road in the east, with the central business district currently located in the area from Country Club Road to Stirrup Road.

As the BVA considered implementing Brooks Report recommendations, they identified the need for a Master Plan to guide vitalization planning. With CPF funds, the Chamber engaged respected planner Mike Weber, principal of MRW Group (San Diego), to help formulate a Master Plan for two key areas –

- the larger **Town Center**, encompassing the entire primary commercial corridor along Palm Canyon Drive from Montezuma Valley Road in the west to DiGiorgio Road in the east, and
- within that area, the **Village Core**, stretching from Country Club Road in the west to Stirrup Road in the east.

f. Town Center Master Plan

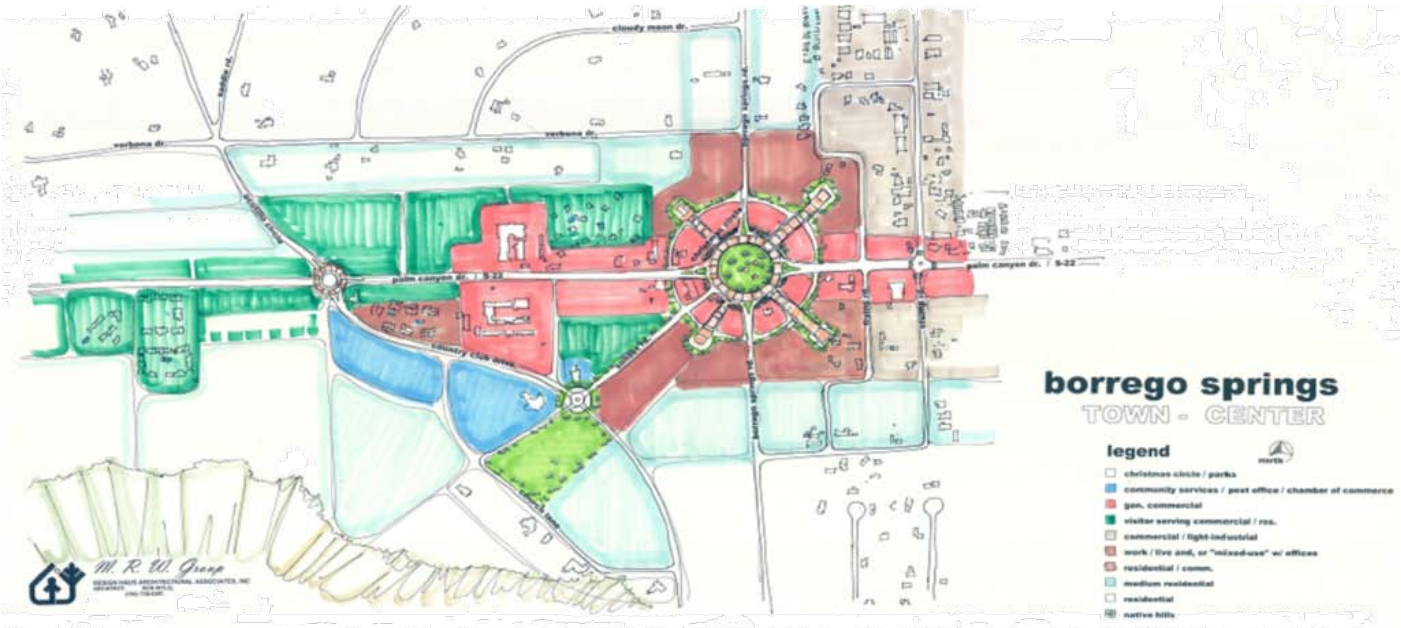

Figure 5: Borrego Springs Town Center
(design by MRW Group, 2007)

The Town Center Master Plan uses scenic and other natural advantages to vitalize its primary commercial corridor to benefit full-time and seasonal residents, businesses, and tourists. The plan reflects the community's desire to create a more clearly defined, functional, and attractive Town Center surrounding the Village Core.

The Master Plan includes pedestrian walkways; traffic calming medians, landscape and streetscape improvements, revitalization of older buildings and new commercial buildings to accommodate a new retail base.

g. Village Core Master Plan

Within the Town Center is another distinct area, the Village Core, our central business district. Vitalizing the Village Core is a key to economic development by enhancing the appeal for visitors, potential residents and new businesses.

The Village Core is distinguished from the Town Center by highly-concentrated mixed-use commercial and residential applications interconnected with inviting pedestrian circulation elements and high-density uses that radiate out from Christmas Circle – the heart of town.

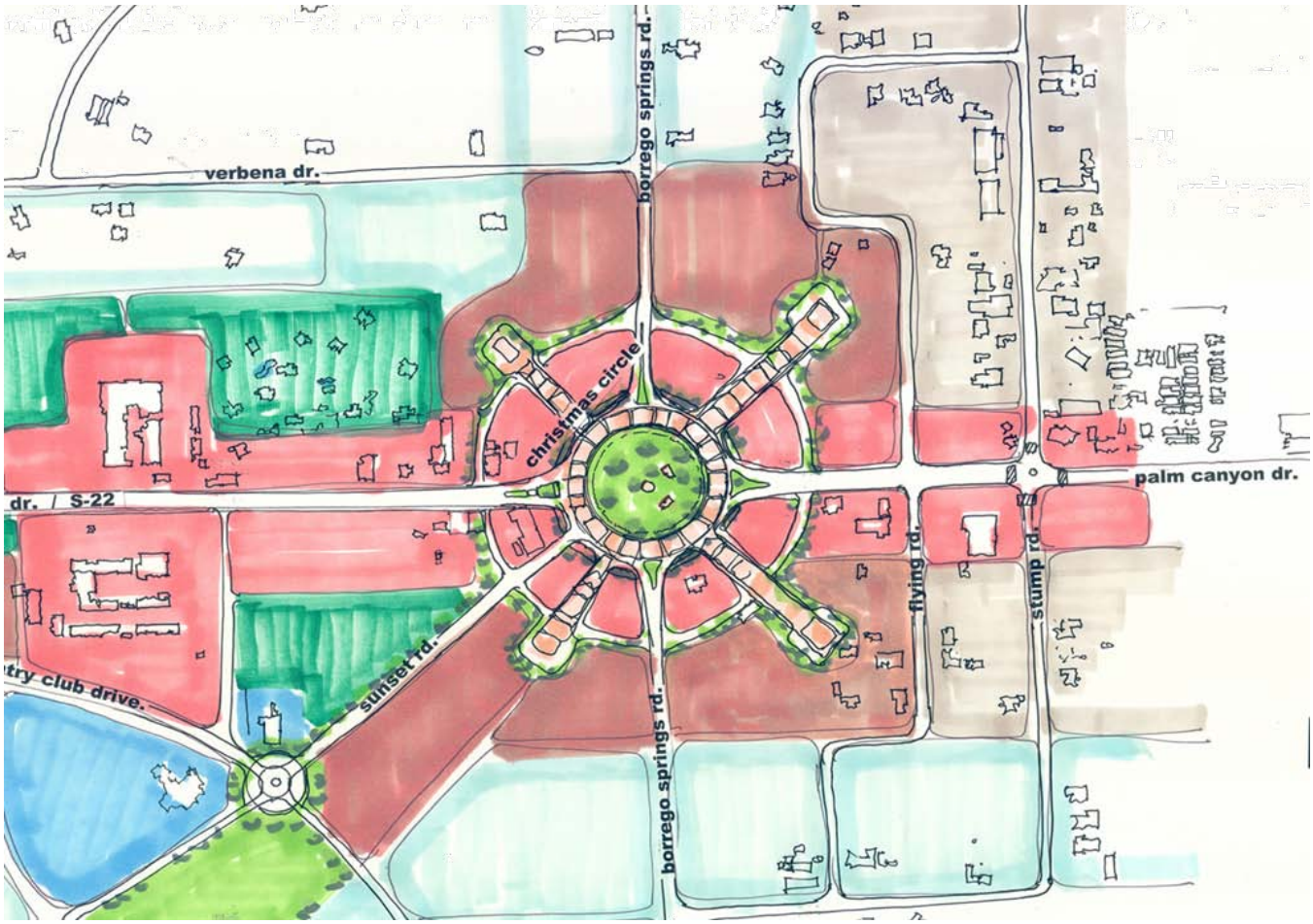

Figure 6: Borrego Springs Village Core
(design by MRW Group, 2007)

j. Vision

- Re-engineer Palm Canyon Drive from an extended business and commercial corridor to a more-defined entry (Town Center) to the community's primary retail center (Village Core) using density and mixed use as the primary land use drivers.
- Concentrated high-density uses in an extremely pedestrian-friendly Town Center, with a Village Core that radiates from Christmas Circle – the heart of Town – and the three-quarter mile section of Palm Canyon Road between Stirrup Road to the east and Country Club Road to the west.

h. Objective (Goal)

Develop Town Center and Village Core Master Plans to guide intelligent growth designed to serve residents and spur economic development by attracting new visitors, potential residents and new businesses to Borrego Springs.

i. Policies

- Create an inviting commercial oasis (Village Core) with unique, natural, desert-oriented cultural appeal and image that encourages artisan and tourist-serving venues and capitalizes on our natural, scenic environment.
- Encourage specific demonstration projects by major community sectors: public, non-profit, community and private.
- Encourage residential dwelling unit densities throughout the CPA to shift and focus new residential use and density into the Town Center and Village Core Special Study Areas.
- Concentrate future designations of General Commercial uses in parcels located in the Town Center, Village Core and County Airport areas.
- Ensure an adequate quantity of light industrial land uses appropriately sited providing for areas of economic development. Potential locations are near the County Airport and adjacent to Stirrup Road.
- Establish a special study area and coordinate with the BSCSG, Borrego Village Association, Borrego Water District and the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce to create a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use "village" district including parcels adjoining Christmas Circle, Borrego Springs Road, Avenida Noreste and Avenida Sureste in the immediate vicinity of Christmas Circle.
- Evaluate the potential use of Transportation Impact Fee funds to increase capacity of roadways in Borrego Springs through operational and pedestrian-friendly improvements, such as roundabouts, sidewalks and improvements around Christmas Circle.

k. Proposed Study Elements

- Density increases and mixed residential/commercial uses in the Village Core.
- Provisions for managing / diverting through traffic in and around the Village Core.
- Downsize the major arterial road in the Village Core, Palm Canyon Drive, to provide a network of traffic calming installations such as parkways, pathways, cart, bicycle and pedestrian paths, attractive landscaped medians and rest areas.
- Plan for a possible regulatory tool creating 'Borrego Desert Style' development standards to fit "tailored zones" (D designator with design control) specific to the Town Center and Village Core.
- Methods to create attractive pedestrian-oriented Village Core:
    - Build an inviting walking path to link the Mall, Center, Circle merchants and Christmas Circle;
    - Include covered picnic and interpretive areas, shaded parking, benches and nooks from which to appreciate valley views;
    - Incorporate native landscaping, attractive pedestrian crosswalks and effective dark-sky-appropriate lighting and wayfinding elements; and
    - Use the Mall as an axis for a pedestrian pathway to Sunset.
- Redesign Christmas Circle as a "Community Plaza," adding a trellised pedestrian promenade around the perimeter.
- Convert Avenida Sureste and Avenida Noreste into landscaped Village Core parking areas to mitigate off-street parking requirements and encourage development of smaller perimeter lots.
- Develop ABDNHA Nature & History Center site with outdoor native gardens and interpretive panels, connecting with the main pedestrian path.
- Design the new Community Park as a desert botanical garden with interpretive pedestrian pathways and special areas for children's play, informal sports or lounging and picnics.
- Create a "meditation walk" or path to link the cross behind the United Methodist Church with Town Center walkways.
- Incorporate a cemetery or other appropriate memorial park behind the Catholic and Lutheran Churches.
- Study flood control methods and funding opportunities within the Village to reduce the need for raised structures.
- Study traffic calming methods along Palm Canyon Drive and Christmas Circle, including the use of increased pedestrian amenities, diagonal parking along the park and crosswalks.
- Create a program for the planting of street trees in the downtown revitalization area from Country Club to Stirrup Road.

6.3 Resource Conservation Areas (SS-RCA)

The following four elements, 6.3.a. - 6.3.d., are proposed for designation as Resource Conservation Areas under this Plan. (See Figure 7 below for the location of each).

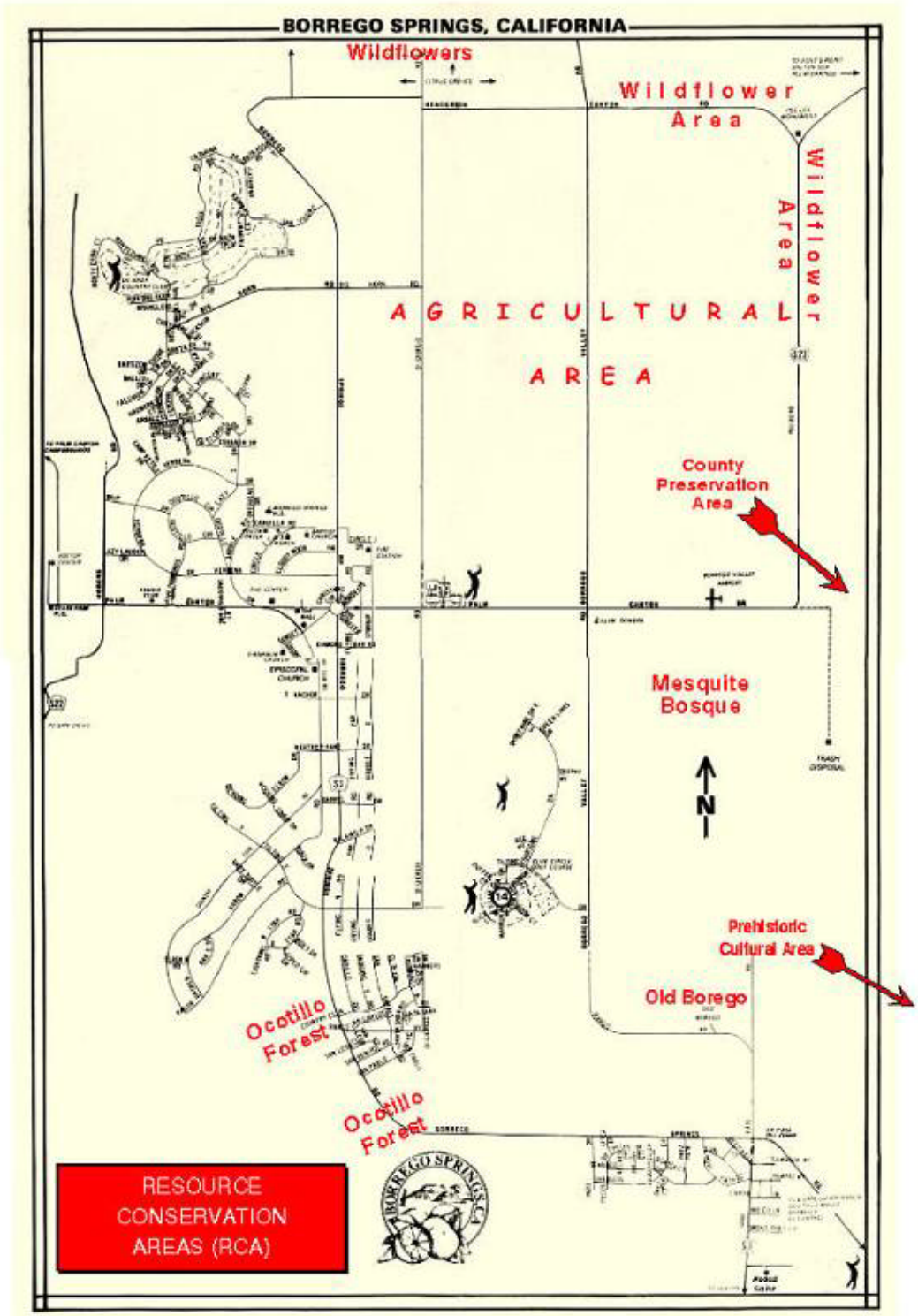

Figure 7: Location of Proposed Resource Conservation Areas

a. Mesquite Bosque (Forest)

On the eastern margin of Borrego Valley, in the low-lying area known as “Borrego Sink,” large concentrations of the native Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) are found. The mesquite forest, known by its Spanish name, Mesquite Bosque is a valuable native plant community that attracts large numbers of resident and migratory bird species. The mesquite provides large quantities of food sources to migratory birds as well as those species that stay through the nesting season. The mesquite flowers, and the insects they attract, are extremely important to scores of bird species, including the endangered Least Bell’s Vireo.

An important foundation plant in the lower elevations of the Borrego Valley, the Mesquite is a deep-rooted, woody legume that produces and recycles large quantities of nitrogen, a component rare in desert soils, and one upon which desert grasses and other native plants depend. Nutrient enrichment of soil under a woody legume canopy can result in production values twice those measured between canopy spaces. The deep mesquite roots and the grasses that thrive underneath in the enriched soil serve to stabilize the surrounding sandy soil allowing other native shrubs to take hold, which then further stabilize and fertilize the soil with organic matter in the form of leaf and seed litter. Soil in these mesquite forest ecosystems tends to be more stable in wind and rain storms, resulting in less runoff and wind-blown sand.

Culturally significant, lithic (stone) artifacts discovered in and around the Mesquite Bosque and surrounding low area known as the Borrego Sink indicate considerable use by Native Americans who harvested the mesquite bean pods and ground them into meal or flour, an integral part of their diet. The mesquite forest also provided wood, shade and shelter for early desert people. In addition, native tools and weapons were fashioned from the heavy, dense wood of this native tree.

The mesquite bosque plant community has been classified by the County of San Diego as an area of special concern which is in need of preservation. The Mesquite Bosque of Borrego Valley is the largest such plant community left in San Diego County. (See Figure 8 on the next page for details).

Mesquite trees are documented as having the deepest root systems of any plant in the world. Despite the depth to which the roots can grow to reach water, a large number of the local mesquite can be observed as having died, clearly attributable to the declining water table beneath the CPA.

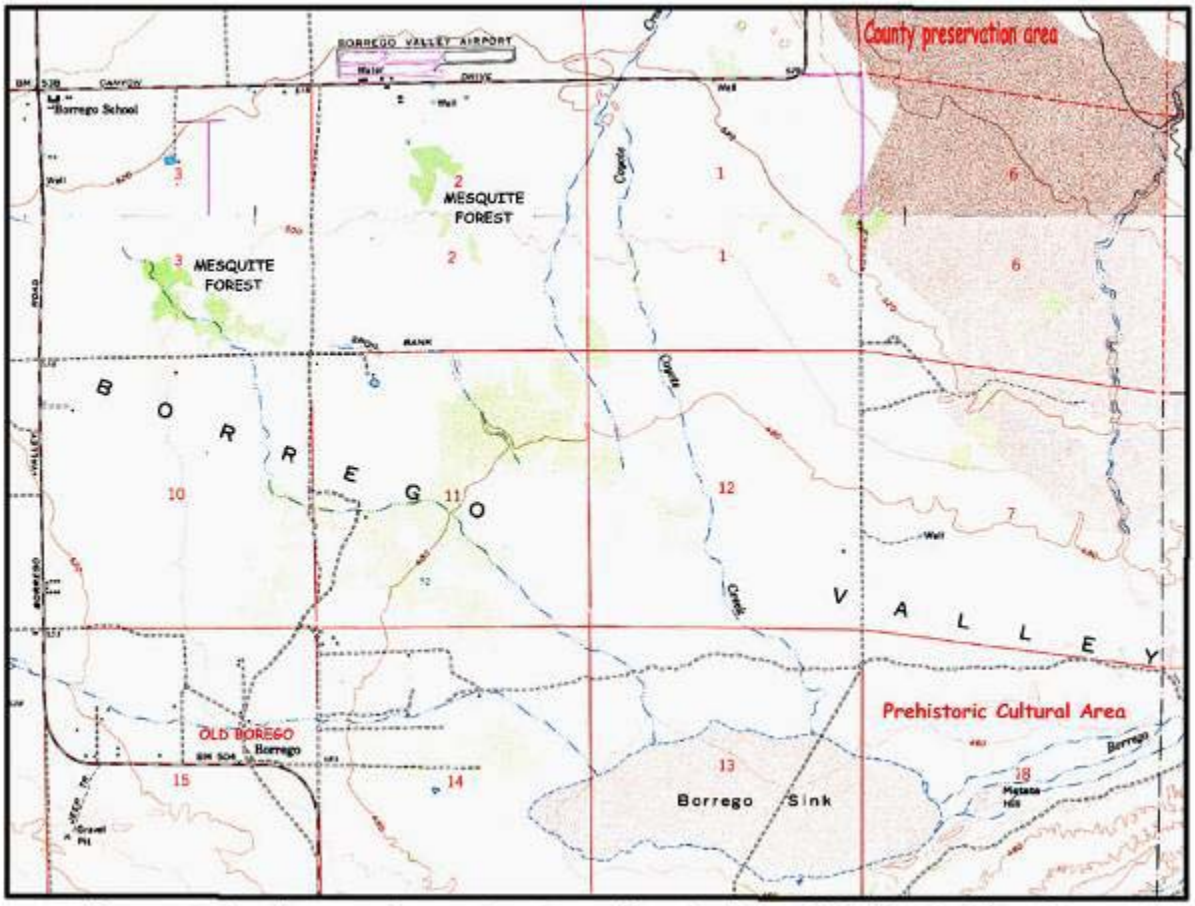

Figure 8: Mesquite Forests and Prehistoric Cultural Areas

b. Ocotillo Forest

The ocotillo plant (*Fouquieria splendens*), a tall, woody shrub species, is commonly thought of as the signature plant of the Colorado Desert. Ocotillos are thought by botanists to live as long as 200 years; they are slow to reach maturity, and once removed from a parcel of land, will not naturally regenerate for many decades or centuries.

High densities of ocotillos are found in the northern and southern areas of Borrego Valley. Thousands of acres of ocotillos have been removed for agricultural purposes in northern Borrego Valley, and large parcels of ocotillo forest are currently threatened by proposed development in the southern and southwestern portions of the Valley.

Ocotillo is used for forage by bighorn sheep, mule deer and many species of birds, including hummingbirds and orioles. Insects, an important part of the desert food-chain, gain nutrients and water from the flower buds of the ocotillo.

The ocotillo forests are a key part of our natural desert surroundings in Borrego Springs, and a concerted effort needs to be implemented to protect this natural resource through

acquisition by public/private land trusts and specific protection from destruction or disturbance due to development. Once removed, the ocotillo forests can never be replaced. The ocotillo forests have taken many centuries to develop and cannot be restored once destroyed.

c. Wildflower Fields

The most popular attraction to Borrego Springs for visitors from all over the United States and Europe are fields of native wildflowers, which in good rainfall years can literally cover the Borrego Valley in color. Several hundred thousand additional visitors will travel to Borrego Springs and the nearby Anza-Borrego Desert State Park during a good flower season. The desert area needs to receive plentiful rainfall in mid to late winter in order for the seeds of annual wildflowers to respond in vast fields of splendid colors. This phenomenon may present itself only once every five to eight years, and will last from late February to early April. The massive crowds of flower seekers cannot be over emphasized in their importance to the local economy, supporting business and local organizations of all types, including motels, hotels, inns, restaurants, markets, gas stations, gift shops and other retail and art galleries.

Wildflowers are found on all the lower mountain slopes surrounding Borrego Valley, in the State Park, but many of the best annual wildflower fields are found within the CPA on the floor of Borrego Valley. It is imperative the best of the spring flower fields are preserved, not only for the sake of this wonderful natural resource, but also for the sake of the future of businesses in Borrego Springs. Good flower seasons save many local small businesses, as they prepare for the five summer months of extreme heat when tourism slows considerably.

The most notable flower fields are found along Henderson Canyon Road, Bighorn Road, DiGiorgio Road, Borrego Valley Road, east Palm Canyon Drive, and Pegleg Road. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute have successfully purchased several hundred acres of prime flower fields in the northern Borrego Valley, and they continue to pursue new acquisitions to save the best wildflower areas.

The best areas for the annual flower bloom present a wide array of native annual plant species, including dune primrose, desert sunflower, sand verbena, popcorn flower, fiddleneck, desert lupine and the desert lily. Shrub and cacti species of note during the spring flower show include brittlebush, chuparosa, ocotillo, numerous cactus species, desert indigo and desert senna.

Preservation of the prime flowering areas of the Borrego Valley is key to the local business community and the health of the tourist industry in both Borrego Springs and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

d. Cultural Resources (Old Borego Town Site, etc.)

Borrego Springs' first store – built by Eslie Wynn in 1929 – Old Borego Town site

Old Borego is the original commercial district for early Borego Springs. (Borrego was spelled with one "r" prior to the mid-1940s). It was the center of town for the early desert homesteaders and farmers of the 1920s, 30s, and early 40s. Historically, it was the site of an original homestead residence and the community's first grocery store, gas station, post office and library. Old Borego Townsite serves as a reminder of the region's homesteading roots and the often difficult, early life in the desert in eastern San Diego County. Of countywide historic significance, Old Borego Townsite is currently the only designated cultural site with the Historic District Preservation (H) Special Area Designator in the Borrego Valley.

Today, Old Borego Townsite is located on private property, which is owned by an East Coast family with a home and other property in Borrego Springs. The old homestead residence is well maintained and occasionally occupied by the property owner and family. The historic store and gas station building is in moderate to good repair (see photo above).

The owners are keenly aware of the historic significance of the property to the community. The family cooperates with the Borrego Springs Civic Foundation to open the property annually to school children and the public. The Civic Foundation and the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA) sponsor an annual History Preservation Day open house at the Old Borego Townsite, offering tours, talks by old timers and local history information.

The two non-profit groups, working together, are in contact with the family about the possibility of designating the property an official County historic site. The San Diego County Historic Site Board (HSB) has offered assistance; efforts in this direction continue.

A broader survey of additional local historic sites indicates that in many cases, developable land encroaches on cultural sites and structures, which makes it difficult to preserve our cultural history, both indigenous and modern. In some cases, historic sites significant to the local community are located on nearby State Park land, which makes it difficult to preserve the site, structure or landmark. The local history committee has identified historic sites and landmarks in the CPA that require future study for consideration as part of this Special Study Area under this Community Plan.

6.4 Christmas Circle (SS-XMC)

Christmas Circle is located at the central crossroads of Palm Canyon Drive and Borrego Springs Road. It combines a community park, a traffic control device and surrounding retail commercial parcels. Originally conceived by its planners to serve as the town center, it remains largely undeveloped except for the community park.

In the 50 years since its initial planning, changing public tastes and governmental standards for hydrology, flood control, public health, road design and parking have made the current Christmas Circle area poorly suited to current and future community needs. This Special Study Area is being created to address and resolve thorny multi-disciplinary issues facing each component of the Christmas Circle area.

a. Community Park

The park is difficult and often dangerous to access on foot and there are no formally-designated pedestrian access points from areas outside the traffic circle. Safe auto access is complicated by left-hand side parallel parking with an active traffic lane on the right "blind side" of parked vehicles. Children's play areas are not well isolated from vehicular traffic. ADA-compliant parking facilities are not sufficient to fill the need. Event parking is largely "informal" in nature, not in approved parking areas and with ad-hoc crossing of active traffic lanes to gain access to the park.

b. Traffic Circle

The traffic circle surrounding the community park can be improved with the inclusion of diagonal parking to replace the parallel parking which will double the parking capacity. A dedicated back out lane behind the angle parking would reduce the potential for back-out accidents leaving ample room for two thru traffic lanes in the right-of-way. Angle parking also allows for stripped handicap parking spaces and for the inclusion of handicap curb ramps onto a tile paved surface around the perimeter to meet handicap code requirements and reduce water consumption.

c. Surrounding Commercial Parcels

The commercial parcels adjoining the road "spokes" extending from the traffic circle are generally very small, ±1/10 acre in size. No public sewerage facilities currently exist or have been planned to serve these parcels and no system of easements exists to support their needs for sewerage.

A lack of area-wide flood control measures complicates the design of any improvements on these parcels, often practically prohibiting economically-feasible development.

The triangular parcels located behind the rows of street-fronting commercial parcels, once owned by the now-defunct Borrego Springs Community Association and dedicated to parking and septic uses, have fallen into private ownership. Uses for these parcels should be reconsidered.

Current County onsite parking requirements for retail commercial uses further render the small commercial parcels practically undevelopable. Overly wide Avenida Noreste and Sureste, by current form well-suited to serving as common parking areas, are not currently recognized as suitable or available to fulfill onsite parking requirements.

Sufficient parking facilities are not available to support retail commercial uses on all the existing parcels, compromising future development as a retail center.

The entire system of parcels offers an opportunity for an overall redevelopment plan to address the many overlapping regulatory issues and constraints as well as those created by private ownership of parcels.

6.5 Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Buffer Zone (SS-PARK)

The CPA is bounded on its outermost edges by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. There is no formal plan in place for thoughtfully managing this transition zone area for the mutual benefit of the State Park, private landowners in the transition zone and the community as a whole.

More study is needed to ensure that the State Park boundary zone is protected from uses and development that would negatively impact Park lands while also allowing reasonable and consistent uses by landowners in the boundary zone and protecting the character of the community as desert lands within a major desert/mountain wilderness park.

The special study area work shall be conducted with the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and BSCSG and address, at a minimum, the study elements identified below.

a. Buffer Zone

Define a buffer and transition zone wherever the CPA abuts State Park lands, with tapered dwelling unit densities and specialized setbacks for all improvements and structures. This buffer zone should take into account appropriate resource ecology and community character for each affected area, and might vary considerably in depth along the Park boundary. Consider prohibiting exterior walls and fences in the buffer zones and further restricting allowable landscape species than already called for in Section 1, Land Use.

Consider strict guidelines on non-native plants used in landscaping. Certain non-natives are invasive and create issues of competition with native desert plants. Examples are tamarisk, African fountain grass and Cape marigold. Some landscaping species such as oleander are poisonous to native wildlife and have been documented in the deaths of desert bighorn sheep in the Coachella Valley.

b. Appropriate Adjacent Uses

Determine appropriate uses and densities for parcels within the buffer zone, which might vary as a function of resource ecology, community character, local terrain and hydrology and other relevant factors.

c. Corridors and Easements

Consider a system of targeted conservation, “greenway”, and open-space easements throughout the buffer zone, allowing greater plant and animal propagation and movement corridor continuity and preservation.

d. Park Access

Determine how to optimize and expand Park access for residents and visitors. Coordinate new and revised circulation elements, particularly within the Borrego Valley Farmlands Special Study Area, with park access points.

Issue-LU-5.1 No Planned Transition from State Park into CPA. A majority of the land in the CPA is bounded on its outermost edges by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. There is no formal plan in place for thoughtfully managing this transition zone area for the mutual benefit of the State Park, private landowners in the transition zone, and the community as a whole.

Goal-LU-5.1 A protected State Park boundary zone from uses and development that would negatively impact Park lands while also allowing reasonable and consistent uses by landowners in the boundary zone and protecting the character of the community as desert lands within a major desert/mountain wilderness park.

Policy-LU-5.1.1 Encourage the creation of a special study area (see Section 6.5., "Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Buffer Zone SSA") to work with the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and BSCSG to:

(1) Define a buffer and transition zone wherever the CPA abuts park lands;

(2) Determine appropriate uses and densities for parcels within the buffer zone; and

(3) Devise a system of targeted conservation, "greenway", and open-space easements through the buffer zone.