

## Introduction to the General Plan



The General Plan is the primary long-range planning document that guides growth and development within San Jacinto. In addition, the Plan establishes the community's vision for the future and includes goals, policies and programs to achieve that vision.

The current San Jacinto General Plan was originally adopted in 1985, and portions have since been amended to reflect changes in the community. In 2000, the City Council identified the need to comprehensively update the Plan in order to address changing economic, environmental, social, legal, and other conditions.

Updating the General Plan presents an important and exciting opportunity for San Jacinto to establish and update goals, policies, and implementation programs to guide the City for the next 10 to 20 years. An update of the General Plan also challenges the community to renew its "vision for the future" and determine the goals, policies and implementation programs to achieve that vision. The renewed vision for the future reflects desired changes to promote a sustainable community and enhance the overall quality of life, as well as emphasize the City's strengths and desirable attributes. San Jacinto's General Plan contains seven chapters, or elements covering topics such as land use, housing, circulation, resource management, noise, public safety, and community services and facilities.

### *SAN JACINTO PLANNING AREA*

San Jacinto is located in western Riverside County about 80 miles east of Los Angeles, 25 miles north of Temecula, and 90 miles north of San Diego. Regional access is provided by the Ramona Expressway and State Routes 74 and 79.

**Figure I-1** depicts the planning area for San Jacinto, which includes the City and adjacent unincorporated land that relates to long-range planning for the community. The planning area contains approximately 33.2 square miles of land (or about 21,241 gross acres). Approximately one-fourth of this area is unincorporated land located to the north and east of the current City limits.

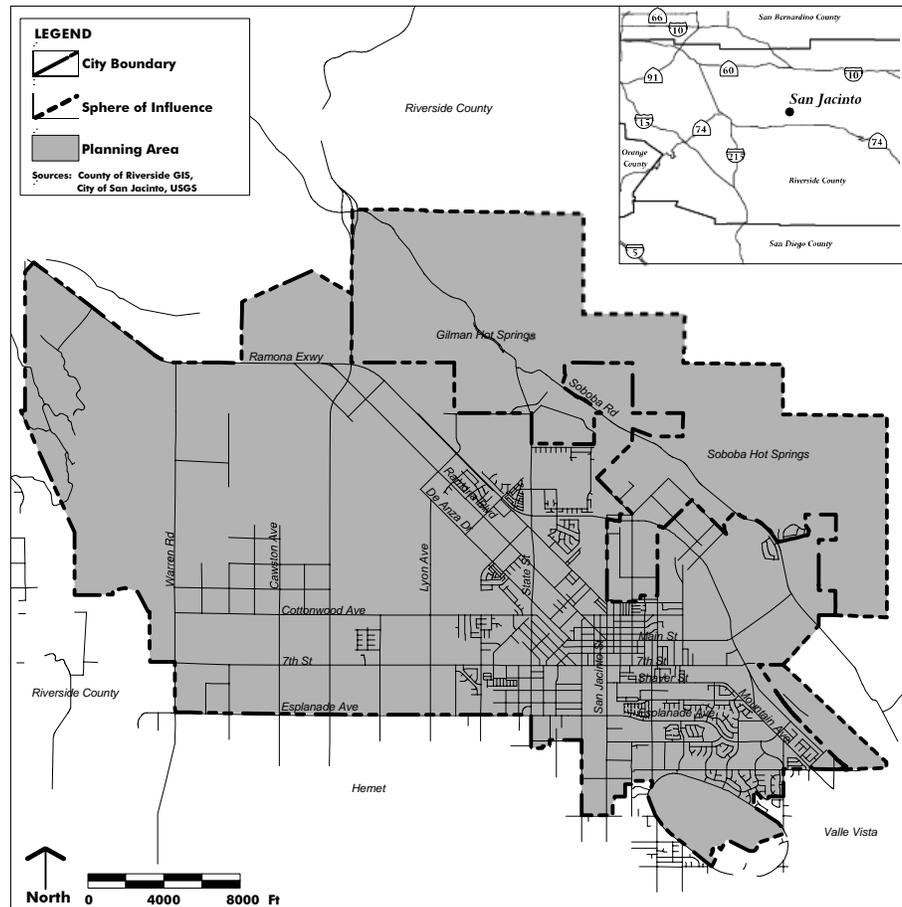


Figure I-1  
San Jacinto Planning Area

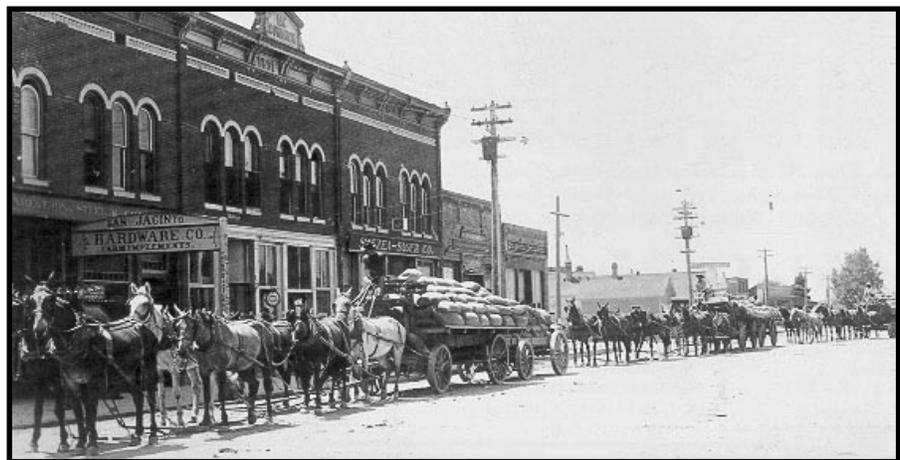
**HISTORY OF THE  
COMMUNITY**

The San Jacinto Valley was first settled by the native Cahuilla peoples, many of whose descendants still live in the valley. The area was first seen by Europeans when Juan Bautista explored the valley in 1774. In the early 1800s, the valley became a cattle ranch for Mission San Luis Rey and was named for Saint Hyacinth, or San Jacinto. At this time, Rancho San Jacinto extended from the San Jacinto mountains to present day Corona. When the mission system was broken up in the 1840s, approximately 35,500 acres of land in the valley was granted to the Estudillo family. As families began to move into the area, Don Jose Antonio Estudillo sold off portions of his holdings and decided to begin a town.

Many new southern California towns sprang up during the 1870s and 1880s as a result of land companies engaged in speculation. The City was founded in 1870 and incorporated in 1888, making San Jacinto the oldest incorporated city in Riverside County. San Jacinto’s steady progress and growth after incorporation was based on an economic

base of agriculture, lumber, and tourism. For more than 100 years the fertile valley of the planning area has supported businesses and ranches with jobs, good resources and bumper crops such as grains apricots, peaches, walnuts, and citrus. In the early 1900s, the local hot springs and mild climate also attracted many visitors and new residents to the area.

San Jacinto continued to grow and prosper throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and residential development began in earnest following the end of World War II. Although, the community at first attracted many retirees, today residential growth in the community is largely spurred by younger residents who commute to work from as far as Orange and Los Angeles counties.<sup>1</sup> This increased demand for housing in the community is evidenced in the 62 percent population increase between 1990 and 2000. The City continues to offer a plethora of amenities and opportunities for businesses, residents, and tourists, which will spur additional growth and development in the years to come. According to the SCAG 2004 RTP Growth Forecast, by 2025 the resident population in San Jacinto is expected to reach approximately 40,000 and the City will offer close to 11,000 job opportunities.



<sup>1</sup> Archaeological Associates, *Study for the General Plan for the City of San Jacinto, Riverside County, California*, August 8, 2001.

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE  
OF SAN JACINTO**

San Jacinto's Vision for the Future provides the foundation of the General Plan and an expression of what the community of San Jacinto wants to be in the future.

***Vision for the Future***

*San Jacinto is a community that prides itself on its agricultural and historic setting by:*

- *Preserving the natural assets and historic resources of our valley;*
- *Encouraging high quality growth and economic development;*
- *Ensuring managed growth and the provision of adequate services and facilities at the time development occurs;*
- *Maintaining the safety and security of our neighborhoods;*
- *Promoting the development of quality educational facilities through increased cooperation between the City and school districts; and*
- *Providing for recreation and healthy lifestyles.*

The following provides a more detailed description of the concepts underlying this Vision.

Surrounded by natural beauty, including the mountains and San Jacinto River, the community of San Jacinto recognizes the value of protecting the natural resources that contribute to its character and provide a healthy environment in which to live and work. In combination with these natural resources are historic resources found throughout the City that are also protected and revitalized to create a unique community offering a small town quality with recreational and open space opportunities for all to enjoy.

While striving to protect its natural and historic resources, the community of San Jacinto also recognizes that additional growth will occur. To ensure that future growth is compatible with and enhances the existing community, San Jacinto encourages quality development that provides a range of land uses, including agriculture, so that residents can live, work, shop, and play in the community. Providing a range of land uses also ensures that a variety of housing and educational facilities is available to meet the needs of all residents as they progress through the various stages of life. The City also promotes the development of quality educational facilities through increased cooperation between the City and school districts.

By attracting light industry and other compatible employment-generating businesses to the community and requiring new development to fund its share of improvements to public services and facilities, the community of San Jacinto ensures the managed growth and fiscal sustainability of the City. Economic development also builds upon the recreational opportunities provided by surrounding attractions, such as Diamond Valley Lake and the Soboba Reservation. The resulting fiscal well-being of the community allows the City to provide the necessary public services and infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and future development.



San Jacinto is also a community that places great importance on community pride and the continued safety of its residents and businesses. Both private and public properties are well maintained to present a positive image and encourage pride in the community. Community members actively participate in local government decision-making processes to help create a community in which they are proud to live and work. The public's safety and security is protected by City-supported law enforcement, fire

protection, and other community programs. While the local circulation system is designed to allow the efficient movement of traffic, it is designed so in a manner that promotes safety, and the use of alternatives to the automobile, such as bicycling and walking.

**PURPOSE OF THE  
GENERAL PLAN**

California State law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive General Plan to guide the long-term physical development of the community. In essence, a City's General Plan serves as a blueprint for future growth and development. As a blueprint for the future, the plan must contain goals, policies, and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid basis for decisions related to land use and development.

State law requires the Plan to address at least the following seven issues: land use, circulation, housing, conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space, noise environment, and protection of public safety (Section 65302 of the California Government Code). The law also allows a city to include in its Plan, other chapters, or elements that are deemed locally important, such as community services and facilities. The San Jacinto General Plan addresses these required and optional issues in the following elements:

- Land Use
- Community Services and Facilities
- Circulation
- Resource Management
- Public Safety
- Noise
- Housing

Table I-1 shows the relationship between the seven elements of the San Jacinto General Plan and the State-mandated elements.

**Table I-1  
Relationship of San Jacinto General Plan Elements to State-mandated Elements**

San Jacinto General Plan Elements	State-Mandated General Plan Elements							Optional
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Noise	Safety	Conservation	Open Space	
Land Use	◆							
Community Services and Facilities								◆
Circulation		◆						
Resource Management						◆	◆	
Public Safety					◆			
Noise				◆				
Housing			◆					

**GENERAL PLAN  
ORGANIZATION AND USE**

The General Plan is comprised of this Introduction and 7 elements. Each element is complete in itself, but is an integral part of the General Plan. The General Plan also includes a Glossary (Appendix A). The elements will help the City achieve its vision for the future. Each of the 7 General Plan elements is organized according to the following format: 1) Introduction; 2) Issues, Goals and Policies; and 3) Plan. Each element also contains a detailed Implementation Program as an Appendix.

The Introduction of each element describes the focus and the purpose of the element. The Introduction also identifies other related plans and programs outside of the General Plan that may be used to achieve specific General Plan goals. The relationship of the element to other General Plan elements is also specified in the Introduction.

The Issues, Goals and Policies section of each element contains a description of identified planning issues and goals and policies related to the element topic. The issues, goals, and policies are based on input received from: community workshops; members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC); members of the City Council and Planning Commission; and City staff. The issues represent the opportunities, constraints or concerns that are addressed by the General Plan. The goals are overall statements of community desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose or direction. The policies serve as guides to the City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff in reviewing

development proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of San Jacinto.

Each element also contains a Plan section. The Plan provides an overview of the City's course of action to implement the identified goals and policies. For example, the Land Use Element contains a "Land Use Plan" indicating the types and intensities of land use permitted in San Jacinto. The Circulation Element contains a "Circulation Plan" describing the overall circulation system required to meet the community's future needs.

Each of the seven elements also includes an Implementation Program as an Appendix to the main body of the Element. The Implementation Program identifies the specific actions the City will undertake to implement the goals and policies contained in the elements. Annual review of the Implementation Program appendices allows the City to adjust programs and planned actions in response to new and refocused priorities, annual budget constraints or opportunities, and changes in any physical condition or circumstance in the community (e.g., occurrence of a natural disaster) without automatically triggering the need for a General Plan amendment.

The Glossary is an appendix of the General Plan (Appendix A) and provides a set of definitions for technical terms used within the Plan.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to turn to the section that interests them and quickly obtain a perspective on the City's policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the policies in the various elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. Policies are presented as written statements, tables, diagrams and maps. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.

### ***Direction to the Future***

The General Plan provides the way to achieve the future the community has identified for itself. Direction is established in the General Plan elements to take advantage of opportunities to achieve the community's goals. The policies and plans in the elements and the Implementation Program provide guidance for dealing with changing conditions and specific actions to optimize the community potential. The path established in the General Plan is an integrated and innovative approach to achieve the vision for the future.

### ***Supporting Documentation***

Several supporting documents were produced during the development of the General Plan, including the Housing Element Technical Report, a Background Report for the San Jacinto General Plan, and the General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Housing Element Technical Report is included as an appendix to the Housing Element.

The other background documents and technical reports, which were primarily prepared for issue identification and General Plan and EIR preparation, are temporal and will become outdated as conditions in the community change. Because of their temporal nature and the length of these documents, they have been compiled separately and are available for review at City Hall.

**COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION IN THE  
GENERAL PLAN  
PROGRAM**

Public participation played an important role in updating the General Plan. Because the General Plan reflects community goals and objectives, citizen input was essential in identifying issues and formulating goals. Public participation in the General Plan preparation process occurred through the following methods:

- Three community workshops that encouraged residents and business people to identify issues to address in the plan; comment on proposed land use, circulation, and housing alternatives; and review of the Preliminary Draft General Plan.
- A series of six workshops with a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) comprising: representatives of the Planning Commission and other standing commissions and committees; representatives of the community at large; and leaders from business within the City. The GPAC formulated a long-range vision for the future and assisted in translating this vision into General Plan issues, goals and policies, as well as suggestions for land use and circulation alternatives. The public was invited to share their comments and concerns with the members of the GPAC during these workshops.
- Four joint City Council/Planning Commission Workshops, in which the public had the opportunity to address decision makers directly regarding issues, goals, and policies and land use, housing, and circulation alternatives, as well as other general comments and concern regarding the General Plan update.
- Information provided on the City's website.
- Newsletters about the General Plan update program.
- 45-day public review period.
- Public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

