

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a General Plan?

A General Plan is a comprehensive long-term strategy for the physical development of a city. It determines how land may be used and the infrastructure and public services that are needed or desired by the community. The Moreno Valley General Plan is a reflection of what the community considers necessary to create a safe, healthful, prosperous and desirable place to live, work and play.

California law requires both cities and counties to adopt general plans. A general plan acts as the “constitution” for the physical development of a city. It forms the basis of decisions concerning the development of property. Land use and zoning regulations, development standards, capital projects (e.g. roads), subdivision approvals and requirements for land dedication must be consistent with the adopted general plan.

1.2 Background

The City of Moreno Valley was incorporated on December 3, 1984 and its first General Plan was adopted in 1988. Prior to 1988, Moreno Valley operated under the General Plan and the zoning ordinance(s) of the County of Riverside.

The 1988 General Plan was a detailed document, very much like a zoning code. A detailed document was considered necessary because the Riverside County zoning ordinance did not adequately address the concerns of the community. A new zoning code for the City of Moreno Valley was adopted in 1992. A comprehensive update of the General Plan was initiated in 1996 to address the latest concerns and conditions and create a document that is easier to read, more convenient to use and avoid duplication of the zoning code and other existing regulations.

Physical conditions changed since the first General Plan was adopted in 1988. For example, March Air Force Base became March Air Reserve Base. Base realignment resulted in the loss of local jobs but also reduced the noise generated from aircraft operations. It also resulted in the disposal and potential reuse of federal land and created an opportunity for joint use of the airfield for civilian uses. Another significant development was the relocation of a portion of Interstate 215 to the west of Moreno Valley. This dramatically reduced traffic along the western city limits.

1.3 Setting

The City of Moreno Valley is located in northwestern Riverside County, approximately 52 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, and 42 miles west of Palm Springs (see Figure 1-1). The City is located near the eastern edge of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Moreno Valley is situated along two major freeways. The Moreno Valley Freeway (State Route 60) connects directly to downtown Los Angeles and the regional freeway system. State Route 60 connects to Orange County via the Riverside Freeway (State Route 91). To the east, State Route 60 connects with Interstate 10, running to Palm Springs, Phoenix, and beyond. Interstate 215 runs by the westerly city limits, and is an important north-south link from San Diego through western Riverside and San Bernardino counties and beyond.

Moreno Valley encompasses approximately 50 square miles characterized by a beautiful valley bounded by mountains and hills on three sides. The city limits are bounded on the north by the Box Springs Mountains. The gullied hills of the Badlands lie to the east. The mountains of the Lake Perris Recreation

Area, the floodplain of Mystic Lake and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and level terrain in the City of Perris are located to the south. Gently sloping terrain lies west of the city limits within March Air Reserve Base, the City of Riverside and the County of Riverside.

1.4 History

American Indians were the first inhabitants of Moreno Valley. They hunted game and gathered seeds. They left evidence in rocks that they used to grind seeds.

Early settlers traveled through the area from northern Mexico to various mission settlements along a trail charted by Juan Bautista de Anza in 1774. The trail passed through the San Jacinto Valley, the Perris Valley and southwest Moreno Valley.

Moreno Valley and the rest of California became part of the United States in 1850. The Moreno Valley area began to develop in the late 1880's with the establishment of the Alessandro and Moreno settlements. The community of Moreno was built around the intersection of Redlands Boulevard and Alessandro Boulevard. Alessandro was located within the limits of present day March Air Reserve Base.

Grain and fruit farms were established and an aqueduct was built to deliver water from a new reservoir in the San Bernardino Mountains. Frank Brown formed the companies that built the reservoir and aqueduct. Water was delivered to the community of Moreno in 1891.

The flow of water ended shortly thereafter due to a combination of drought conditions and a legal dispute over water rights. Crops failed and many farmers and settlers moved away. Some of the remaining farmers turned to dry farming.

Activation of March Air Force Base in 1918 (later closed in 1922) and an increase in water well drilling spurred new development.

Reactivation and expansion of March Air Force Base during the 1940's generated additional growth. New development occurred in the area that became the communities of Edgemont and Sunnymead in the southwestern and central portions of the valley and Moreno in the southeastern end of the valley.

Moreno Valley was included in the Eastern Municipal Water District in the 1950's, providing a more reliable source of water for residential and agricultural development. The community continued to grow at a rapid rate. The population grew from 13,291 residents in 1960, 18,871 in 1970, to 28,139 residents in 1980.

The City of Moreno Valley was incorporated on December 3, 1984 and thereafter the population soared, reaching 118,779 in 1990. For part of that period it was the fastest growing city in the country. Moreno Valley is the second largest city in Riverside County with a population of 142,381 in the year 2000. The California Department of Finance population estimate for 2005 was 165,328.

1.5 Planning Area

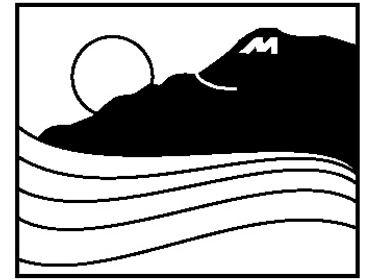
Figure 1-1 is a map illustrating the regional setting. The planning area boundary includes the approximately 50 square miles within the city limits and 18 square miles within the sphere of influence.

Development of land to the north and east of the City and its sphere of influence could have an effect on the City of Moreno Valley. Therefore, the general plan study area extends north to the San Bernardino County line and east into the Badlands.

1.6 Public Participation

The Moreno Valley General Plan is the result of an extensive public participation program to establish an understanding of community concerns. The public participation program

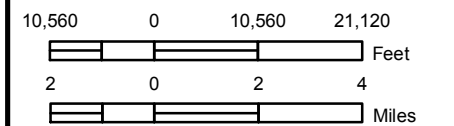
MORENO



VALLEY

**FIGURE 1-1
VICINITY MAP**

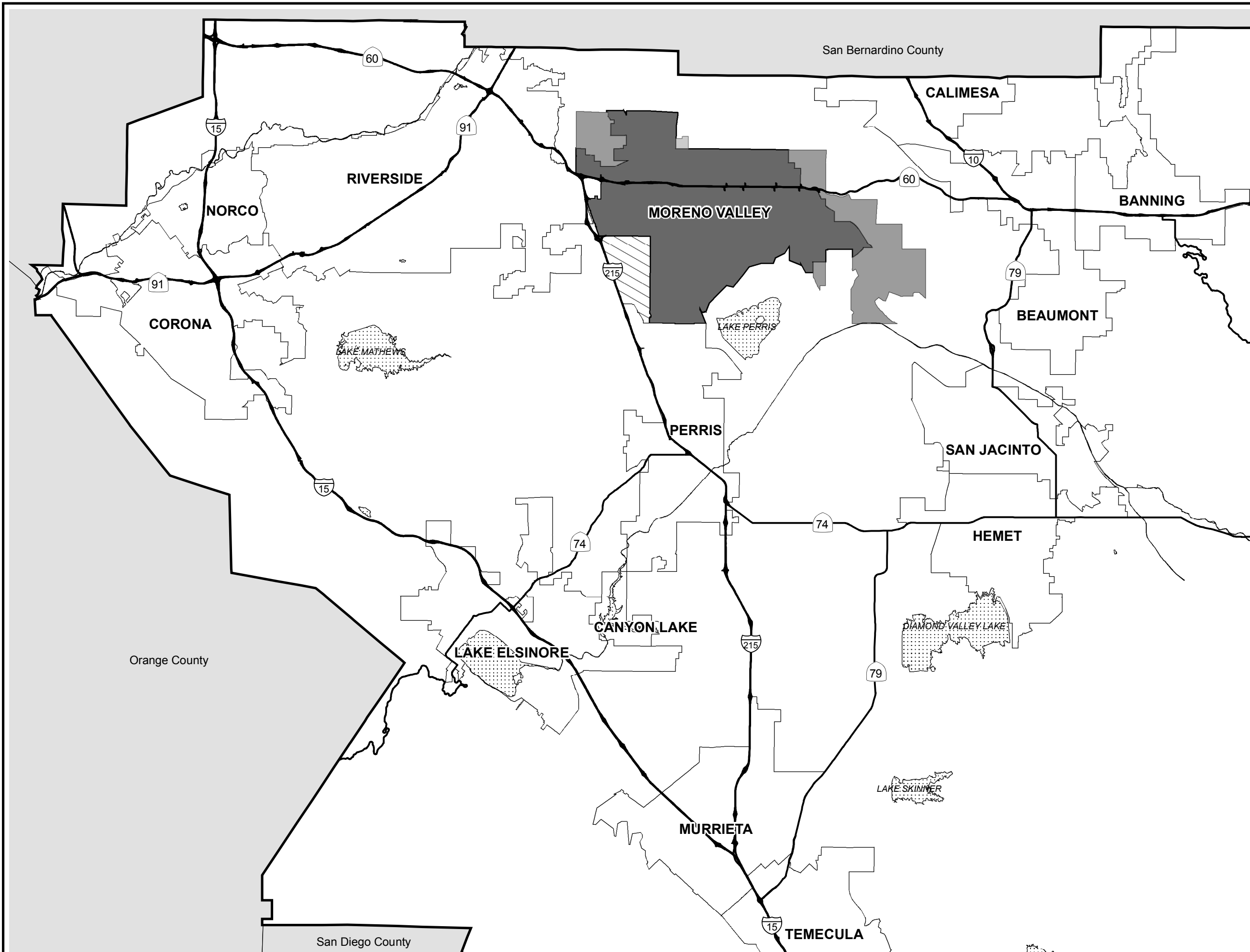
- Highways
- Moreno Valley
- City Boundaries
- Moreno Valley Sphere
- March ARB
- Riverside County
- Waterbodies



Date: July 11, 2006
State Plane NAD83 Zone 6
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vicinity.mxd

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The information shown on this map was compiled from the Riverside County GIS and the City of Moreno Valley GIS. The land base and facility information on this map is for display purposes only and should not be relied upon without independent verification as to its accuracy. Riverside County and City of Moreno Valley will not be held responsible for any claims, losses or damages resulting from the use of this map.



for the General Plan Update took place in phases. The first phase took place in 1996. It entailed interviews with city officials, focus group meetings with representatives from various private organizations, youth involvement and a series of 5 community issues workshops. A preliminary land use plan was prepared for presentation during the second phase of the public participation program.

The second phase of the public participation program was developed with the assistance of an ad-hoc committee of local residents. Notice of the preliminary land use plan was provided through a variety of methods, including MVTV-3, newspaper notices, press releases and flyers. Community input was obtained at meetings of service clubs, citizen advisory committees and the Chamber of Commerce. Special community meetings were held at Palm Middle School and the Edgemont Woman's Club.

A questionnaire was distributed at each meeting and at various facilities. Letters were also mailed directly to owners of property proposed for change. A number of residents and property owners provided written comments.

Many people from the eastern end of the City commented on the General Plan Update. The majority expressed that they wanted the zoning in that area to support a rural lifestyle with a land use pattern consisting of single-family residences on large lots. Many residents were opposed to providing a regional transportation route through the eastern portion of Moreno Valley.

A number of residents stated that they wanted to minimize traffic congestion. Several people were opposed to increasing opportunities for apartments, stating that the City has enough "affordable" housing. Attracting high-paying employers was a priority for many residents. Revitalization of older parts of the city was also an important

consideration.

Changes were made to the preliminary land use plan based on the initial public input. Alternative land use plans were also developed. The Planning Commission conducted a series of public meetings in 2000 and made additional changes to the land use plan(s). The Commission subsequently considered changes to the text, figures, goals, objectives, policies and programs of the General Plan. An environmental impact report was prepared to analyze the significant environmental effects of the General Plan, compare alternatives and discuss methods to reduce or avoid environmental damage.

The City conducted a survey of residents in 2000 that included several questions concerning planning and development issues.

The results of the survey indicated that the residents agreed with the following goals: redevelopment of Edgemont (61% agreed, 6% disagreed), improving the road to Redlands (58% agreed, 9% disagreed), and retaining the rural character of northeast Moreno Valley (47% agreed, 10% disagreed).

When asked whether Moreno should focus on being a bedroom community or a job center, 80 percent of the residents indicated that they wanted the city to be both a job center and a bedroom community. The results with respect to other development issues were inconclusive.

1.7 Organization of the General Plan

Each general plan must contain at least seven elements. The seven mandatory elements are land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. The Moreno Valley General Plan contains all of the mandatory elements, plus an optional, Economic Development Element. In some cases, mandatory elements are combined to minimize redundancy. For example, the land use element is part of the community development element and the noise element has been combined with the safety element.

All of the General Plan goals, objectives, policies and programs are located in one chapter, Chapter 9.