CHAPTER 7 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

Preserved Open Space at Four Seasons Senior Community

The City of Hemet recognizes its role as steward of the natural and biological resources within its jurisdiction. The City intends to take an active role in the management and conservation of these resources for the benefit of current and future residents.

The purpose of the Open Space and Conservation Element is fourfold:

- to identify the natural, open space, and environmental resources located within the City and Planning Area;
- to address the issues and opportunities that enable a balance between resource conservation and long-term residential and economic growth;
- to establish goals and policies that allow the City to be an active participant in the determination of the City and Planning Area's environmental future; and
- to respond to recent legislation concerning climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs), which promotes the City's core value of becoming a sustainable community.

7.1 SCOPE AND CONTEXT

State law requires that an Open Space Element and a Conservation Element be included in all local government general plans. The elements have been combined for this General Plan because of the interrelationship of the goals and policies of these elements and the overlap in state requirements.

Additionally, a sustainability section has been added to the element to comply with recent legislation concerning climate change and the reduction of GHGs. The section discusses the City's approach to creating a sustainable community and to meeting reduction targets for GHG emissions, as required by state law.

Open Space

The "Open Space" section guides the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of "open space land," defined in California state statute as any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space use. This portion of the element addresses:

- open space for the preservation of natural resources, such as:
  - undeveloped wilderness lands including canyons, hillsides, and areas with significant rock formations;
  - biological resources that create habitat for endangered species and other wildlife; and
  - lakes, creeks, and other water resources;
- open space used for the managed production of resources, such as:
  - agricultural lands;
  - mineral resources; and
  - areas required for the recharge of groundwater basins;
- open space for outdoor recreation and scenic enjoyment, such as:
  - areas of cultural resources;
  - areas for recreational use and linkages; and
  - trees, greenbelts, and landscaped open space; and
- open space to protect public health and safety, such as areas that require special management (e.g., earthquake fault zones, high fire risk areas, and floodplains).

Conservation

The "Conservation" section provides direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. Its requirements overlap those related to open space, land use, safety, and circulation. This portion of the element addresses the following:

- management of water resources;
- assessment, protection, and improvement of air quality consistent with regional air quality and transportation plans and reduction targets for GHG emissions; and
- conservation, development, and utilization of energy resources.

Sustainability

The "Sustainability" section outlines the City's approach to reducing GHG emissions in response to the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Act of 2007, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, and other federal and state legislation. The City has threaded its sustainability goals and policies throughout the General Plan with a focus on energy and water conservation and reducing GHG emissions. These goals and policies generally fall into the following categories:

- Smart Growth: Land Use and Community Design,
- Transportation and Connectivity,
- Water Conservation,
- Air Quality,
- Energy and Resource Conservation,
- Waste Reduction, and
- Economic Sustainability.

7.1.1 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE GENERAL PLAN

State planning law requires the Open Space and Conservation Element to be consistent with other General Plan elements. The Land Use; Circulation; Housing; Public Safety; Recreation and Trails; and Community Services and Infrastructure Elements relate most closely to the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element provides a planned land use pattern, identifying residential, commercial, business park, professional office, and public land use designations. Public and private lands intended for conservation and open space are identified using the open space land use designation. These areas are identified in the Open Space and Conservation Element and are preserved for such purposes.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element identifies and ensures access to open spaces and recreational areas requiring access. The Circulation Element assigns the location of streets and trail systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians that provide access to open space areas.

Public Safety Element

The Public Safety Element addresses public health and safety within the Planning Area, including open space lands such as parks, trails, lakes, and wildland areas. Public health issues include natural and human-made hazards in open space.

Recreation and Trails Element

The Recreation and Trails Element identifies the parks, off-road trails, and open space recreational areas within the City and the Planning Area. The goals and policies for these recreational areas are consistent with the preservation and conservation goals and polices in the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Community Services and Infrastructure Element

The Community Services and Infrastructure Element addresses provision of the City's utilities: water, sewer, drainage, solid waste, power, and telecommunications. Conservation of these utilities is a key aspect of both elements and they include consistent goals and policies.

Sustainability Matrix

For ease of reference, Appendix A is a sustainability matrix that organizes the City's sustainability policies by General Plan element and category: Smart Growth – Land Use and Community Design, Transportation and Connectivity, Water Conservation, Air Quality, Energy and Resource Conservation, Waste Reduction, and Economic Sustainability.

7.2 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Hemet area is known for its ideal winter weather, natural beauty, hillsides, canyons, lakes, fields, and outdoor recreational venues. One of the best economic opportunities available to the City is the maximization of these open space resources through careful planning, conservation, and management to emphasize the intrinsic value of nature, demonstrate the economic strength of green development, increase tourism, attract new financial investment, and maintain a high quality of life for Hemet residents. Taking advantage of this opportunity is also one of the City's primary challenges.

This element addresses the following issues and opportunities:

- balancing and regulating development to enable healthy economic growth while preserving Hemet's natural beauty;
- evaluating open space options in conjunction with new development to protect irreplaceable natural resources such as hillsides, scenic vistas, natural vegetation, and wildlife habitat areas;
- instituting policies and practices that conserve water and energy resources while maintaining a high quality of life for residents and encouraging business growth;
- reducing air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions without negatively affecting economic growth and development; and
- establishing a framework for integration and coordination of sustainability goals and policies throughout the General Plan.

7.3 RELATED PROGRAMS, PLANS, AND REGULATIONS

Many plans and programs enacted through federal, state, and local legislation relate directly to the goals preserving, conserving, and managing natural resources and open space. These plans and programs are administered by agencies with powers to enforce federal, state, and local laws.

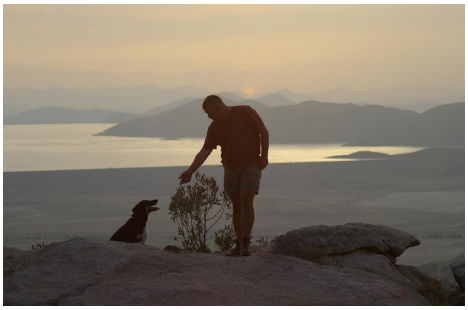
7.3.1 FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Clean Air Act

The federal Clean Air Act forms the basis of the national air pollution control effort. Basic elements include national ambient air quality standards for major air pollutants, hazardous air pollutants standards, state attainment plans, motor vehicle emissions standards, stationary source emission standards and permits, acid rain control measures, stratospheric ozone protection, and enforcement provisions.

Clean Water Act

The federal Clean Water Act provides the statutory basis for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, which is discussed under the Community Facilities and Services Element of the General Plan.



View of Diamond Valley Lake from the Santa Rosa Mountains.

Endangered Species Act

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), applies to federally listed species and habitat occupied by federally listed species. Federally listed species are most likely to occur within riparian habitat areas in floodplains within the Planning Area. ESA Section 9 forbids specified acts that directly or indirectly harm listed species. Section 9 also prohibits "taking" any species of wildlife or fish listed as endangered. These restrictions apply to all federal agencies and all persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

National Energy Act

The National Energy Act of 1978 was a legislative response by the U.S. Congress to the 1973 energy crisis. It includes the following statutes:

- Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (Public Law 95-617),
- Energy Tax Act (Public Law 95-318),
- National Energy Conservation Policy Act (Public Law 95-619),
- Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act (Public Law 95-620), and
- Natural Gas Policy Act (Public Law 95-621).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game

Both the USFWS and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) are charged with protecting wildlife resources. Special permits are required for alteration, dredging, or any activity in a lake or stream and for other

activities that may affect fish and game habitat. Both agencies are also responsible for protecting sensitive plant and animal species as described above. Future development in Hemet that has the potential to affect wildlife habitat will be subject to the regulations of both of these federal and state agencies.

7.3.2 STATE REGULATIONS

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) generally parallels the main provisions of the ESA and is administered by DFG. CESA prohibits the "taking" of listed species except as otherwise provided in California law. Any future development or redevelopment in Hemet that has the potential to affect wildlife will be subject to CESA restrictions.

California Energy Commission

The California Energy Commission is the state's primary agency that handles energy policy and associated planning issues. The commission is responsible for:

- forecasting future energy needs and keeping historical energy data,
- licensing thermal power plants that are 50 megawatts or larger,
- promoting energy efficiency through appliance and building standards,
- developing energy technologies and supporting renewable energy, and
- planning for and directing the state response to an energy emergency.

California Environmental Quality Act and Guidelines

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the California Legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of projects that might affect the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA statutes and guidelines. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the decision making stage of development, City officials and the general public will be able to assess the environmental impacts associated with private and public development projects and ensure that the impacts are appropriately mitigated.

California Green Building Standards Code

The 2010 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) took effect January 1, 2011. CALGreen is the first statewide mandatory green building code in the nation. It sets minimum standards for all new structures as part of a broad effort to significantly reduce California's carbon emissions. The code has approximately 52 mandatory measures and an additional 130 optional provisions. The code addresses compliance verification by using the existing building code enforcement structure. Public agencies incorporate CALGreen code provisions into their building inspection procedures.

Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Assembly Bill 1881)

Assembly Bill (AB) 1881 took effect in 2010, updating AB 325. Principally, the law restricts overspraying irrigation systems, encouraging drip systems that are more efficient, and disallows overhead irrigation in parkway landscape areas that are less than 8 feet wide. The law also establishes a water budget for how much water may be applied to landscape areas. Cities and counties in California are required to either adopt the model ordinance or an equivalent local ordinance. The City adopted a local ordinance that is codified as Article XLVIII of the Hemet Municipal Code.

Natural Community Conservation Planning Act

DFG has identified certain species and habitat as necessary to maintain the continued viability of biological communities that are affected by human changes to the landscape. The purpose of natural community conservation planning is to sustain and restore these species and habitats. It is also the policy of the state to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance natural communities. The state may acquire a fee or less-than-fee interest in lands consistent with approved natural community conservation plans and may provide assistance with the implementation of those plans.

State Water Resources Control Board

The State Water Resources Control Board was created by the California Legislature in 1967. The mission of the board is to ensure the highest reasonable quality for waters of the state, while allocating those waters to achieve the optimum balance of beneficial uses. The joint authority of water allocation and water quality protection enables the State Water Resources Control Board to provide comprehensive protection for California's waters.

Nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) were created to develop and enforce those water quality objectives and implementation plans that will best protect the beneficial uses of the state's waters, recognizing local differences in climate, topography, geology, and hydrology. Hemet's Planning Area is mostly within the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana RWQCB and partially within the San Diego RWQCB.

State Water Conservation Plan – 20x2020 (SBx 7-7)

The State Water Conservation Plan affects the supply of water and water agencies throughout the state. The Plan outlines two key initiatives: fixing the Sacramento Delta and the state's water infrastructure, and improving regional water supply reliability and conservation. The Plan also mandates a 20 percent reduction in per-capita water use by 2020.

State Legislation Regarding Climate Change and Sustainability

California has recently enacted legislation that requires local jurisdictions to develop sustainable community strategies regarding climate change and to ensure sustainable development. These mandates will significantly affect City policies and procedures.

Assembly Bill 32, Global Warming Solutions Act

The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop regulations and market mechanisms to

reduce California's GHG emissions to their 1990 levels by 2020. Mandatory caps on GHG emissions will begin in 2012 for significant GHG sources. The caps will be reduced over time to meet the 2020 goals.

Senate Bill 97, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Act

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Act of 2007 states that GHG emissions and their impacts are appropriate subjects for CEQA analysis. Senate Bill 97 directed the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to develop CEQA guidelines to mitigate GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions. Amendments to CEQA establishing new guidelines for GHG emissions became effective on March 18, 2010.

Senate Bill 375, Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 aligns regional transportation planning efforts, regional GHG reduction targets, and land use and housing allocation to enhance jurisdiction's ability to meet AB 32 goals. SB 375 requires metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or Alternative Planning Strategy, which will prescribe land use allocation in that MPO's regional transportation plan. ARB, in consultation with MPOs, is required to provide each affected region with regional reduction targets for GHGs emitted by passenger cars and light trucks in the region for 2020 and 2035. These reduction targets will be updated every 8 years, but can be updated every 4 years if advancements in emissions technologies affect the reduction strategies to achieve the targets. ARB is also charged with reviewing each MPO's SCS or Alternative Planning Strategy for consistency with its assigned GHG emission reduction targets. If MPOs do not meet the GHG reduction targets, transportation projects located in the MPO boundaries would not be eligible for funding after January 1, 2012.

7.3.3 REGIONAL PLANS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Green Coalition of San Jacinto Valley

The Green Coalition of San Jacinto Valley is working with the Cities of Hemet and San Jacinto to achieve its mission of creating a sustainable community for the San Jacinto Valley. The Coalition believes that a sustainable community is a community of residents and neighbors who work together to balance ecological, economic, and social needs to ensure a clean, healthy, and safe environment for all members of our society and for the next generations of the San Jacinto Valley.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) is a consortium of 26 cities and water districts, including Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD). MWD provides drinking water to nearly 19 million people in southern California. MWD constructed Diamond Valley Lake, a water storage reservoir holding up to 264 billion gallons and located within the Planning Area. Diamond Valley Lake was completed in December 1999 and filled by the Colorado River Aqueduct by 2003. While the main mission of MWD is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water, MWD is a partner in the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve. The reserve includes 11,000 acres surrounding and

connecting Diamond Valley Lake with Lake Skinner via the 2,500 acre Dr. Roy Shipley Reserve, which MWD purchased as partial mitigation for Diamond Valley Lake construction.

Regional Transportation Plan and Improvement Program (RTIP)

The Southern California Association of Governments has adopted a regional transportation plan and a regional transportation improvement program to fund and implement the projects and programs listed in the regional transportation plan. These plans work together to help improve vehicular traffic within the region and thereby reduce air pollution.

Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)

The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) is a comprehensive, three-part, integrated program balancing the housing, transportation, and economic needs of a large population with the existing environment and available natural resources. The RCIP accommodates continued growth by integrating the direction in the *Riverside County General Plan* with transportation and environmental issues. The three parts of the RCIP are the *Western Riverside County Multiple-Species Habitat Conservation Plan* (MSHCP); Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP); and the *Riverside County General Plan*.

South Coast Air Quality Management Plan

The South Coast Air Quality Management Plan mandates a variety of measures to reduce emissions and improve air quality. These measures include the requirement that each jurisdiction develop an air quality component within its general plan.

Southern California Edison

Southern California Edison (SCE) is the primary electricity supply company for much of southern California, including the City of Hemet. SCE's environmental commitment is to provide leadership in areas that include renewable resources, green building, energy efficiency, environmental protection, resource protection, and advanced metering to automatically reduce power consumption in key situations.

Southern California Gas Company

Southern California Gas Company is the primary natural gas provider for much of southern California, including the City of Hemet. The gas company's commitment to the environment includes incorporating environmentally friendly practices into its facilities and daily operations; minimizing the impact of operations on wildlife, air, and water; investing in green technologies; and helping customers save energy and resources.

Water Districts Serving the City/Planning Area

Three water districts serve the City of Hemet and the Planning Area. The districts are described below and further discussed in the Community Services and Infrastructure Element. Figure 5-1 shows the service areas of each district.

City of Hemet Water District

The City supplies potable water within a 5.25-square-mile service area located mostly within the central part of the incorporated City. The City relies on groundwater as its supply source, which is pumped by eleven City-owned wells. The City plans to continue the use of local groundwater as its primary supply source through 2030; however, the City recognizes the need to implement water conservation measures and a combination of basin recharge measures through both natural and artificial means.

Eastern Municipal Water District

EMWD generally serves the City south of Stetson Avenue, west of Sanderson Avenue, and north of Menlo Avenue. EMWD's water conservation goal is to reduce per capita consumption by 25 percent over the next 2 decades. To achieve that goal, EMWD promotes targeted programs, offers rebates, educates consumers, and helps customers locate and fix irrigation leaks. EMWD also offers recycled water services and participates in a joint program with the US Bureau of Reclamation that created multipurpose wetlands, which serve as both a wastewater treatment research center and wildlife habitat.

Lake Hemet Water District

Lake Hemet Water District (LHWD) generally serves the eastern portion of the City and Planning Area. LHWD's water conservation goal is to reduce per capita consumption. To achieve that goal, LHWD provides free water audits of homes and businesses within their service area to help residents and businesses identify ways to reduce water consumption. LHWD also participates in MWD's rebate program to replace nonconserving fixtures with water-efficient items.

Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve

The Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve, which is under multiple ownership, contains more than 13,500 acres of natural lands that extends from Diamond Valley Lake to Lake Skinner between Hemet and Temecula. Preserved in perpetuity, the reserve was formed in part as an environmental mitigation measure for the Diamond Valley Lake project by MWD. The reserve is home to at least eight types of habitat and up to 16 sensitive bird, animal, and plant species, including the Stephens' kangaroo rat. Additionally, it offers more than 10 miles of hiking and equestrian trails with the potential for strategically extending the trail system throughout the reserve.

Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan

The MSHCP is a comprehensive, multijurisdictional habitat conservation plan (HCP) focusing on conserving species and their associated habitats in Western Riverside County. The MSHCP is one of several large, multijurisdictional habitat-planning efforts in southern California, with the overall goal of maintaining biological and ecological diversity within a rapidly urbanizing region. The MSHCP allows Riverside County and the cities within the County to better control local land use decisions and maintain a strong economic climate in the region while addressing ESA and CESA

requirements. The MSHCP is administered by the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), comprised of member elected officials.

The MSHCP area encompasses approximately 1.26 million acres, including all unincorporated Riverside County land west of the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line. It includes the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, Wildomar, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Norco, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Perris, Menifee, San Jacinto, and Hemet. The MSHCP covers multiple species and multiple habitats within a diverse landscape, from urban centers to undeveloped foothills and forests, under multiple jurisdictions. The HCP extends across many bioregions, including the Santa Ana Mountains, Riverside Lowlands, San Jacinto Foothills, San Jacinto Mountains, Agua Tibia Mountains, Desert Transition, and San Bernardino Mountains and establishes a coordinated implementation program to preserve biological diversity and maintain the region's quality of life. The Hemet Planning Area lies within the MSHCP area, and cells which have designated targets for habitat conservation are identified in Figure 7.1.

Habitat Conservation Plan for the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat in Western Riverside County

The HCP for the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) is implemented by the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA). The SKR HCP mitigates impacts on the SKR caused by development by establishing a network of preserves and a system for managing and monitoring them. Through implementation of the SKR HCP, more than $45 million has been dedicated to establishing and managing the preserves, resulting in conserving approximately 50 percent of the SKR-occupied habitat remaining in the HCP area. A small portion of the Planning Area is located within the 533,954-acre SKR HCP area. Any proposed project located within the SKR HCP area will be required to comply with applicable provisions of the plan.

7.4 OPEN SPACE

The Hemet Planning Area is characterized by unique landforms, extensive biological resources, scenic vistas, agricultural land, water resources, and open space areas, as shown in Figure 7.1, "Natural and Open Space Resources."

7.4.1 OPEN SPACE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Hemet area is renowned for the expanse of lands that possess significant natural resources. These resources generally fall in the categories discussed below.

Undeveloped Wilderness Lands

Hemet contains and is surrounded by natural topographic beauty, as described by category in the following text.

Scenic Vistas

The San Jacinto Mountains, the San Bernardino National Forest and Mountains, and the San Gabriel Mountains provide a scenic background of

vista points that enhance the visual character of Hemet, highlight distinguishing landmarks, and offer a sense of direction or orientation as people move about the community. Preserving view corridors for the enjoyment of future generations through design and development standards is a goal of the City. As shown in Figure 7.1, large portions of the riverbed and Bautista Canyon are within MSHCP criteria cells and targeted for conservation.

Hillsides

Hemet contains and is surrounded by natural topographic beauty. Within the Planning Area are hillsides and hilltops with spectacular views. Unique landforms and hillsides include the hills at Diamond Valley Lake, Lakeview Mountains, Santa Rosa Hills, Tres Cerritos Hills, and Park Hill.

The Lakeview Mountains are a range of low mountains encompassing approximately 30 square miles bordering the western edge of the Planning Area. The Lakeview Mountains reach an elevation of 2,673 above mean sea level.

The Santa Rosa Hills, located in the southeastern section of the Planning Area, climb to 2,333 feet above mean sea level and contain Simpson Park, the Ramona Bowl, and opportunities for recreational hiking.

Tres Cerritos Hills are a series of three peaks located in the northwest quadrant of the City. The hills are a well-known landmark that enhance the visual character of the City and provide a sense of direction for residents.

Park Hill is a hilltop located outside of the Planning Area in the City of San Jacinto. The summit climbs to 1,893 feet above mean sea level and provides scenic vistas for Hemet residents.

Domenigoni Parkway and the Santa Rosa Hills.

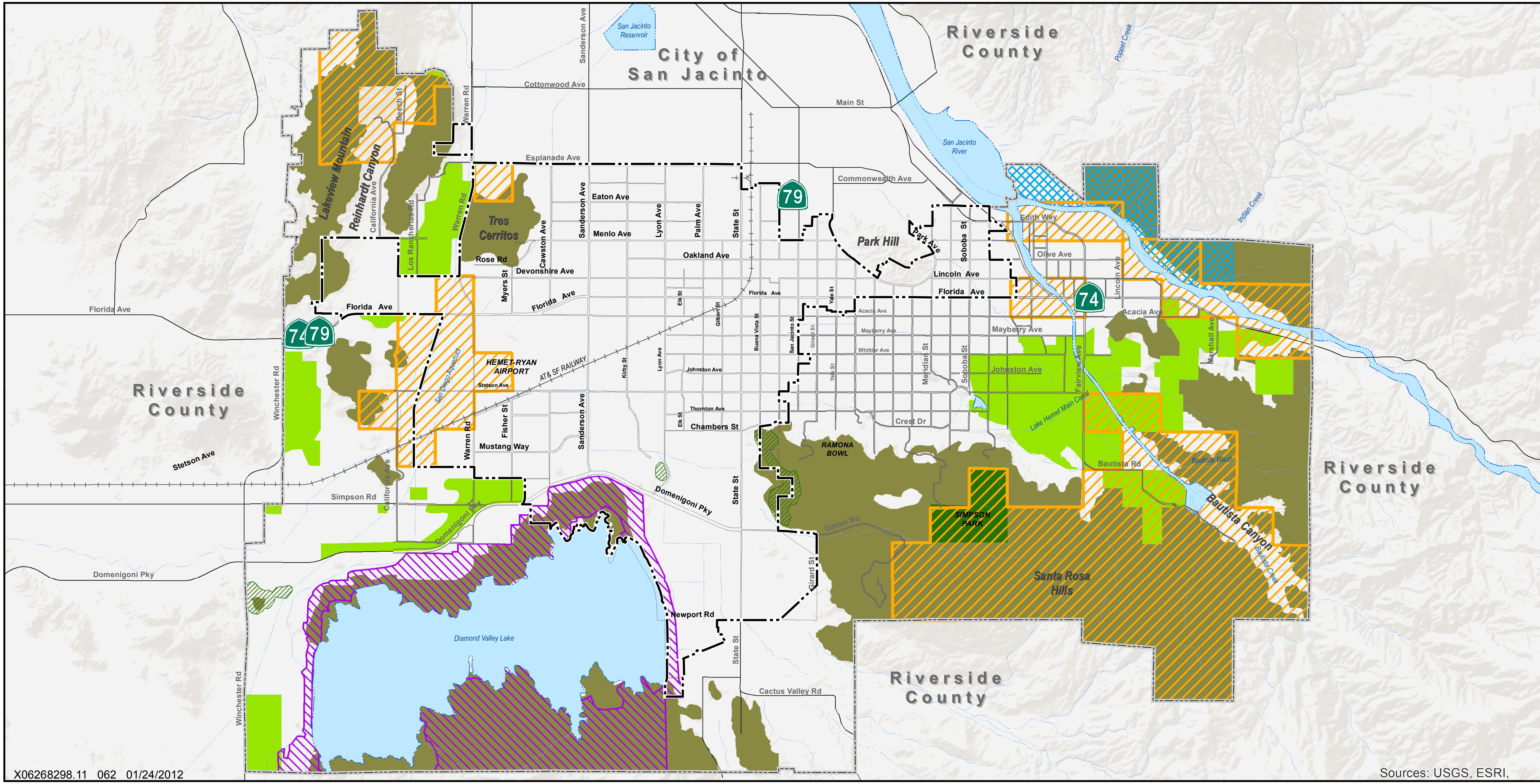
Canyons

Two of the most significant canyons in the Planning Area are Bautista Canyon and Reinhardt Canyon. The canyons offer a range of biological and agricultural resources as well as opportunities for recreation and residential development.

West Valley

A section of the City and Planning Area is located in a flat valley that has been identified through the MSHCP as a conservation area due to its vernal pools and associated plants and wildlife. Generally located west of California Avenue, east of Warren Road, south of Florida Avenue, and north of Stetson Avenue, a portion of this land will be preserved as permanent open space.

The San Jacinto River/Bautista Creek runs through the Bautista Canyon, creating an extensive sphere of vegetation, habitat, and sensitive species. Bautista Canyon is a migration corridor for birds connecting the Anza-Borrego region to the San Jacinto Valley. The canyon and waterways also provide linkage for bobcats and mountain lions. As shown in Figure 7.1, large portions of the riverbed and Bautista Canyon are within MSHCP criteria cells and targeted for conservation.



LEGEND

Natural and Open Space Resources

- Existing Agriculture
- Mountainous Areas
- Significant Outcroppings
- MSHCP Cells
- Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve
- Soboba Tribal Lands
- Hemet City Boundary
- Planning Area
- River/Lake
- Creek/Canal
- Street
- Railroad

Sources:
Census Tiger Line Data 2005
Riverside County TLMA 2005
ESRI 2010

1 0.5 0 1 2 Miles

Figure 7.1
NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES
Hemet General Plan

Back of Figure 7.1

Reinhardt Canyon is a secluded "box" canyon located on the easterly side of the Lakeview Mountains in the Planning Area. The canyon is generally populated by ranches and estate properties on the canyon floor and is known as the location of the Hemet Maze Stone, a prehistoric petroglyph. A riparian watercourse runs through the area and the northern portion of the canyon is designated for habitat conservation under the MSHCP.

Outcropping incorporated into the Seven Hills Golf Course.

Significant Outcroppings

The Hemet area contains numerous rock outcroppings of various sizes that provide natural beauty and are a regionally unique asset. Many have been incorporated into parkland, residential developments, and open space areas. Figure 7.1 shows the locations of two of the most significant outcroppings.

Vegetative Communities

Hemet and the Planning Area contain several sensitive biological resources of natural vegetative communities that are unique or of relatively limited distribution in the region, and/or that create habitat for endangered and other wildlife. Native vegetation communities are concentrated within open space areas associated with playas and hillsides in the western portions of the Planning Area, as well as disturbed and undisturbed areas along the San Jacinto River. The primary sensitive communities in the Planning Area are briefly described below and mapped in Figure 7.2.

Riparian Scrub, Riparian Forest

Riparian areas are the green, vegetated areas on each side of streams and rivers. They serve many important functions, including purifying water by removing sediments and other contaminants; reducing the risk of flooding and associated damage; reducing stream channel and streambank erosion; increasing the duration of available water and stream flow by holding water in stream banks and aquifers; supporting a diversity of plant and wildlife species; maintaining a habitat for healthy fish populations; providing water, forage, and shade for wildlife and livestock; and creating opportunities for recreationists to fish, camp, picnic, and enjoy other activities.

Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub, Riversidean Sage Scrub

Alluvial scrub is considered a distinct and rare plant community found primarily on alluvial fans and floodplains along the southern bases of the Transverse Ranges and portions of the Peninsular Ranges in southern California. This relatively open vegetation type is adapted to periodic flooding and erosion. Riversidean alluvial scrub is one of the primary habitats for the endangered and protected California gnatcatcher, and has been designated by the Department of Fish and Game as a "very threatened" community.

Chaparral

Chaparral is a native plant community that supports a high diversity of plant and animal life. Chaparral is widely distributed on dry slopes and ridges at low and mid-elevations. Chaparral vegetation is valuable for watershed protection in areas with steep, easily eroded slopes.

Coast Live Oak Woodland
The coast live oak is an evergreen oak that is highly variable and often shrubby. It typically has a branched trunk and reaches a mature height of 33–82 feet. Some specimens may live more than 250 years.

Southern Willow Scrub
Southern willow scrub was formerly extensive along the major waterways of southern California because it requires repeated flooding to prevent succession to southern cottonwood-sycamore riparian forest. However, this community is now much reduced by urban expansion, flood control, and channel improvements.

Nonnative grasslands
Nonnative grasslands are characterized by a dense to sparse cover of annual grasses with flowering stems. The grasslands are often associated with numerous species of showy-flowered, native wildflowers, especially in years of favorable rainfall. With a few exceptions, the plants are dead through the summer-fall dry season, persisting as seeds and flowering with the onset of late fall rains.

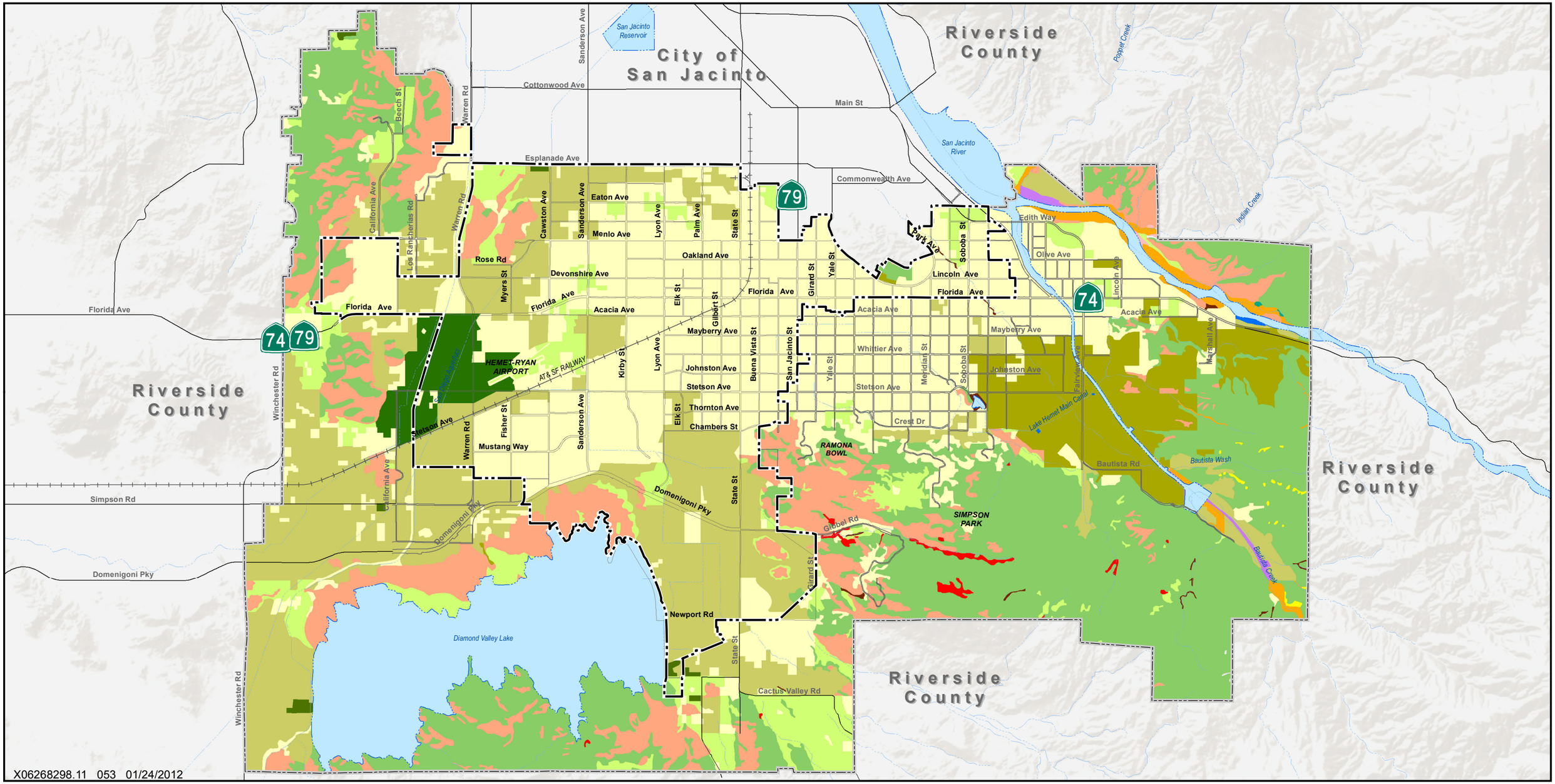
Wildlife Species
USFWS and DFG manage and protect wildlife species that are either listed or are a candidate for listing as endangered or threatened. Some of the identified species in the Planning Area include arroyo toad, mountain yellow-legged frog, Cooper's hawk, Least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow warbler, Quino checker spot butterfly, bobcat, Los Angeles pocket mouse, mountain lion, San Bernardino kangaroo mouse, western pond turtle, Bell's sage sparrow, cactus wren, loggerhead shrike, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and Riverside fairy shrimp. Additionally, the three habitat conservation plans in the Planning Area protect identified wildlife species and their habitats.

Lakes, Creeks, and Other Water Resources
Water resources in Hemet and the Planning Area are described in the following text.

Diamond Valley Lake
DVL is a made-made lake located within the Domenigoni/Diamond valleys which features three earth fill dams; two on either side of the valley and one on the south rim. It took 4 years to fill the lake with water provided by the Colorado River Aqueduct and San Diego Canal. The lake has been stocked with several species of freshwater fish including; Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, Crappie, Rainbow Trout, Striped Bass, Channel Catfish, and Shad. It is considered one of the best fisheries in California.


Diamond Valley Lake.

Vernal Pools
Vernal pools are seasonally flooded depressions found on ancient soils with an impermeable layer such as hardpan, claypan, or volcanic basalt. Vernal pools often fill and empty



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Sources:
Census Tiger Line Data 2005
Riverside County TLMA 2005
ESRI 2010

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LEGEND

Vegetation Communities

- Alkali Playa\Vernal Pool
- Chaparral
- Coast Live Oak Woodland
- Coastal Scrub
- Southern Willow Scrub
- Disturbed Alluvial
- Field Croplands
- Grove/Orchard
- Non-native Grassland
- Open Water/Reservoir/Pond
- Residential/Urban/Exotic
- Riparian Forest
- Riparian Scrub
- Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub
- Riversidean Sage Scrub
- Dairy & Livestock Feedyards
- Hemet City Boundary
- Planning Area
- Street
- Railroad
- Creek/Canal
- River/Lake

Figure 7.2
VEGETATION COMMUNITIES
Hemet General Plan

Back of Figure 7.2

several times during the rainy season. Only plants and animals that are adapted to this cycle of wetting and drying can survive in vernal pools over time. These specialized plants and animals are what make vernal pools unique and a protected natural resource. Hemet's vernal pools are located on the western side of the City in a MSHCP criteria cell. Criteria cell refinement will allow development on a portion of the vernal pool area in exchange for long-term conservation protection on the remaining portion of the area.

Orchards in Bautista Canyon.

Bautista Creek/San Jacinto River

Bautista Creek/San Jacinto River drain the San Bernardino Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountains. The waterways and canyon support strong populations of foothill riparian and woodland species including arroyo toad, burrowing owl, Cooper's hawk, San Bernardino kangaroo rat, and slender-horned spine flower.

7.4.2 OPEN SPACE FOR THE MANAGED PRODUCTION OF RESOURCES

In Hemet and the Planning Area, resource production activities in open space areas include: agriculture, mineral extraction, and recharge of groundwater.

Agriculture

The agricultural industry was once an integral part of the economy and culture of the San Jacinto Valley. At this time, however, there is declining agricultural production in the Planning Area. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, administered by the California Department of Conservation, assigns one of four designations to important farmlands:

- *Prime Farmland* includes land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained yields of crops when treated and managed. Such land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last 3 years to be so designated.

- *Farmland of Statewide Importance* is land with a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last 3 years.

- *Unique Farmland* is land that does not meet the above criteria for Prime or Statewide Importance, but which is currently used for the production of specific high-value crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and high yields of specific crops. Examples of such crops include oranges, olives, avocado, rice, grapes, and cut flowers.

- *Farmland of Local Importance* is nonirrigated land that is either currently producing crops or has the capacity of production. This land includes dryland grain, dairies, and other agricultural-zoned land not included in the above categories. This land may be important to the local economy because of its productivity.

Within the City's boundaries, Farmland of Local Importance is the dominant category of agricultural land. The majority of the Prime Farmland is located in Bautista Canyon, and much of it is protected as agricultural preserves. A preservation easement held by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation conserves 486 acres in perpetuity, of which approximately 250 acres are suitable for citrus-fruit crops. Additionally, according to the California Department of Conservation, several Williamson Act contracts for prime and nonprime agricultural land are located in the Bautista Canyon area. Under a Williamson Act contract, the local jurisdiction and landowners agree to continue agricultural activities for at least 10 years. In return, the County agrees to assess the property at agricultural value rather than at market value. Existing agricultural land is shown in Figure 7.1.

Mineral Resources

State law requires the General Plan to address the need for conserving mineral resources within the Planning Area. The California Geological Survey has prepared mineral resource reports designating the mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance. These reports are to be used to address mineral resources within the Planning Area. The State Geologist has classified areas into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) identifying the statewide or regional significance of mineral deposits based on the economic value and accessibility of the deposits. Within the Planning Area, the State has applied the MRZ-3 classification. MRZ-3 areas contain sedimentary deposits that have the potential to supply sand and gravel for concrete and crushed stone for aggregate. However, the City does not consider these areas to contain deposits of significant economic value, based on available data.

Even though the Planning Area includes no mineral deposits of statewide or regional importance, some mineral resources have the potential for local significance. Historically, limestone, serpentine, sand, and gravel were mined in the Bautista Canyon, Diamond Valley, and the Salt Creek and San Jacinto riverbeds, respectively.

The nonrenewable characteristic of mineral deposits necessitates careful and efficient use of mineral resources to prevent the unnecessary waste of these deposits due to careless exploitation and uncontrolled urbanization. Effectively managing these resources will protect future development of mineral deposit areas and guide the exploitation of mineral deposits so that adverse effects caused by mineral extraction may be reduced or eliminated.

Recharge of Groundwater Basins

Groundwater is the supply of freshwater found beneath the Earth's surface and is a major source of water in the Hemet area. A groundwater basin is an area underlain by permeable materials, like alluvium, capable of storing a substantial amount of water. The largest source of groundwater for Hemet

is the Hemet Basin, which underlies a majority of the Planning Area with water-bearing strata. This basin has a potential capacity of 1 million acre-feet (326 billion gallons), although it is not being fully replenished. As the Planning Area continues to grow, protecting the basin from the effects of development is critical, particularly given Hemet's reliance on groundwater. Protecting recharge areas and conserving water are important steps to reducing the City's dependence on imported water and maintaining viable sources of groundwater. One mechanism of protection is innovative infrastructure systems that try to replicate nature, and by doing so, protect groundwater recharge areas, conserve groundwater resources, maintain water quality through pollution reduction, channel drainage in environmentally sensitive ways, and design attractive and multi-use open space areas for development, recreation, and habitat. Groundwater recharge is further addressed in Section 7.5.1 and in the Community Services and Infrastructure Element.

7.4.3 OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SCENIC ENJOYMENT

The Hemet area is known for its outdoor recreational venues and opportunities. Diamond Valley Lake, Simpson Park, the Santa Rosa Hills, Bautista Canyon, and Salt Creek provide open space areas for hiking, cycling, horseback riding, fishing, and other outdoor activities. Parks, golf courses and trails provide additional open space recreational facilities. The Recreation Element addresses the integration of outdoor recreation and open space.

The National Arbor Day Foundation program, Tree City USA, recognizes U.S. towns and cities that develop comprehensive urban forestry programs. A community must meet four standards to become a Tree City USA. These standards include a tree board or department, a community tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. Hemet has been named a Tree City USA annually since 1987 showing that the City values its trees for their beauty, grace, and positive investment in a healthy future environment. Trees can also reduce the erosion of precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife.

A greenbelt is a largely undeveloped area of natural or landscaped land that surrounds and connects urban neighborhoods. Hemet's greenbelts and common-use landscaped areas are intended to provide scenic enjoyment, off-road linkages, and buffers between urban uses to help preserve Hemet's rural character. Through the incorporation of drought-resistant vegetation and mature shade trees into landscape designs and the revegetation of graded slopes, these areas provide opportunities to integrate water conservation, neighborhood aesthetics, energy reduction, erosion control, and the maximization of carbon capture and storage.

7.4.4 OPEN SPACE TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Nondevelopable open space lands are those areas in which it is unsafe or unhealthy to develop, but which may provide opportunities for aesthetic, cultural, or recreational uses. Within the Planning Area, nondevelopable open space includes floodplains (San Jacinto River floodplain), drainage swales (Bautista Wash and Salt Creek), aqueducts and flood control channels (San Diego Aqueduct and Lake Hemet Main Canal), rock outcroppings, steep hillsides, open space buffers between developments, earthquake faults (San Jacinto Fault), and utility rights-of-way. The City has an opportunity to secure joint use of both existing and planned future utility rights-of-way owned or operated by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, EMWD, MWD, and the Riverside County Transportation Department and Flood Control and Water Conservation Districts for the purpose of open space trails. Additionally, buffer areas and recreational use areas provide locations for the relocation of heritage trees or the replacement of trees removed from public right-of-way or other construction projects.

7.5 CONSERVATION

This section of the Open Space and Conservation Element provides direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources such as water, air quality, and energy. The element addresses each aspect below.

7.5.1 MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Water is essential in both the natural and urban environments. In the natural environment, water resources promote healthy ecosystems, provide wildlife habitat, sustain riparian plant communities, recharge groundwater basins, and create scenic corridors. In the urban environment, water sustains existing communities and enables new residential, commercial, and industrial growth. The two key issues related to water resources in the Planning Area are watershed management and conservation. Watershed/drainage, water supply, and the provision of water services are discussed in detail in the Community Services and Infrastructure Element.

Watershed Management

A watershed, sometimes referred to as a water basin or drainage basin, is a natural occurrence that replenishes groundwater resources. The Hemet Water Department relies on local groundwater as the water supply source for customers in its 5.25-square-mile service area. Managing the watershed and stormwater to maximize groundwater recharge is imperative to ensuring an adequate and affordable source of water in the future and to meeting habitat hydration needs in biologically sensitive areas of the City. To address these issues, the Cities of Hemet and San Jacinto, EMWD, Lake Hemet Municipal Water District, private pumpers (agricultural users), and the Soboba Tribe are developing a groundwater management plan for the Hemet–San Jacinto Basin.

Groundwater Management Plan

The groundwater management plan acknowledges that the community is using more groundwater than can be naturally replenished. Current demand is exceeding the safe yield of water, resulting in an overdraft (over use) that could eventually lower the water table beyond the reach of existing wells. With residential and commercial growth expected to continue, the plan addresses both reducing the demand and increasing the supply of groundwater.

Groundwater demand is reduced through water conservation practices, the incorporation of new technology such as water-efficient sprinklers, and the use of alternative water sources such as tertiary water for agriculture and landscaping. Supply is addressed by recharging groundwater through development design and activities that reduce surface runoff, and through water basin management in collaboration with affected water agencies, cities, and the Soboba Tribe.

Water Conservation

Sources of water other than groundwater serving the City and Planning Area include the Colorado River Aqueduct, Lake Hemet, the San Jacinto River, and the State Water Project, a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants and pumping plants including the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta (Delta). Approximately 30 percent of southern California's water comes from the Delta, where the rivers of the western Sierra Nevada merge before heading south through the aqueduct system of the State Water Project. The Delta's declining ecosystem, caused by a number of factors, has led to historic restrictions in water supply deliveries. The *Bay Delta Conservation Plan* is a long-term Delta habitat restoration program and aqueduct improvement project, which is expected to take a minimum of 10 to 12 years to complete. With years of low rainfall and the diminished supply from the Delta, these sources are also facing shortages. Water reserves, such as Diamond Valley Lake, have been tapped, with MWD reporting in 2010 its reserves were 50 percent less than 2006 levels.

Conservation efforts, such as water recycling and reduced use, have been shown to have a significant impact on water demand throughout the region. The City and other water suppliers in the Planning Area have implemented the following conservation measures:

- **Urban Water Management Plans.** These plans are required by the state for water agencies that supply either 3,000 customers or 3,000 acre feet of water annually, which includes the City of Hemet. The plan describes and evaluates the agency's sources of water supply, methods for efficient use and demand management, and an implementation strategy. Actions for consideration may include demonstration landscape projects, landscape retrofitting of parkways medians and parks, required use of new water-efficient technology in building construction, natural approaches to managing streams and creating drainage infrastructure systems, and incentive programs to encourage water-wise development projects. These plans have been updated in

2011 to demonstrate consistency with the state's 20 percent conservation by 2020 requirement.

- Hemet's Landscaping and Irrigation Ordinance. The ordinance establishes water-efficient landscape regulations that ensure that public agencies, nonresidential developers, multi-family residential developers, and homeowners install new landscapes or implement rehabilitation projects, use water efficiently, encourage water conservation, and prevent water waste.

- Eastern Municipal Water District. EMWD's water conservation efforts are divided into three categories:

  - Recycled Water: EMWD has a network of recycled water pipelines that extend for nearly 1,200 miles, supported by 35 lift (pumping) stations. Recycled water is available for landscaping, industrial, and agricultural business use. Additionally, EMWD constructed wetlands at the Hemet/San Jacinto Regional Water Reclamation Facility to demonstrate how natural processes efficiently recycle secondary treated wastewater. It is now an integral part of the treatment plant, with proven improvement in water quality. It is also a haven for nearly 120 species of migratory and resident waterfowl, shorebirds, neotropical song birds, and raptors.

  - Conservation: EMWD was one of the original signatories of the *California Urban Water Conservation Council Memorandum of Understanding* and implements 14 conservation best management practices.

  - Water Education: EMWD's education program is designed for grades K–12, is intended to foster an understanding of water and wastewater, and to promote wise water use.

- Lake Hemet Water District. LHWD has imposed stage-one water conservation measures in its Hemet and San Jacinto service areas because of the continuing drought and the need to conserve local and imported supplies against wasteful use. The voluntary measures, which are intended to achieve a 10 percent reduction in water demand, are expected to be in force until drought conditions and water supply issues improve. To assist this effort, LHWD provides free water audits of homes and businesses within the service area to help identify ways to reduce water consumption and lower water costs.

7.5.2 CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND UTILIZATION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Energy resources provide the necessary power for Hemet's residents; however, many of these resources are nonrenewable, which places stress on their long-term viability. Electricity and natural gas are the primary sources of household energy, while fossil fuels are the primary source of energy for most modes of transportation.

Conservation is an important component of using energy resources in an efficient manner. Lowering energy demand by conserving both renewable and nonrenewable energy is critical. Reducing energy usage is the most environmentally sound and cost effective way to limit the negative consequences of consuming nonrenewable energy resources and to protect the reliability of the electric power grid. Energy usage and pollutants resulting from the generation of energy can be reduced through innovative architectural design, building construction, structural orientation, landscaping, and use of renewable energy resources. Opportunities for power produced by renewable and cleaner energy sources such as wind and solar are becoming more available and more reliable. These resources are more difficult to harness, but produce no or reduced air pollutant emissions or hazardous waste byproducts. On September 15, 2009, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Governor of California, issued Executive Order S-21-09, which instructed ARB, under its AB 32 authority to establish state regulations to ensure that all retail sellers of electricity serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020.

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Resources

The City recognizes that it must collaborate with local utility companies to facilitate the minimization of energy consumption in the City and the maximization of renewable energy source development to achieve state-mandated renewable portfolio standards. It recently joined the Western Riverside Energy Leader Partnership (WRELP), a program of SCE and Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG). WRLEP is a unique partnership that brings SCE and local governments together in an effort to make Western Riverside County a leader in energy efficiency by identifying opportunities to increase energy efficiency, finding savings in ever-tightening government budgets, and planning for new state greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

Other SCE policies and programs include:

- incentives to encourage energy conservation through rebates and savings for lighting, appliances, heating and cooling, multi-family housing, pools, home upgrade projects, solar leadership, and customer power generation;
- residential education programs such as Home Energy Survey, Residential Energy Guide, residential tips to reduce energy usage in the home, and a guide to buying an electric vehicle;
- interactive pages on the SCE website that assist homeowners in identifying "energy guzzlers" and ways to save electricity;
- a commitment to biological and archaeological resources protection; and
- a leadership position in the development and use of renewable energy resources such as wind, geothermal, solar, biomass, and hydro.

California Green Building Standards Code

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen standards) that takes effect January 1, 2011, is the first statewide mandatory green building code in the nation. It sets minimum standards for all new structures as part of a broad effort to significantly reduce California's carbon emissions. Green design and construction practices significantly reduce or eliminate the negative effects of new buildings on the environment and occupants in five broad areas:

- sustainable site planning,
- safeguarding water and water efficiency,
- energy efficiency and renewable energy,
- conservation of building materials and resources, and
- indoor environmental quality.

In addition to the mandatory CALGreen standards, the City has the option to adopt an energy efficiency standard that surpasses the state's basic requirements. The Tier 1 standard would require construction to exceed Title 24 requirements by 15 percent; the Tier 2 standard would require construction to exceed Title 24 by 30 percent. It is generally accepted that compliance with Tier 1 requirements addressing energy, water, lighting, and building envelope is likely to be comparable to achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Silver certification.

The Western Science Center at Diamond Valley Lake, built in 2006, received LEED Platinum certification. It is first museum in California to be awarded this highest distinction from the US Green Building Council.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system. The certification provides third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance. Measures of improved performance include energy savings, water efficiency, reduced carbon dioxide emissions, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED is intended to provide building owners and operators a concise framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, and operations and maintenance solutions. The LEED rating system is point based and has four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

Solar panels provide energy for the Western Science Center.

Solar Energy

Riverside County is becoming one of the prime areas for the use of solar technologies due to the area's abundant sunshine. Solar technologies are broadly characterized as either passive solar or active solar depending on the way they capture, convert, and distribute solar energy. Passive solar techniques include orienting a building to the Sun, selecting materials with favorable thermal mass or light dispersing properties, and designing spaces that naturally circulate air. Active solar techniques include using photovoltaic panels and solar thermal

collectors to harness the energy. City policies encourage both techniques in the following ways:

- Passive Solar: Property owners are encouraged to design existing and new structures to maximize solar access by promoting passive solar energy design, natural ventilation, and effective use of daylight.

- Active Solar: Property owners are encouraged through a variety of local, state, and federal incentive programs to invest in capital improvements, primarily photovoltaic panels, which will generate enough energy to, at least partially, meet individual property needs. In 2010, the Hemet Unified School District initiated an active solar program to reduce energy costs and support renewable energy resources.

- Solar thermal projects (above 50 megawatts) are long-term ventures requiring approvals from both the federal Bureau of Land Management and the California Energy Commission before construction. In 2010, four large solar energy projects (solar trough and central tower) were approved in Riverside County, totaling approximately 1,800 megawatts. MWD is considering a solar thermal project at its Diamond Valley Lake property, located in the City and the Planning Area.

Conserving energy and pursuing renewable energy sources can benefit Hemet residents and the region. Efforts to conserve nonrenewable energy resources are important to provide and maintain a healthy, viable community. In the first few years of this century, California has experienced times of acute electricity shortages that have negatively affected the local and regional economy. Energy resource conservation and the use of renewable resources can reduce these fiscal and economic effects, as well as improve air quality.

Biomass Energy

Biomass is a renewable energy source derived from biological material from living or recently living organisms such as wood, waste, (hydrogen) gas, and alcohol fuels. EMWD has initiated plans to construct a plant in southwest Riverside County that would turn discarded restaurant grease into an environmentally-friendly fuel to power its diesel fleet and equipment. The fuel is expected to emit 20 percent less unburned hydrocarbons and 12 percent less carbon dioxide and particulate matter. The City supports and encourages EMWD's efforts regarding the use of alternative energy.

7.5.3 ASSESSMENT, PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF AIR QUALITY

The Planning Area lies within the South Coast Air Basin that is topographically bound by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and San Jacinto Mountains to the north and east. The South Coast Air Basin includes all of the Orange County and the nondesert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. The topography and climate of the region combine to create an area with high potential for air pollution. Air pollution results from naturally

occurring conditions combined with the activities of residents. Natural sources include dust from barren ground surfaces and forest fires. Human sources include automobile emissions, fugitive dust, industrial processes, chemical emissions from paint and similar materials, and household cleaners.

Air pollution creates unhealthy conditions that could lead to respiratory irritation or illness, breathing difficulties, decreased lung function, watery eyes, coughing, or decreased tolerance for exercise. The health risks depend on an individual's health status, the pollutant type and concentration, and the length of exposure to the polluted air. In a community like Hemet, with a large elderly population and a growing youth population, the health risks are magnified. Additionally, polluted air damages agriculture, the natural environment, and human-made materials.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) regulates and monitors three types of air pollutants: criteria air pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and global warming and ozone-depleting gases, generally called green house gases (GHGs). Criteria air pollutants are measured by sampling concentrations in the ambient air, toxic air contaminants are measured at the source and in the general atmosphere, and GHGs are not monitored, but are subject to regulations that call for their reduction and eventual phase out. Air quality standards have been established by the federal government for ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and fine and respirable particulate matter of 2.5 and 10 micrometers or less. The state Air Resources Board (ARB) has also established standards for these pollutants (some of which are more stringent than national standards) plus for hydrogen sulfide, sulfates, vinyl chloride, and visibility. Additionally, the South Coast AQMD has adopted rules that are not a part of federal or state programs. South Coast AQMD is working with other regional and local jurisdictions to reduce air pollutants to acceptable air quality standards and improve the impacts of air pollution on southern California communities by the deadlines established by federal and state regulation.

GHGs are generally defined as gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. The human activities during which these gases are emitted include burning, manufacturing, and transportation-related combustion of fossil fuels. Livestock and solid waste emissions also contribute to the buildup of GHGs. GHGs are generally considered a major cause of climate change, which is defined as a change in the state of the climate that persists for an extended period of time.

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) was created by the state legislature to address the threat global warming poses to the state's "economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment." Among other things, the act directs ARB to "adopt a statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit equivalent to the statewide greenhouse gas emissions levels in 1990 to be achieved by 2020." Furthermore, Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, requires metropolitan planning organizations to

work with its member cities to create sustainable communities strategies in regional transportation plans to reduce GHG emissions.

While recognizing that some sources of air pollution are out of the City's control, the City of Hemet is committed to improving the public health and safety of its residents through strategies that improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions. Strategies include:

- promoting increased use of public transit;
- minimizing commuting times by developing a diverse mix of land uses, attracting local employment opportunities, providing neighborhood retail and services near residential uses, and increasing shopping, dining, and recreational opportunities in Hemet;
- growing a base of clean industries;
- increasing economic vitality through higher education;
- improving the City's job-housing balance through the establishment of business parks and local industries;
- encouraging the use of alternative fuels;
- improving the roadway networks to reduce traffic and vehicle idling times;
- providing a citywide system of bicycle lanes and recreational trails that improve non-motorized accessibility;
- creating safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- improving the urban forest; and
- diversifying energy resources through the increased use of renewable energy.

The City's approach to meeting California climate laws and regulations is twofold. First, as part of its Implementation Program for the General Plan (Chapter 12), Hemet will be preparing a Climate Action Plan. The plan will have two primary objectives: (1) reduce total GHG emissions in the City by at least 15 percent from 2010 levels by 2020 and (2) create adaptation strategies to address the impacts of climate change on the City, such as increased risk of flooding and wildfires, diminished water supplies, and public health. Second, the City has threaded sustainability goals and policies throughout the General Plan with a focus on reducing GHG emissions. The following Section 7.6 further addresses Hemet's sustainability program.

7.6 SUSTAINABILITY IN HEMET

Sustainability is generally defined as any set of activities, programs, policies, or other efforts whose purpose contributes to addressing deleterious

environmental impacts that reduce the capacity to sustain natural resources. Throughout the General Plan, goals, policies, and implementation programs have been designed to address climate change and sustainability. The City has categorized its approach to sustainability into six categories: Smart Growth: Land Use and Community Design, Transportation and Connectivity, Water Conservation, Air Quality, Energy and Resource Conservation, Waste Reduction, and Economic Sustainability. For easy reference, the City's sustainable General Plan policies are listed in Appendix A by element and policy number and are placed into one of the six sustainability categories as defined herein.

7.6.1 SMART GROWTH: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

Sustainable land use and community design practices concentrate growth in compact centers to avoid sprawl and advocates transit-oriented, walkable, and bicycle-friendly land use patterns. Relevant policies encourage enhanced open space conservation; pedestrian-friendly, mixed-used, and in-fill developments; the restoration of the historic downtown center; and the redevelopment of deteriorating areas to more sustainable development. The model also discourages noncontiguous (leapfrog) development.

Hemet's sustainable land use and community design goals and policies are primarily located within the Land Use Element, the Community Design Element, the Historic Resources Element, the Housing Element, and the Open Space and Conservation Element. These goals and polices include:

- establishing land use patterns and development standards that incorporate "smart growth" tenets;
- creating walkable neighborhoods and connections to open space;
- preserving significant historic buildings and neighborhoods;
- protecting environmentally sensitive habitats and species;
- strengthening and directing development toward existing communities;
- revitalizing the downtown core through design, intensity, and pedestrian-scale; and
- facilitating the revitalization of older, deteriorating neighborhoods through rehabilitation, recycling of underutilized properties, incentives, and redevelopment.

Ten principles of smart growth:

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation sources.
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Source: Smart Growth Network, a partnership of the Environmental Protection Agency and several non-profit and government organizations

In December 2010, the City of Hemet was designated the Inland Empire's "most walkable community" by Walk Score, an online site that helps gauge the pedestrian friendliness of neighborhoods and encourages walkable cities. Points were awarded to residential neighborhoods based on the proximity of nearby amenities such as stores and schools. Hemet's

traditional grid system of streets and location of commercial nodes near residential neighborhoods assisted in achieving the top designation.

7.6.2 TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Transportation and connectivity refers to policies that decrease vehicle miles traveled; encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation; encourage the use of alternative fuel or lower emission vehicles; and increase connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, and employment centers. Additionally, the precept addresses the management of transportation systems to improve efficiency through more effective utilization of facilities.

Hemet's transportation and connectivity goals and policies are primarily located within the Circulation Element; the Land Use Element; the Community Design Element; and the Recreation Element. General concepts include:

- increasing the capacity, safety, and accessibility of streets through the Complete Streets Program;
- providing for the expanded use of Neighborhood Electric Vehicles;
- accommodating a low-speed travel culture in Hemet to reduce GHG emissions while encouraging a healthier level of community interaction;
- providing expanded and safe facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and recreationalists;
- creating walkable neighborhoods through appropriately scaled and designed developments and associated infrastructure;
- facilitating access to and use of public transportation systems; and
- establishing development standards that encourage the siting of employment and commercial centers along transportation corridors and activity centers.

7.6.3 WATER CONSERVATION

Water conservation refers to policies that conserve and protect water resources. Hemet's goals and policies regarding the supply, distribution, and conservation of water are located within the Open Space and Conservation Element and the Community Services and Infrastructure Element. Preservation and conservation of water resources will continue to be a significant issue throughout the planning period. General concepts include:

- managing the City's watershed and use of groundwater to reduce demand, increase supply, and ensure that water use does not exceed the safe yield of groundwater; and
- implementing a variety of water conservation measures.

7.6.4 ENERGY, AIR QUALITY, AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Energy and resource conservation refers to policies that conserve and preserve open space and natural resources; reduce energy use; promote the production of clean energy resources; protect the air from air pollutants; and decrease Hemet's GHG emissions. This precept requires the participation of a wide range of participants: residents, businesses, schools, industries, transportation users and providers, developers, builders, innovators, conservationists, utility providers, and government.

Hemet's energy and resource conservation goals and policies are primarily located within the Open Space and Conservation Element, Community Services and Infrastructure Element, and Community Design Element. General concepts include:

- preserving natural resources;
- managing agriculture, minerals, and groundwater recharge basins;
- establishing and protecting outdoor recreation venues and scenic vistas;
- implementing energy conservation measures;
- facilitating renewable energy development and use;
- encouraging building orientations and landscaping that enhance natural lighting and sun exposure;
- implementing CALGreen building standards and facilitating LEED certifications to help reduce the negative effects of new buildings on the environment; and
- addressing sources of air pollution to reduce unhealthy conditions for residents and damage to agriculture, the natural environment, and human-made materials.

7.6.5 WASTE REDUCTION

Waste reduction refers to household solid waste recycling; commercial and industrial recycling; waste reduction targets; and use of recycled materials for City use and for community facilities and infrastructure projects. State law mandates specific per-capita disposal targets for each jurisdiction based on demographics and industrial bases.

The City of Hemet currently operates its own refuse and recycling division, the Integrated Waste Management Division, but is exploring contracting with a private company. The City's waste reduction goals and policies are primarily located within the Community Services and Infrastructure Element and focus on the following areas:

- complying with California statewide waste reduction mandates,
- promoting the use of recycling and recycled materials in development projects, and
- promoting the use of recycling and recycled materials in City operations.

7.6.6 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable economic policies support an equitable housing-jobs balance; promote environmental justice in land use decisions, promote sensitive use of cultural and open space facilities; ensure economic opportunities for all segments of the community; and attempt to balance potential impacts of global warming measures, which could affect the lives of residents and the livelihood of businesses. The City's economic goals and policies, which are primarily located in the Land Use Element, the Community Design Element, and the Open Space Element, include:

- establishing incentives for job creation;
- enhancing opportunities for sustainable tourism;
- creating public gathering spaces; and
- encouraging sensitive, adaptive reuse of historic and culturally sensitive structures where the original use is no longer feasible.

7.6.7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN WEST HEMET

West Hemet, an approximately 5,400-acre area that extends into the City's sphere-of-influence on its western edge, presents a challenging opportunity to balance growth with natural resource protection. This primarily underdeveloped section of the City and Planning Area contains 1,600 acres of sensitive biological habitats and is primarily located within a 100-year floodplain with minimal flood control. A large portion of the area cannot be developed until habitat preservation and major flood-control solutions are addressed.

Within this area, the City has the opportunity to create innovative infrastructure systems that try to replicate nature, and by doing so, protect groundwater recharge areas, conserve groundwater resources, maintain water quality by reducing pollution, and channel drainage in environmentally sensitive ways. The City can promote the design of attractive and multi-use open space areas for development, recreation, and habitat. The Urban Land Institute, Orange County/Inland Empire, Edge Development Initiative Council in 2010 identified 4 focus areas for sustainable infrastructure in West Hemet:

- Stormwater Through groundwater recharge, biofiltration, and habitat hydration, stormwater can be safely conveyed to benefit the local community. Implementing a stormwater management approach that uses open "naturalized" planted channels and treatment detention

basins wherever possible can reduce costs, add amenity value, and perform water quality and groundwater recharge functions.

- Recycling Water Expanding existing recycled water systems into West Hemet will alleviate the strain on potable water and mitigate the ever-rising cost of water.

- Energy By developing a "smart grid" approach to power system development with linkages to alternative energy sources, West Hemet can become less dependent on conventional forms of energy and potentially become more self-reliant.

- Transportation West Hemet has the opportunity to develop a three-phased plan to implement transportation systems in "steps" to coincide with demand and revenues. The plan would integrate intercommunity shuttles, bicycle paths, and "complete" or "green" streets as development occurs. Complete streets include pedestrian travel, event spaces, canopy shade trees, pervious pavements or pavers, and other features that enable multipurpose use and value. Complete streets are discussed in detail in the Circulation Element.

View from Simpson Park.

GOALS AND POLICIES

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

GOAL OS-1	Preserve and protect critical open space and natural resources.

POLICIES

OS-1.1 **Development Proposals** Require development proposals to identify significant biological resources and to provide mitigation, including the use of adequate buffering and sensitive site planning techniques, selective preservation, provision of replacement habitats, and other appropriate measures as may be identified in habitat conservation plans or best practices related to particular resources.

OS-1.2 **Vernal Pools** Preserve the integrity of the vernal pool complex by ensuring adequate hydration, providing appropriate conservation buffers, and the preservation of native plants, in accordance with the requirements of the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

OS-1.3 **Wetland Habitats** Require project applicants to conserve wetland habitats along the San Jacinto River, the Upper Salt Creek watershed, and elsewhere as identified where conservation serves to maintain watershed processes that enhance water quality and contribute to the hydrologic regime, and comply with Clean Water Act Section 404. Identify and, to the maximum extent possible, conserve remaining upland habitat areas adjacent to wetland and riparian areas that are critical to the feeding, hibernation, or nesting of wildlife species associated with these wetland and riparian areas.

OS-1.4 **Resource Protection in Development Design** Require appropriate resource protection measures to be incorporated within specific plans and subsequent development proposals. Such requirements may include the preparation of a vegetation management program that addresses landscape maintenance, fuel modification zones, management of passive open space areas, provision of corridor connections for wildlife movement, conservation of water courses, rehabilitation of biological resources displaced in the planning process, and use of project design, engineering, and construction practices that minimize impacts on sensitive species, MSHCP conservation areas, and designated critical habitats.

OS-1.5 Restriction of Use As needed to protect resources, limit recreational use in open space areas where sensitive biological resources exist.

OS-1.6 Habitat Conservation Plans Coordinate with Riverside County and other relevant agencies to implement the *Western Riverside County Multiple-Species Habitat Conservation Plan*, the *Habitat Conservation Plan for the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat in Western Riverside County,* and any other applicable habitat plan.

OS-1.7 Wildlife Movement Corridor Continue efforts to establish a wildlife movement corridor in areas such as the San Jacinto River corridor, Santa Rosa Hills, Lakeview Mountains, and the open space areas surrounding Diamond Valley Lake. As applicable, new development in these areas shall incorporate such corridors. To minimize impediments to riparian wildlife movement, new roadways over ravines, arroyos, and drainages shall maintain wildlife corridors by incorporating bridges or culverts, where practical.

OS-1.8 Local Resource Preservation Maintain and enhance the natural resources of the Santa Rosa Hills, Tres Cerritos Hills, Salt Creek, Bautista Canyon, San Jacinto River/Bautista Creek, Reinhardt Canyon, Lakeview Mountains, Diamond Valley Lake, and all other waterways, ecosystems, and critical vegetation to ensure the long-term viability of habitat, wildlife, and wildlife movement corridors.

OS-1.9 Partnerships Support efforts of local, state, and federal agencies and private conservation organizations to preserve, protect, and enhance identified open spaces and natural resources.

GOAL OS-2	Conserve open space areas and hillsides to provide for a balance of recreation, scenic enjoyment, development, and protection of natural resources and features.

POLICIES

OS-2.1 Development Design Encourage the use of clustered development and other site planning techniques to maximize the preservation of permanent open spaces.

OS-2.2 Resource Conservation Conserve view corridors and ridgelines, the San Jacinto River and Mountains, slopes, significant rock outcroppings, historic and landmark trees, and other important landforms and historic landscape features through the development review process.

OS-2.3 Greenbelts Use natural, undeveloped greenbelts as buffers between developments and on the edges of the City to preserve the rural and diverse character of Hemet.

OS-2.4 Landscaping Guidelines Require developers and residents to incorporate native drought-resistant vegetation and shade trees into landscape designs to conserve water, improve comfort, augment neighborhood aesthetics, reduce energy use from operation of buildings, and maximize carbon capture and storage.

OS-2.5 Revegetation Require vegetation of graded slopes concurrent with project development to minimize erosion and maintain the scenic character of the community.

OS-2.6 Open Space Accessibility As appropriate, create, enhance, or improve accessibility to, visibility of, or recreational opportunities in natural and open space areas.

OS-2.7 Nature Education Identify and develop appropriate natural habitat areas for low-impact hiking and nature education.

OS-2.8 County Hillside Development Coordinate with Riverside County on the development of hillside and other sensitive areas outside of the City jurisdictional boundaries in the Planning Area and Hemet's sphere of influence.

GOAL OS-3	Protect prime agricultural land from conversion to urbanized use for areas shown as agriculture on the Land Use Map.

POLICIES

OS 3.1 Conservation of Agricultural Land Support conservation of the remaining productive and prime agricultural lands in the Planning Area by encouraging their preservation, honoring the preservation easements that conserve Bautista Canyon land in perpetuity, and seeking opportunities for additional preservation easements.

OS 3.2 Riverside County Agricultural Land Coordinate with Riverside County to address the preservation of agricultural resources outside of the City's jurisdictional boundaries.

OS-3.3 Land Use Compatibility Recognize and protect areas of agricultural production from the encroachment of incompatible land uses and establish appropriate buffers, disclosures, easements, and mitigation measures, as warranted.

OS-3.4 Conservation Easements Secure scenic, resource, or other open space conservation easements, where feasible and suitable, as a means for protecting prime farmland located adjacent to residential areas and where the property does not quality for inclusion in an agricultural preserve program.

GOAL OS-4	Ensure that the process and manner of locating and extracting mineral resources in the City and Planning Area does not cause impacts to surrounding areas.

POLICIES

OS-4.1 Surface Mining and Reclamation Act Require that the operation and reclamation of surface mines be consistent with the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) and City and County zoning provisions.

OS-4.2 Protect Mineral Resources Protect and conserve mineral resource deposits in designated areas to ensure that such deposits are available for future use.

OS-4.3 Minimize Long-Term Impacts Ensure that surface mining operations are designed to maintain the integrity of significant viewsheds, hillsides, and aesthetic resources as designated by the City.

OS-4.4 Minimize Operational Impacts Ensure the compatibility of surface mining operations with surrounding properties and environmental resources.

OS-4.5 Restoration and Reuse Provide for the restoration and reuse of the surface mining site upon completion of the extraction and production activities in a manner that is sensitive to and compatible with the character and integrity of adjacent land uses and the natural environment.

GOAL OS-5	Conserve and protect surface water, groundwater, and imported water resources.

POLICIES

OS-5.1 Natural Approaches Use natural approaches to the maximum extent possible to manage streams and create drainage infrastructure systems to protect groundwater recharge areas, conserve groundwater resources, maintain water quality through pollution reduction, channel drainage in environmentally sensitive ways, and design attractive and multi-use open space areas for recreation and habitat.

OS-5.2 **Protection of Groundwater Resources** Identify and protect the area's waterways and groundwater resources from depletion and sources of pollution in cooperation with local water districts, Riverside County Flood Control District, the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, or other appropriate agencies.

OS-5.3 **Development Design** Encourage the efficient use of water resources by residential, commercial, and industrial users by requiring development project proposals to incorporate best management practices into their designs, including the use of new technology in development design.

OS-5.4 **Reclaimed Water** Use reclaimed water to irrigate parks, golf courses, public landscaped areas, and for other feasible applications as service becomes available from local water providers.

OS-5.5 **Water Efficient Landscaping** Require new landscape installations or rehabilitation projects by public agencies, nonresidential developers, multi-family residential developers, and homeowners to use water efficiently, encourage water conservation, and prevent water waste.

OS-5.6 **Water Management Strategy** In cooperation with local water suppliers, adopt and implement a comprehensive water management strategy that specifies the City's role in the conservation and groundwater recharge effort.

OS-5.7 **Regional Planning** Participate in regional water resource management planning to facilitate the long-term availability of clean water resources for Western Riverside County.

OS-5.8 **Educational Outreach** Support and engage in educational outreach programs with local water suppliers and other agencies that promote water conservation, drought-tolerant landscapes, and widespread use of water-saving technologies.

GOAL OS-6

Conserve energy resources through the use of available technology and conservation practices.

POLICIES

OS-6.1 **CALGreen Standards** Encourage the efficient use of energy resources by residential, commercial, and industrial users by requiring project proposals to incorporate energy-efficient products and techniques into their designs in accordance with adopted California Green Building Standards Code standards and other development standards.

OS-6.2 City Incentives Through incentives such as expedited review of development projects, promote nonrequired alternative energy practices and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications.

OS-6.3 Federal, State, Utility Company Incentives Encourage homeowners, business owners, and other energy users to use incentives offered by federal, state, and utility companies; to identify voluntary retrofit opportunities and funding options that increase building energy performance; and to reduce energy consumption.

OS-6.4 Public Sector Development and Practices Require Redevelopment Agency–funded projects, public sector projects, and publicly owned institutions and facilities to use systems, methods, and practices that promote energy conservation.

OS-6.5 Clean Energy Support the use and production of clean energy resources through green technology and programs that promote wind, solar, renewable, biomass, and cogenerating energy resources, where compatible with adjacent land uses.

OS-6.6 Solar Energy Encourage existing or new structures to maximize solar access by promoting passive solar energy design, natural ventilation, effective use of daylight, an on-site solar generation.

OS-6.7 Recycling Promote the use of recycling and recycled materials in development projects and consumable products.

GOAL OS-7

Improve air quality and seek to reduce green house gas emissions.

POLICIES

OS-7.1 Development Design and Practices Reduce the amount of air pollution emissions from mobile and stationary sources, and enhance the South Coast Air Basin by using best management practices in development proposals and project implementation.

OS-7.2 Public Transportation Pursue expansion of the public transportation system, as well as bicycle and pedestrian trails, that are linked to the regional transit network, to reduce vehicle trips.

OS-7.3 Alternative Vehicles Promote the use of fuel-efficient and low-emissions vehicles, including neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs).

OS-7.4 Municipal Fleet Manage the municipal fleet to achieve the highest possible number of fuel-efficient and low emissions vehicles commercially available.

OS-7.5 Trip Reduction Encourage a mix of housing types that are affordable to all segments of the population and are near job opportunities to further reduce vehicle trips.

OS-7.6 Transportation Trip Management Encourage employers to implement transportation demand management (TDM) measures to reduce trips and vehicle miles traveled.

OS-7.7 Clean Technologies Encourage businesses to use clean, innovative technologies and promote the use of alternative clean-fueled vehicles, new transportation technologies, and other alternatives to the combustion engine for City vehicles and individual use.

OS-7.8 Green Building Techniques Encourage green building techniques that improve indoor air quality, energy efficiency and conservation in buildings, and utilization of renewable energy sources.

OS-7.9 Stationary Source Pollution Continue to minimize stationary source pollution through the following:

- Ensure that industrial and commercial land uses are meeting existing South Coast Air Quality Management air thresholds by adhering to established rules and regulations.
- Encourage the use of new technology to neutralize harmful criteria pollutants from stationary sources.
- Reduce exposure of the City's sensitive receptor s to poor air quality nodes through smart land use decisions.

OS-7.10 Sensitive Receptors Locate sensitive receptors (i.e., residences, playgrounds, childcare centers, athletic facilities, churches, long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes) away from significant pollution sources to the maximum extent feasible.

OS-7.11 Fugitive Dust Reduce the amount of fugitive dust released into the atmosphere by construction and demolition, materials handling, paved roads, unpaved roads, and stock piles through development standards and compliance with CEQA regulations.

OS-7.12 Best Management Practices Ensure all applicable best management practices are used in accordance with South

Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to reduce emitting criteria pollutants during construction.

OS-7.13: Partnerships Continue to work with the WRCOG Regional Air Quality Task Force to implement regional and local programs designed to meet federal, state, and regional air quality planning requirements.

OS-7.14 Public Education Protect the air from contamination by working with South Coast Air Quality Management District and other interested organizations to elevate public awareness regarding air pollution sources and pollutant reduction initiatives.

OS-7.15 State Updates Consult and coordinate with State resource and emergency management agencies regarding updates to climate change science and development of adaption priorities.

GOAL OS-8	Promote practices that fulfill present and future housing and economic needs while not harming natural resources, depleting renewable energy resources, or disrupting environmental systems.

POLICIES

OS-8.1 Comprehensive Approach Coordinate policies and implementation measures of the various elements of the General Plan to ensure a comprehensive approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to establish the basis for a sustainability plan.

OS-8.2 Land Use Planning Encourage new and infill development that provides employment opportunities for Hemet residents, is located near activity centers or along transportation corridors, and incorporates off-road trails for pedestrians and cyclists to reduce the length and number of vehicle trips.

OS-8.3 Mixed Use Development Support mixed-use commercial-residential development in accordance with the Land Use Element as an opportunity to improve the City's current jobs-housing ratio and work-live balance.

OS-8.4 Local Employment Continue to create local employment opportunities by maintaining an adequate supply of designated commercial and industrial land, in accordance with the Land Use Element.

OS-8.5 Jobs/Housing Balance Improve the City's jobs-housing balance by encouraging the development, expansion, and retention of business.

OS-8.6 Vehicle Miles Traveled Cooperate with regional, state, and federal agencies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and consequent emissions through job creation.

OS-8.7 Innovative Practices Encourage the efforts of utility companies, water companies, private businesses, and other persons or organizations in their efforts to institute sustainable practices in their operations.

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