

# 9 Public Services + Facilities

## Introduction

This chapter of the General Plan addresses the public services and facilities needed to support development in Rancho Mirage. Sub-categories found in this element discuss services and facilities such as water, sewer, and utilities, fire and police protection, schools and libraries, health services, emergency preparedness, and public buildings and facilities. The levels of service needed for residential, commercial, and industrial development are directly related to the intensity of development in the community. The economic life of Rancho Mirage is tied to the level of service, the types and intensities of land use, the level of demand for services, and the revenue generating potential of urbanizing areas.

## Public Services

### Water, Sewer, and Utilities

#### Purpose

The provision of domestic water, sewage treatment, and utility services is essential for orderly growth and development of the community. Infrastructure types and utility services discussed here include potable and irrigation water, sanitary sewage, natural gas, electricity, and telephone. The purpose of the element is to establish City policy that provides for a coordinated system of these services to adequately serve Rancho Mirage at full build out, identifies standards for infrastructure relative to population or land use intensity, and identifies courses of action and programs that provide the means to implement the goals and policies of the element.

#### Background

The portion of this element that addresses water, sewer, and utilities is directly related to the Land Use Element as new development

must be planned in conjunction with the extension and availability of essential infrastructure. Other related topics include Water and Energy Resources, and Flooding and Hydrology. California Government Code Section 65302(d) provides for the General Plan to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, which includes waste water (sewer) treatment, and natural gas and electricity availability. This Element partially satisfies the requirement for a Conservation Element, while also addressing other utilities as allowed by Section 65303.

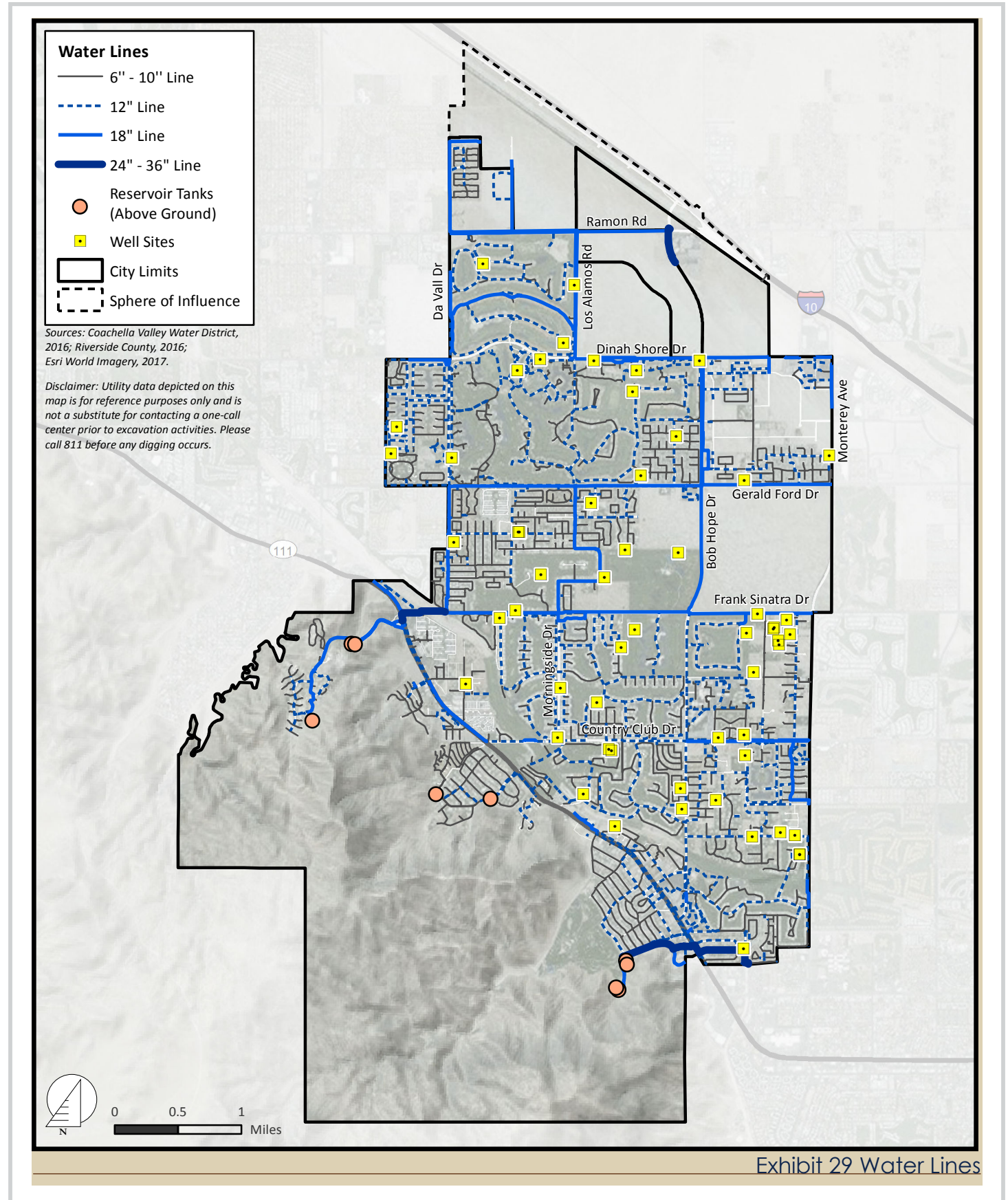
### Domestic Water Services

Domestic water services are provided by the CVWD.<sup>1</sup> All drinking or domestic water comes from the groundwater basin, a source usually referred to as the aquifer. The Whitewater River Subbasin underlies the major portion of the Coachella Valley floor and encompasses approximately 400 square miles. Wells approximately 1,200 feet deep reach the highest quality water in the aquifer. Pumps push the water up to one of 58 distribution reservoirs. Water is then delivered to customers via 1,978 miles of distribution piping. Regulation of drinking water quality is provided by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, amended in 1986.

CVWD's domestic water system serving Rancho Mirage includes 57 wells, nine aboveground storage reservoirs (water tanks) and an extensive system of distribution lines ranging in size from 2 to 36 inches in diameter (Exhibit 29). The nine reservoir tanks are located in the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains in Rancho Mirage. Additional improvements are currently under construction which will improve service in the Mission Hills Pressure Zone.

CVWD was formed in 1918 for the purpose of protecting the water supplies of the Coachella Valley. At that time, the prima-

<sup>1</sup> CVWD



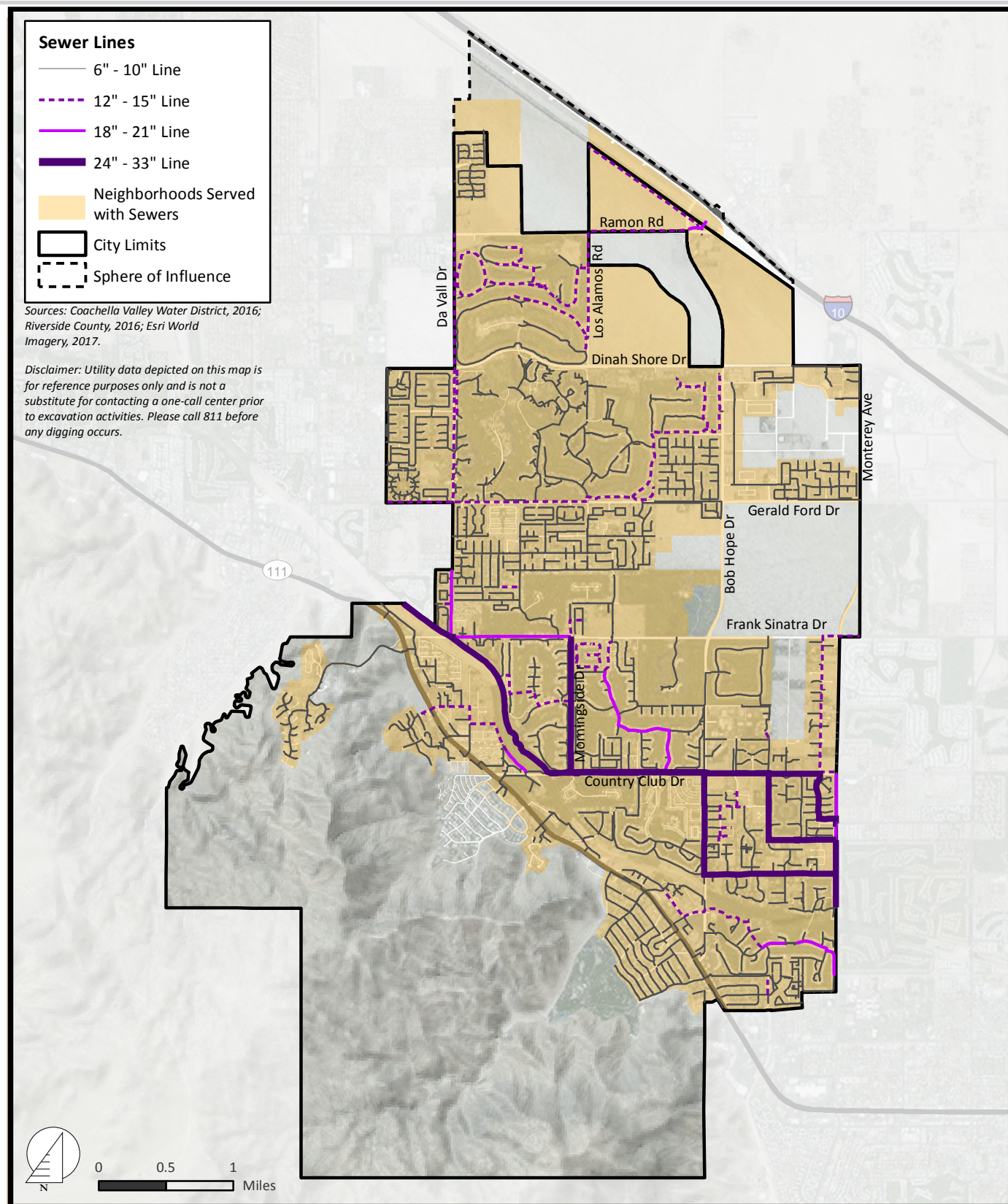


Exhibit 30 Sewer Service

ry source of water was groundwater. In the early 1930s, CVWD recognized the onset of declining groundwater levels as a result of farming activities. This prompted CVWD to acquire imported water supplies. The delivery of Colorado River through Coachella Canal commenced in 1949. In the early 1960s, CVWD and DWA contracted with the State of California for SWP water. This water has been exchanged with Metropolitan for a like amount of Colorado River Aqueduct water since 1973.<sup>2</sup>

The demand for groundwater has annually exceeded the limited natural recharge of the groundwater basin. The condition of a groundwater basin in which the outflows (demands) exceed the inflows (supplies) to the groundwater basin is called "overdraft." The historical overdraft in the Coachella Valley had caused groundwater levels to decline in many portions of the East Valley from La Quinta to the Salton Sea, and raised concerns about water quality degradation and land subsidence. Groundwater levels in the West Valley from Palm Springs to La Quinta had also decreased substantially, except in areas adjacent to and down-gradient of the Whitewater River Recharge Facility, where artificial recharge has successfully raised water levels. The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is presently not in overdraft due to active management of the Basin through Coachella Valley Water Management Plan programs like the GRP and non-potable supply to golf courses on private groundwater wells.

In 1973, CVWD and DWA began replenishing groundwater in the West Whitewater River Subbasin of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin by importing Colorado River water exchanged for SWP water allocations. Since 1997, CVWD has been replenishing groundwater with Colorado River water in the East Whitewater River Subbasin, commencing with a pilot program at the Thomas E. Levy Groundwater Replenishment Facility. CVWD also operated the Martinez Canyon pilot project in the East Whitewater River Subbasin from 2005 to 2013. In 2002, CVWD and DWA expanded the GRP into the Mission Creek Subbasin.

Groundwater replenishment is essential in the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. If groundwater replenishment with imported water is eliminated, groundwater overdraft will result. Increased overdraft results in declining water levels, increased pump lifts, and

<sup>2</sup> CVWD

increased energy consumption to pump groundwater for irrigation and domestic use. For more information regarding CVWD please visit their website at [www.cvwd.org](http://www.cvwd.org).

According to CVWD the majority of water used in the Coachella Valley continues to be for outdoor irrigation. The City has long been a champion of water conservation when it comes to landscaping, and has adopted ordinances that require compliance with the [CVWD Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance](#). Additionally, the City proactively began to remove all grass from street medians and City-maintained parkways many years ago in favor of drought tolerant landscaping.

CVWD is involved in a variety of efforts to conserve finite groundwater resources. In addition to the provision of domestic water, CVWD provides landscape plan checking services and publications on the design and installation of drought tolerant landscaping. In addition to efforts to target the domestic user, CVWD has also developed tertiary waste water treatment capability and is providing treated waste water to various golf courses and to public landscaped areas in the vicinity of the Cook Street treatment plant in Palm Desert.

### Waste Water Treatment

Most CVWD domestic water customers also receive sewer services from CVWD.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 6.3 billion gallons of wastewater are treated yearly. The district also has the capacity to increase its wastewater treatment as the Coachella Valley's population grows.

CVWD began wastewater collection and treatment services in 1968, when it acquired the Palm Desert Country Club's water and sewer systems. Today CVWD provides wastewater service to more than 91,000 home and business accounts. It operates 6 water reclamation plants from Palm Desert to Thermal, and maintains more than 1,000 miles of sewer pipelines and more than 30 lift stations that collect and transport wastewater to the nearest water reclamation facility.

Current expansions and improvement to the wastewater collection system and reclamation plants are taking place throughout the Coachella Valley. Of CVWD's six water reclamation plants, three are equipped to treat wastewater to meet state standards for non-pota-

<sup>3</sup> CVWD

ble water for irrigation. Every gallon of recycled water used for outdoor irrigation saves precious groundwater for potable use by domestic customers.

The vast majority of Rancho Mirage now utilizes the District's sewer, but there are still a few areas in the community that rely on septic tanks for waste water disposal. These areas include Thunderbird Cove, portions of the Peterson Road neighborhood, Thunderbird Country Club, the Vista Del Sol corridor, and lands in the northeast quadrant of Rancho Mirage. Exhibit 30 shows sewer service areas in Rancho Mirage.

### Electric Service

Electric power services are provided by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE), and to a limited extent, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). SCE has transmission substations in several locations in Rancho Mirage. Electric power is primarily generated outside the Coachella Valley, but SCE purchases wind-generated power from local producers. SCE facilities include 12 kV transmission lines for local distribution. Higher voltage lines for more distant transmission range up to 115 kV and 230 kV. Substations step down voltage for local distribution and use. Three substations serve Rancho Mirage: one on Highway 111 just east of Thunderbird Cove, one on Clancy Lane at Monterey Avenue, and one on Plumley Road south of 35th Avenue.

IID serves most of the lower Valley from Palm Desert to and including Imperial County. IID electrical rates are lower than rates charged by SCE. One explanation is that IID is a not-for-profit utility district. Businesses and industrial uses within the boundaries of IID have an economic advantage in that a smaller proportion of their budgets are spent on electrical service.

SCE currently offers various rebates for installation of energy efficient equipment, including incentives for the installation of smart thermostats, variable speed pool pumps, evaporative coolers, and high efficiency air conditioners to name a few. Another program called the Summer Discount Plan provides an opportunity to save money by allowing SCE to remotely "cycle-off" selected air conditioning units during periods of heavy use and potential power outages.

Electrical rates in the Coachella Valley continue to be among the highest in the nation. Regional electric utilities monopolies have traditionally been sole purveyors in distinct geographical areas and as such, have the ability to set prices without concern for competition. SCE changed its standard rate structure to a three-tiered plan in June of 2016.<sup>4</sup> The cost of electricity in Tier 1, which is considered the baseline allocation, is charged at a lower rate than Tiers 2 and 3. This baseline allocation is established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and is based on where you live, the season (winter or summer), and whether your home is "all electric" or uses both electricity and gas. Rancho Mirage lies in Baseline Region 1.<sup>5</sup> In this region allocations go up considerably during the summer months when energy use is at its peak, and are then reduced significantly during the winter months when consumption is at its lowest.

### Community Choice Aggregation

In March of 2016, the City's Budget Subcommittee authorized staff to proceed with a feasibility study on a Community Choice Aggregation (commonly known as a CCA). Forming a CCA under AB 117 allows a local government to manage the electric supply on a community level, instead of through the local purveyor, in this case SCE. The CCA, which would be controlled by the City Council, would purchase the power necessary for the community and that power would be delivered through SCE infrastructure. SCE would still maintain control of the poles, wires and necessary infrastructure to deliver the power purchased by the CCA. Customers' electric bills would be based on the rate schedules set by the CCA. CCAs provide a community and individual customers with a choice where one did not exist before. This choice often leads to lower monthly electricity bills, cleaner energy, and economic development advantages.<sup>5</sup>

### Renewable Energy (Solar)

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "the tremendous growth in the U.S. solar industry is helping to pave the way to a cleaner, more sustainable energy future. Over the past few years, the cost of a solar energy system has dropped significant-

ly -- helping to give more American families and business access to affordable, clean energy." As shown in Table 37, building permits for solar energy projects has increased dramatically in recent years. As noted on the City's website, Rancho Mirage enjoys approximately 350 days of sunshine each year, and so is a perfect location for solar energy installations.

### Natural Gas

TABLE 37 SOLAR-RELATED BUILDING PERMITS, BY YEAR

YEAR	NUMBER OF PERMITS ISSUED
2005-2010	227
2011	115
2012	123
2013	248
2015	325
2015	309
2016	332
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,679</b>

Natural gas provides more electricity generation than any energy source in California. According to the California Energy Commission, data gathered as of September 10, 2015 indicates that 60 percent of all electric generation in California comes from natural gas.<sup>6</sup> Natural gas service is provided in Rancho Mirage by Southern California Gas, which has regional and local distribution lines in Rancho Mirage and the SOI. Natural gas is used for space heating, domestic and commercial hot water, cooking and air conditioning applications.

Services are available to all prospective users and nearby major transmission facilities assure availability for most anticipated needs, be they residential, commercial or industrial. Cost of services varies seasonally and with amount of use.

### Telephone Service

Multiple companies offer telephone service in Rancho Mirage, but phone service is oftentimes bundled with other services such as internet and television. For instance, AT&T offers telephone service as a standalone product, whereas Spectrum (formerly Time Warner Cable) only offers telephone service in conjunction with internet or television.

Home telephone service will most likely be offered as an ancillary service to internet and television services given the shift from traditional landlines to wireless phones. According to surveys conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US Department of Health and Human Services), the prevalence of wireless only households continues to rise. Nearly one-half of American homes (48.3 percent) had only wireless telephones (also known as cellular telephones, cell phones, or mobile phones) during the second half of 2015 – an increase of 2.9 percent since the second half of 2014.<sup>7</sup> Between January and June of 2006, approximately 10 percent of households were wireless only. Over the last decade that number has increased to nearly 50 percent.

### Wireless Communication Facilities

As previously discussed, wireless telephone use has increased exponentially over the last decade. A survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 2015 indicates that 92 percent of U.S. adults own cell phones.<sup>8</sup> The infrastructure that is commonly needed to support these vast wireless networks comes in the form of large antennas; unfortunately, these structures tend to be very unsightly. The City encourages the development of stealth facilities in order to protect citywide aesthetics, and has found that integrating the antennas into the architectural features of buildings (towers, cupolas, etc.) proves to be quite successful. As a secondary means of development, when buildings are not available, monopoles, streetlamps, and/or flagpoles have been used.

The most significant cost associated with the expansion of fiber networks for high speed broadband is that of trenching and conduit installation. In order to plan for the orderly expansion

<sup>4</sup> Southern California Edison

<sup>5</sup> All of the information regarding CCAs was obtained from a staff report by Isaiah Hagerman, Director of Administrative Services for the City of Rancho Mirage, dated September 15, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Southern California Gas Company

<sup>7</sup> CDC

<sup>8</sup> Pew Research Center



Water conservation is a high priority for the City.

of these networks, and also to help offset the cost of extraction, the City encourages a “dig once” philosophy for construction activities. While a trench is open for any reason, one or more conduits are placed in the trench, either with or without fiber, for the future expansion of wireless facilities, communications, video surveillance, etc. This seemingly insignificant task will pay huge dividends for future development.

### *Cable Television*

Cable television service is provided to Rancho Mirage by Spectrum (formerly Time Warner Cable), but there are other options for television service through satellite providers. In addition to cable and satellite options, internet television services are also very popular.

### *Solid Waste Disposal Services*

The City contracts with Burrtec for provision of solid waste management and disposal services. A variety of residential services are available from the service provider in addition to the basic twice-weekly pick up, some of those services include: bulky item pick up, electronic waste, Christmas tree recycling, household hazardous waste and used motor oil. Burrtec also offers services for commercial businesses, construction-related activities and special events.

Most trash destined for disposal at land-fills is taken to the Edom Hill Transfer Station, which is located in Cathedral City approximately three miles north of Rancho Mirage’s boundary. A transfer station is an approved facility for accepting commercial, residential, and industrial waste from internal and external clients. Transfer stations serve as a local collection point to the final disposal site.<sup>9</sup> The Edom Hill transfer station has a maximum permitted throughput of 3,500 tons per day and a permitted capacity of 3,500 tons per day for general waste (e.g, agricultural, construction/demolition, food wastes, green materials, industrial, metals, tires).

In addition, the transfer facility has a separate area for composting (construction/demolition and green materials) that has a maximum permitted throughput of 500 tons per day, and a permitted capacity of 10,221 cubic yards.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Burrtec

<sup>10</sup> CalRecycle

Burrtec’s website states that “recycling plays an important role in managing the waste generated in homes and businesses, and it reduces the need for landfills.” The residential recycle bins used in Rancho Mirage are considered “comingle” bins, which means that all types of recyclables can be collected in the same receptacle.

Recyclables go to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting and processing, and are then shipped to destinations for reuse and repurposing. The MRF closest Rancho Mirage is the West Valley Transfer Station/MRF in Fontana.

### *Future Direction*

Water, sewer and public utilities are essential parts of community development of all types. The orderly and contiguous extension of services and facilities is integral to the logical and cost-effective extension of the urban land use pattern. The provision of water, energy and other public services is coordinated by the City and must be planned to adequately accommodate future growth anticipated in the General Plan.

The General Plan provides service with important information of future service demands to allow the providers to determine how they can best be met.

**WATER, SEWER, AND UTILITIES GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

**GOAL PS&F 1**

Water, sewer and utility facilities that safely and adequately meet the needs of Rancho Mirage at build out.

**GOAL PS&F 2**

Conservation of the quality and quantity of the water basin.

**POLICY PS&F 2.1**

The City shall work with CVWD and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, to the greatest extent possible, to preserve and protect water resources.

**POLICY PS&F 2.2**

The City shall encourage the expanded use of tertiary treated water by supporting the efforts of CVWD to expand the capacity and distribution of such treatment facilities.

**GOAL PS&F 3**

A city-wide sewer system that serves all residences and businesses.

**POLICY PS&F 3.1**

Support the formation of neighborhood-wide Assessment Districts for the purpose of sewer installation.

**PROGRAM PS&F 3.1A**

The City shall prepare the preliminary engineering estimates for assessment districts for sewer installation.

**POLICY PS&F 3.2**

All subdivisions shall be connected to sewer lines.

**POLICY PS&F 3.3**

When a property that is served by a septic system transfers ownership, the septic system shall be properly abandoned, and the property shall be required to connect to CVWD sewer, provided sewer lines are already installed in the right-of-way to serve said property.

**PROGRAM PS&F 3.3A**

The City shall maintain a list of residences and businesses not connected to the sewer system.

**POLICY PS&F 3.4**

If soil conditions do not permit proper percolation, prohibit septic systems.

**GOAL PS&F 4**

Lower electricity rates.

**POLICY PS&F 4.1**

Take a leading role in forming a cooperative program with adjacent cities to acquire ownership of the electrical distribution system.

**PROGRAM PS&F 4.1A**

The City shall investigate the feasibility of establishing a municipal electricity district, which may include acquiring ownership of electrical transmission or distribution lines and purchasing power directly from producers.

**GOAL PS&F 5**

Placement of all utility lines underground.

**POLICY PS&F 5.1**

Give utility lines on major streets primary consideration for under-grounding.

**POLICY PS&F 5.2**

Site major utility facilities to assure minimal impacts to the environment and the community, and minimize potential environmental hazards

**PROGRAM PS&F 5.2A**

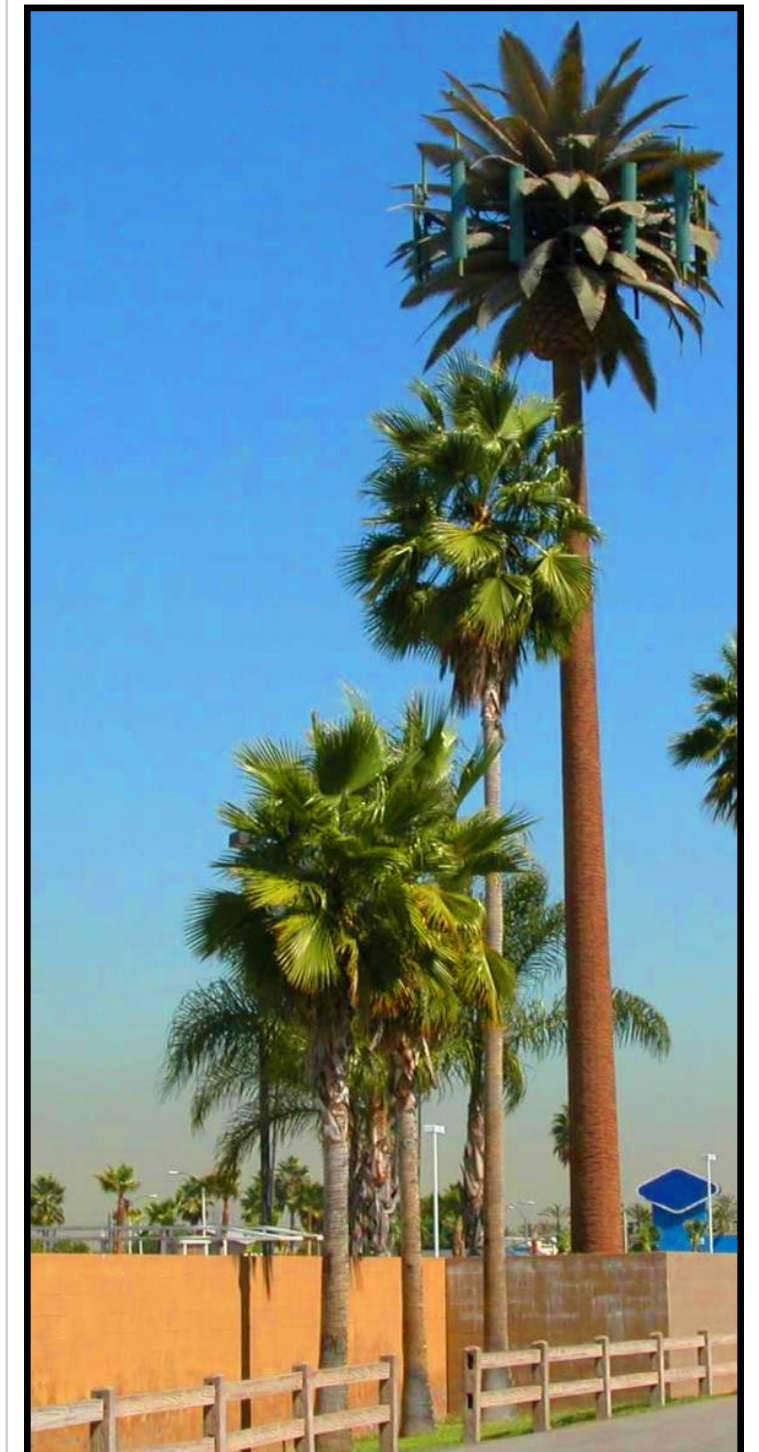
Wireless facilities shall be stealth in their design in order to preserve citywide aesthetics.

**POLICY PS&F 5.3**

Encourage the coordinated and shared use of underground transmission corridors as a means of minimizing repeated exactions into the streets.

**POLICY PS&F 5.4**

Promote a "dig once" approach for construction activities in order to plan for the orderly and efficient expansion of fiber networks.



Palm tree cell tower concealment.

## Fire and Police Protection

### Purpose

The Police and Fire Protection portion of this element addresses two of the essential functions of governments. The element reflects the City's commitment, which places high priority on the best protection services possible. The City also recognizes the benefits of the high number of gated/walled communities, the larger of which typically have private security that enhances overall safety for these households. Consolidated contractual arrangements are also in place for police services to enhance service in the most cost effective manner possible.

Fire services in the community are state-of-the-art, with two stations in Rancho Mirage and cooperative, joint power agreements with other communities for fire services.

### Background

Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that a General Plan include a Safety Element, or its equivalent, for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risk associated with the effects of fire, crime, or other threats. Public Resources Code Section 4125(a) also references the state Board of Forestry, which classifies lands for the purpose of establishing hazards and responsibility. Unclassified lands will fall under the jurisdiction of the City or appropriate federal agency, such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service.

### Fire Protection Services

The threat of fire poses hazards to life and property. Given the Rancho Mirage's sparsely vegetated open desert lands and hillsides, developed areas are the source of most service calls. The Riverside County Fire Department provides fire protection in Rancho Mirage under contract to the California Department of Forestry. A typical response to a fire will place eight personnel, including a battalion chief, on the scene within five minutes. This includes fire fighters and certified paramedics.

The City entered into a cooperative agreement for fire-related services with the County of Riverside, through its Cooperative

Fire Programs Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement, in June of 2016. This two-year agreement ensures that Rancho Mirage will be provided with fire protection, disaster preparedness and response, fire prevention, rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue response, medical emergency services, and public service assistance for the life of the agreement. Funds for these services come from a citywide "fire tax" levied on raw acreage, residential dwelling units, and commercial developments. The taxes collected to pay for these services do not cover the actual costs, so the City uses money from the General Fund to make up the difference. The Riverside County Fire Department maintains thirteen fire stations in the upper Coachella Valley. The following fire stations are located in city limits:

Rancho Mirage Station No. 50 is located on Highway 111 between Thunderbird Cove and Thunderbird Heights. This station is responsible for covering the southern portion of Rancho Mirage and is equipped with one medic engine (fire truck). The station is staffed with two firefighters and one firefighter/paramedic at all times. Station 50 added a medic unit (ambulance) in early 2017.

Rancho Mirage Station No. 69 is located on Gerald Ford Drive, less than 0.25 mile west of Bob Hope Drive. This station is responsible for covering the northern portion of Rancho Mirage. Equipment at this station consists of one medic engine and one medic unit. A total of three firefighters and two firefighter/paramedics are on duty at this station at all times.

In addition to the two fire stations located in Rancho Mirage, five other County operated fire stations are located close to Rancho Mirage: Station 71 (Palm Desert), Roy Wilson Fire Station (Thousand Palms), Station 33 (Palm Desert), Fire Station 81 (North Bermuda Dunes), Fire Station 55 (Indian Wells), and Riverside County Fire Department in La Quinta. In the event of a major incident, resources from these stations can be used to assist fire personnel in Rancho Mirage.

National Fire Insurance Organizations and the National Fire Protection Association formally recommend, respectively, a maximum three-mile and five-minute response parameter for siting fire stations. While existing levels of service appear adequate to protect existing improvements in Rancho Mirage, continued growth may stimulate the need for additional fire stations. Further consultation and coordination with local fire officials will be required to determine the optimum location for additional future facilities.

### Police Protection Services

Police protection in Rancho Mirage is provided on a service contract basis by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that operates out of the Palm Desert Station. The current agreement went into effect on July 1, 2016, and is a five-year contract that will expire on June 30, 2021. In 2016, eight dedicated police personnel served Rancho Mirage, and another 15 non-dedicated deputies aided in patrol. Staffing on a daily basis breaks down as follows: two deputies work the day shift, three deputies work the swing shift, and two deputies work the graveyard shift. One additional one non-sworn Community Service Officer works during the day. In 2016, the City provided a ratio of one officer per 786 residents, well above the commonly accepted ratio of one officer per 1,000 residents.

Police response times can vary significantly, depending on the location of patrol cars at the time of a call. In 2015, the average emergency response time in Rancho Mirage for Priority 1 calls was 5.9 minutes.

Methods to reduce or prevent crime include adequate street and security lighting, and development of "defensible space." Defensible space permits surveillance and provides the highest possible level of security, use of appropriate security hardware, and building siting and visibility. The City also promotes the Neighborhood Watch Program. This program exists in both public neighborhoods and private communities. The Sheriff's department has indicated that the relatively high number of walled and gated communities in Rancho Mirage does not necessarily result in a measurable reduction in crime.

To understand the issue of crime it is imperative to consider geographic, demographic, economic and other factors specific to a jurisdiction. The transient population, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family conditions with respect to the family unit is correlated to crime statistics. Considering a jurisdiction's industrial/economic base, economic conditions relating to median income, poverty level, job availability, dependence on neighboring jurisdictions, and transportation systems are all key factors in assessing and understanding the crime issue.

The strength and effectiveness of law enforcement in a city should also be considered when comparing crime statistics. One city may report more crime than another, not because there is more crime, but rather because its law enforcement, through proactive efforts, identifies more offenses. A high ratio of officers to population allows identification and reporting of crimes more effectively. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime influence their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses. This will have an impact on the volume of crimes reported to police.

The timing of specific law enforcement needs that correlate with continued development cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. Nonetheless, it can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police protection services and personnel.

### Citizens on Patrol

The Rancho Mirage citywide Citizens on Patrol (COPS) program was formed in 1994, by resolution of the City Council, to serve as the "eyes and ears" for the Sheriff's department. RMCOPS is made up of volunteers, ages 21 and older, who reside in the Coachella Valley. They assist in the reduction of crime by providing high visibility, direct communication and random daily patrols. As ambassadors of the City, they are trained by the Riverside County Sheriff's department and Palm Springs Police Citizens' Academy in non-confrontational matters, various aspects of police surveillance, reporting procedures, traffic control, CPR, first aid and emergency preparedness. There are currently approximately 30 members who provide about 1,000 hours monthly in volunteer service.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Citizens on Patrol

### Future Directions

The distribution of land uses and anticipated development pattern will continue to directly impact the City's ability to provide adequate fire and police protection. The availability of staff and equipment and the need to provide protection services within a minimum time frame affects the responsiveness of the City's police and fire departments. Development in Rancho Mirage that is distant from services may risk longer response times, which must be considered in land use planning, circulation/traffic planning, the provision of fire flows, and in emergency preparedness planning.

It can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police and fire protection services and personnel. The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which will result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. Fire protection needs are more easily established, but are highly dependant upon the location, type, and intensity of future development.

### FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

#### GOAL PS&F 6

A high level of police and fire protection and paramedic service.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.1

Review all new and improved developments for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.2

Enforce fire standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.3

Regulate potentially hazardous material use and storage.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.4

Due to the fire hazard potential of hilly areas with slopes of ten percent or greater, access problems, lack of water or sufficient pressure, and excessively dry brush, specify special onsite fire protection measures during project review.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.5

Provide emergency police, fire and paramedic vehicle access with all new development to the satisfaction of the City.



Rancho Mirage police and fire personnel.



Rancho Mirage High School has a 2300-student capacity.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.6

Assist the Sheriff's Department in promoting the Neighborhood Watch Program.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.7

Promote concepts of defensible space for walled and gated communities, recognizing the potential effect those concepts can have on reducing crime in Rancho Mirage.

#### POLICY PS&F 6.8

Support the Citizens on Patrol program.

### Schools and Libraries

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of this portion of the element is to describe school and library facilities in Rancho Mirage and surrounding serving area, and provide guidance and direction for decision makers to ensure support of and convenient access to these essential services. City residents of all ages deserve the opportunity to gain a basic education and continue to expand their personal and professional horizons through these important educational and cultural resources. The convenience and safe accessibility of school and library facilities depend upon the community's land use pattern, the efficiency and safety of its streets, and the availability of bicycle lanes/paths and public transit.

#### *Background*

Continued residential development activity, a larger permanent population, and the increased percentage of families with school-aged children can be expected to increase pressure on the local school districts that are required by law to provide school facilities to accommodate students. Rancho Mirage is served by two public school districts: the Palm Springs Unified School District, which serves the majority of Rancho Mirage, and the Desert Sands Unified School District, which serves the portion of Rancho Mirage that lies south of Frank Sinatra Drive and east of Bob Hope Drive.

California Government Code Section 65302(a) requires that, among other things, the General Plan assess the general distribution and location of educational facilities, and determine the adequacy of these facilities.

#### *Public Schools*

As of 2016, the Palm Springs Unified School District operates one elementary school and one high school in the city. Rancho Mirage Elementary School is located on Indian Trail Road in the Magnesia Falls Cove area. It provides class levels K through 6, and has approximately 420 students.<sup>12</sup> Rancho Mirage High School (RMHS) was built in 2013 and is located east of Da Vall Drive and north of Ramon Road in the northern portion of Rancho Mirage. The high school was constructed across the city's boundary line, so a portion of the school (some of the sports fields and a portion of the parking lot) actually lies in the City's SOI in Riverside County. RMHS has a capacity for 2,300 students.<sup>13</sup> Students living in Rancho Mirage must currently attend middle school education in surrounding communities. There are no Desert Sands Unified schools in Rancho Mirage.

According to a school facility needs analysis published in March of 2014, the Palm Springs Unified School District has a district-wide capacity of 25,654 seats, which are divided as follows: 13,923 at the elementary school level, 3,127 at the middle school level and 8,604 at the high school level. Enrollment data for school year 2013/2014 identified 23,360 students. Student enrollment exceeds facilities capacity at the middle school level. At the elementary and high school levels a surplus seating capacity exists.<sup>14</sup> The school district uses these assessments to help plan for the future. When the state reduced funding for public schools, it passed legislation effective January 1, 1987 to permit school districts to levy a per-square-foot fee for residential, commercial, and industrial development. These fees must be paid by developers directly to the school district prior to the issuance of building permits. The fees are used to assist in the construction or reconstruction of school facilities. In 2016 the residential school fee was \$3.48 per square foot and the commercial per-square-foot fee was \$0.56.

<sup>12</sup> Rancho Mirage Elementary

<sup>13</sup> Rancho Mirage High School

<sup>14</sup> PSUSD



### Private Schools

One private school also serves Rancho Mirage. As of October 2016, the Palm Valley School is located on Da Vall Drive, north of Dinah Shore Drive, and provides classroom instruction for preschool aged children through high school. Its current enrollment is 340 students, 71 of which are in grades 9-12. This relatively new facility is a master planned campus with substantial space for future expansion.

### Libraries

In 1991, the City withdrew from the Riverside County Library system and made plans to provide its own library. The City purchased a vacant 10,887 square foot bank building at Bob Hope Drive and Highway 111 and opened its library there in January, 1996 with 15,000 volumes and projections up to 35,000 volumes in five years. The current Rancho Mirage Public Library opened in 2006, and now has more than 70,000 volumes. In addition to the large collection of books, the library also has approximately 14,000 DVDs and more than 6,000 audiobooks. Over the years the library has earned many awards and accolades, and continues to be a cultural asset to Rancho Mirage, the Coachella Valley, Riverside County, and beyond.

Construction of the current Rancho Mirage Public Library began in 2004, and it officially opened in 2006. The stunning facility was designed by the architecture firm Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. The building itself is just over 45,000 square feet and includes outdoor program areas, an audiovisual services area, and a 350-seat auditorium for programs and events.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the large collection of books, the library also has space for revolving exhibits and hosts many events.

Eisenhower Medical Center has a medical library, but lending to non-hospital staff is not permitted. College of the Desert also has an impressive on-campus library that is open to the public and affiliated with the Riverside County library system.

### Future Direction

Rancho Mirage's schools and library are important community assets that support city children and adults and are an important barometer of the social health of Rancho Mirage and its quality of life. These assets are also an important consideration for many consid-

ering residing in Rancho Mirage. As the city continues to urbanize towards I-10, demographics can be anticipated to shift from higher end second homes to more moderately priced, year-round occupied single-family homes. Schools will become increasingly important to Rancho Mirage's population. The location of schools and libraries require consideration of many factors, including student safety, accessibility, impacts from noise and other factors.

Public school districts are "responsible agencies" and have "lead agency" status for the siting, planning and processing of development approvals. While consultation with local jurisdictions is required, most decisions rest with the school district, with building, planning, and design processed and approved by the State Architect's Office. Nonetheless, the City can assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning and provision of educational facilities to provide a maximum opportunity for the education of residents of Rancho Mirage.

The General Plan provides the City with the opportunity to establish policies and programs to preserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure accessibility and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

## SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

### GOAL PS&F 7

Education and library facilities that provide Rancho Mirage with adequate services and convenient access.

### POLICY PS&F 7.1

Assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning, site acquisition, development and provision of educational facilities for the residents of Rancho Mirage.



Rancho Mirage Public Library is over 45,000 square feet and has many amenities for public events.

<sup>15</sup> MSR Architecture



Eisenhower Medical Center has been providing Valley-wide health care since 1971.

#### POLICY PS&F 7.2

Cooperate in the process to secure school impact fees from developers in accordance with state law, and strive to reduce overcrowding and improve the educational quality of the public school system.

#### POLICY PS&F 7.3

Preserve and protect existing and future school sites, to the greatest extent practical, from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure compatible surrounding land uses.

#### POLICY PS&F 7.4

As appropriate, pursue agreements with the school district(s) to assist in the purchase, lease or joint use of land for school and recreation purposes and the provision of recreation facilities to increase the supply of local park acreage and facilities for school students and to provide accessible recreation facilities and open space for the neighboring community during non-school hours.

#### POLICY PS&F 7.5

Ensure that adequate library services, space and volumes are available to satisfy the literary and educational needs of its residents.

### Health Services

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of this portion of the element is to provide information on the various health care facilities and services available in Rancho Mirage and vicinity. Health care services range from the family practitioner to surgical and other specialists working in a hospital environment. Accessible health care facilities and services are an essential part of the community's professional services.

With an older average population in Rancho Mirage, health care facilities and services are important determinants for many would

be residents considering relocation to Rancho Mirage. As with most other areas of community planning, the availability of health care is an essential component of community planning. Issues of medical services/facilities availability are also associated with other areas of community planning, including land use distribution, traffic and circulation, emergency preparedness, and fire and police protection.

#### *Background*

The Health Facilities portion of this element is related to the Emergency Preparedness, Public Buildings and Facilities, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials Elements. It also addresses locational criteria and is therefore related to the Land Use and Circulation elements as well. This portion of the Public Services and Facilities Element is included in the General Plan as an optional element pursuant to Government Code Section 65303 because of the prominence of health related facilities in Rancho Mirage.

Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley provide a broad range of medical services and research facilities, as well as convalescent hospitals and similar facilities. The City has a particular interest in assuring the provision of health care facilities, including hospitals, clinics, medical specialists, and convalescent care.

#### *Eisenhower Medical Center*

As published on its website, Eisenhower Medical Center (EMC) is the valley's only not-for-profit hospital, and has provided the Valley with compassionate care for nearly 40 years through a full range of state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and emergency facilities. EMC is an ACGME accredited teaching hospital, welcoming residents in Family Medicine and Internal Medicine since 2013.

Situated on a 130-acre campus in the heart of the Coachella Valley, EMC is a dynamic, progressive health care complex comprised of a 542-bed hospital, the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences at Eisenhower, the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center at Eisenhower and the Betty Ford Center on the Eisenhower campus. The non-profit Betty Ford Center is a world renowned alcohol and drug addiction treatment hospital, located on an expansive, 20-acre campus adjacent to the EMC. The Betty Ford Center offers help and hope to

individuals and their family members affected by alcoholism and/or addiction to other drugs.<sup>16</sup>

Future development and expansion of EMC is expected. Master planning of the Eisenhower campus has been accomplished through the adoption of the EMC Specific Plan that sets forth the ultimate buildout of facilities on campus.

### *Other Health Care Providers*

In Rancho Mirage, medically related uses have clustered along Bob Hope Drive and Country Club Drive. One of the primary reasons for this development pattern is the availability of Office (O) zoned land along these corridors, but the accessibility and convenience of Eisenhower Medical Center also contributes to the development of these land uses. The City would like to encourage the focus on existing and future medically related uses in this geographic area, while providing sensitive edge treatments and thoughtful buffers to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Other Coachella Valley hospitals capable of providing health care services include Desert Regional Hospital in Palm Springs and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Indio. Desert Regional Hospital is licensed for 385 beds, and is home to the valley's only designated trauma center and only neonatal intensive care unit.<sup>17</sup> The campus in Palm Springs includes tertiary acute care services and a skilled nursing unit. The John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital is licensed for 145 beds, provides 24-hour emergency care facilities, and is a base for paramedic service.

### *Future Directions*

Hospitals and convalescent facilities are regarded as sensitive land uses and should be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels or high levels of air pollution. The General Plan plays an important role in assuring the long-term viability of Rancho Mirage's health care facilities by regulating surrounding land uses and minimizing adverse impacts from traffic, noise and other conditions. The Eisenhower Medical Center Specific Plan is incorporated into the General Plan by reference to assure consistency between these two regulatory documents. The General Plan also provides opportunities

to establish goals and policies that encourage the development of additional medical and health care and possibly research facilities, particularly in the vicinity of EMC, that address the changing demographics of the community and capitalize on Rancho Mirage's economic dominance in the health care field.

### HEALTH SERVICES GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

#### **GOAL PS&F 8**

High quality of health care facilities and services to promote the good health and well-being of Rancho Mirage's residents.

#### POLICY PS&F 8.1

Coordinate with all medical service providers to assure adequate health care facilities and services to meet the needs of Rancho Mirage's residents.

#### POLICY PS&F 8.2

Encourage the development of medical and health care facilities that address the changing demographics and the City's desire to expand the economic base of the community.

#### POLICY PS&F 8.3

The EMC Specific Plan shall serve as the development guide for the campus.

#### POLICY PS&F 8.4

Locate hospitals, convalescent, assisted care, and similar type facilities in areas not subject to excessive noise levels.



Emergency preparedness kit in case of natural or manmade disaster.

<sup>16</sup> Eisenhower Medical Center

<sup>17</sup> Desert Regional Medical Center

## Emergency Preparedness

### Purpose

The purpose of this portion of the element is to provide information on the critical facilities necessary to effectively respond in the event of an emergency. It also identifies the various potential impacts of significant man made and natural hazards in or affecting the community and how they direct emergency preparedness. The City's capabilities in responding to natural and manmade disasters are also identified. Rancho Mirage's substantial potential exposure to major seismic events and flooding threats cannot be prevented, but preparation can be made for an effective response. Manmade threats include wildland and urban fires, hazardous materials spills and leaks, and major transportation accidents, including automobiles, trucks, trains, and aircraft. The element sets forth goals, policies, and programs designed to allow the City to be prepared for emergency threats.

### Background

Concern regarding emergency preparedness is directly related to the Geotechnical (where seismic hazards are discussed), Flooding and Hydrology, Hazardous and Toxic Materials, and Police and Fire Protection portions of both this element and the Safety Element. Other related elements include Land Use, which affects essential relationships of use to location specific threats, and Circulation, which defines the availability of, and need for securing evacuation routes in the event of an emergency in the community. Applicable law includes Government Code section 65302(g), which states that the General Plan shall address "the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure...; slope instability leading to mudslides or landslides."

The Coachella Valley is subject to significant hazards, which constitute serious threats to life and property. The Valley's substantial potential for earthquakes and flooding are natural occurrences that can be anticipated, but cannot be prevented. However, the magnitude of the effect of natural disasters on life

and property can be addressed, and a coherent response to such disasters can be prepared. The goal is to have a realistic assessment of the potential for disaster and response plans for recovery after a disaster has occurred. Due to the large number of public, quasi-public, and private agencies involved in emergency preparedness planning, and their differing areas of responsibility, cooperation and coordination between agencies are essential.

Communication is the critical element in any emergency response capability and must be maintained even in the event of wide ranging disastrous events. Cities, emergency and safety agencies, water districts, utilities, and other involved private agencies must be able to remain in contact in order to coordinate the provision of supplies and personnel. To this end, it is imperative that regular and effective on-going organizational meetings be held in order to assure the efficient and responsive provision of emergency services and supplies.

The development of a carefully conceived emergency preparedness plan includes a disaster operations plan, which sets forth the organization and administration of disaster response efforts such as debris removal, evacuation and emergency communications, law enforcement, fire protection and rescue, the provision of health care and emergency shelter, allocation of emergency food and medical supplies, and the maintenance and restoration of critical services, including transportation, water and sewage, electricity, natural gas, and telephone service.

### Critical Facilities

Certain critical facilities will become essential in the event of a major emergency and are an essential part of the emergency response plan. These include facilities that provide or house emergency services, including hospitals, fire stations, police and emergency services facilities, governmental operations, and utility facilities, especially telecommunications. Commercial radio stations can also play an essential role in apprising the community of appropriate actions to take.

Other critical facilities include evacuation routes and peak load water supply and delivery systems. Evacuation routes may play an especially critical role by allowing the evacuation and/or the delivery of ground based assistance access to affected parts of Rancho Mirage.

### Emergency Transportation and Circulation

One of the single most important activities after a major disaster is the delivery of emergency personnel and relief supplies. Access to the community can be affected by major damage from natural forces, including earthquakes and flooding. Therefore, all weather and earthquake resistant bridges, culverts, and roads adjoining cut slopes must be given careful attention. Programs can be developed in close coordination with Caltrans, Riverside County and adjoining cities to assure maximum functional integrity of major roads serving Rancho Mirage.

### Financial Assistance

Financial assistance to the City and victims of a disaster can come from several sources, with the state and federal governments being the most important. In order to qualify for state or federal assistance, the City must declare a local emergency within 10 days of the actual occurrence of the disaster, have damages assessed, and must apply for aid within 60 days of declaring the local emergency (Government Code Section 8680 8692).

### Emergency Preparedness Coordination

The Riverside County Office of Disaster Preparedness is the responsible lead agency for the coordination of the various agencies in the event of an emergency. In Rancho Mirage, Fire Station 50, on Highway 111 east of Country Club Drive, serves as the base of operations for emergency response. In addition to City staff assigned to specific tasks, ranging from management and coordination to field operations, the City has agreements with local contractors to augment public agency resources and capabilities.

### Emergency Preparedness Commission

The City's Emergency Preparedness Commission was established in 1998 and consists of 10 members who are appointed by the

City Council. The Commission's main purpose is to prepare and train citizens and businesses for any possible emergency. It has progressed from an advisory body to an operational task force. The Commission's Mission Statement reads as follows: The Mission of the Emergency Preparedness Commission is to motivate every person, business, and organization in Rancho Mirage to take actions that reduce future disaster damages and enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.<sup>18</sup>

### Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

In September of 2014, the City Council approved and adopted Resolution 2014-42 which amended the previous General Plan to incorporate, as an appendix, the Rancho Mirage Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the local hazard mitigation plan is to identify the County's hazards, review and assess past disaster occurrences, estimate the probability of future occurrences and set goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and man-made hazards. The plan identifies vulnerabilities, provides recommendations for prioritized mitigation actions, evaluates resources, identifies mitigation shortcomings, and provides future mitigation planning and maintenance of existing plan.

### Future Directions

In addition to the detailed organizational directives, scopes of responsibility, operational priorities, authority and powers established in the City's emergency response plan, emergency communication protocols and other components of the response plan require close multi agency coordination. The ability of the community to respond to emergencies is also affected by the distribution of land uses and the location of future fire stations and other public safety facilities. Development standards set forth in the City's Zoning Ordinance will also determine how effectively emergency personnel can respond to events affecting occupied structures.

<sup>18</sup> Emergency Preparedness Commission

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

### GOAL PS&F 9

A coordinated, responsive, and effective emergency preparedness disaster implementation plan and a high degree of readiness to respond to disastrous events.

#### POLICY PS&F 9.1

Develop and site public facilities to assure maximum protection from environmental hazards such as earthquakes and flood waters.

#### POLICY PS&F 9.2

Coordinate emergency preparedness activities with the state Office of Emergency Services.

#### POLICY PS&F 9.3

Continue to coordinate with Riverside County in the development and dissemination of information to the public advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.

#### POLICY PS&F 9.4

Work with Riverside County to update the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as necessary.

#### POLICY PS&F 9.5

Encourage and assist private communities in the preparation of emergency preparedness plans.

## Public Buildings and Facilities

### Purpose

This portion of this element provides background information on various structures and facilities in Rancho Mirage that are operated by public and quasi-public agencies, and describes some of the long-term planning issues associated with them. It is also meant to provide sufficient information to identify important and critical facilities and to assure coordinated planning and development that keeps pace with growth in the community. This portion of the Public Services and Facilities Element also sets forth the goal, policies and programs, which address the long-term planning needs of the community.

Public facilities are built to accommodate present and anticipated needs, some of which (most notably utilities) play a major role in determining the location, intensity, and appropriate timing of future development. Each year, local governmental agencies planning the construction of capital facilities (including cities, counties, school districts, and special districts) must submit a list to the planning agency (Government Code Section 65401) of proposed projects they would like to implement in Rancho Mirage. In the case of Rancho Mirage, the City would then review the projects for conformity with the General Plan.

### Background

Rancho Mirage is host to a variety of public buildings and facilities, and associated issues have long been of concern in Rancho Mirage. They range from City Hall and the two community fire stations to water wells and electric power substations. They also include electric, telephone, and cable television transmission lines, schools, the Rancho Mirage Public Library, and the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert. Roads and bridges, traffic signals and support facilities, and bus shelters also fall under this category. The Public Buildings and Facilities portion of this element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation, and Community Design Elements. Most public buildings and utility sites are shown on the General Plan map.

Government Code Section 65103(c) states that the planning agency is to "annually review the Capital Improvement Program



Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert is one of the many public facilities in Rancho Mirage



Rancho Mirage City Hall was remodeled in 1996.

of the City or County and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan....” However, the local jurisdiction may emphasize the importance of this issue by requiring an optional Public Facilities Element in the General Plan (Government Code Section 65303).

Rancho Mirage is a unique resort residential community with a wide range of public buildings and facilities utilized for the benefit of community residents and visitors. While much of the discussion focuses on buildings, lands and facilities operated by the City, utility buildings and substations are also given special attention with regard to their compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The location of public buildings and facilities is largely dependent upon their function in the community. This functional criterion does not preclude the need for these facilities to be logically integrated into the existing and planned land use patterns in Rancho Mirage. Those public buildings, which serve as offices where residents and business people come to conduct business, should be conveniently located and provided with safe access and adequate parking.

### Utility Infrastructure

In contrast, utility infrastructure, including electrical substations, and pumping and switching facilities, can generate noise and detract from the scenic values of an area. Methods typically used to integrate utility infrastructure with the surrounding area can include decorative block walls and landscape buffers around major facilities, or the construction of telephone and other equipment buildings in an architectural style compatible with the surrounding built environment. The Verizon switching station on Da Vall Drive, north of Gerald Ford Drive, is a good example of how utility buildings can be designed to complement rather than detract from surrounding development. The City has also been a leader in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines and collects fees at the building permit stage to help fund this effort.

### Rancho Mirage City Hall

The Rancho Mirage City Hall is an unusual and uniquely situated complex of buildings that includes the Council chambers, administrative offices and support facilities. The 17,605 square foot facility

was expanded to provide a total of 27,677 square feet in a basement and two above-ground floors. The remodel and expansion of City Hall was completed in June 1996.

### Corporate Yard/Maintenance Facility

In 1995, the City moved its maintenance yard and facilities from the City Hall site to a new location outside city limits, on Varner Road in Thousand Palms. These facilities include a garage of about 4,500 square feet for equipment maintenance and storage, and an office/locker room/lounge building of about 800 square feet. The corporate yard site encompasses about three quarters of an acre. There is room for future expansion to provide showers and locker room facilities as well as space for equipment and vehicles, as the need arises.

### Bus Shelters

The City has taken the lead in raising the design standard for these facilities. Rather than the typical steel, concrete, and Plexiglass shelters that present an industrial look, the City has adopted and implemented design standards based upon the surrounding built environment. Examples of these facilities include shelters at the Michael Wolfson Park and at the Eisenhower Medical Center. Placement of future bus shelters, coordinated with the Sunline Transit Authority, should consider convenience to major employment and shopping centers and other destinations that bus service could best serve.

### Fire Stations

The placement of fire stations is based on a geographic analysis of service area response time and is location sensitive. The City has made a concerted effort to assure the highest level of community protection, while providing facilities that are well designed and integrated into the surrounding built environment. Stations on Highway 111 and Gerald Ford Drive illustrate how highly functional design needs can be met with pleasing and sensitive building design and site planning. Fire and Paramedic services are paid for via a fire tax on parcels in Rancho Mirage.

### U.S. Post Office

The U.S. Post Office, located on Rancho Las Palmas Drive just north of Highway 111, provides a full-service facility utilizing contemporary architectural design standards. This facility encompasses approximately 13,000 square feet and provides all the basic postal services offered in most other facilities, including post office boxes, voter registration, mail boxes, shipping services, and postage stamp sales. The site accommodates outdoor postal vehicle storage and parking areas for customers and employees.

### Streetscape and Traffic Control Facilities

While the City has made significant progress in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines, efforts have also focused on enhancing the appearance of other facilities located in the street rights of way. Specifically, the City has adopted design and paint standards for street lighting fixtures, traffic signals and support standards, and street signs. Efforts continue to better integrate signal control boxes, telephone switching boxes, and other utility service facilities located in parkways.

The City also has established a city-wide assessment district for the installation and maintenance of landscaped median islands on major arterials. The General Fund and License Tax on new construction pays for their installation. This on-going program, in addition to preserving roadway capacity and enhancing traffic safety and operations, is a significant enhancement of the roadway viewshed. These improvements are further discussed in the Community Design Element.

### Future Directions

The City annually prepares a Public Facility Needs Study to serve as the basis for collecting the License Tax on new construction. The license tax is an integrated impact fee (or tax) that partially funds street widening, traffic signals, utility undergrounding, median islands, bikeways, bridges, parks, fire stations, and public art. The tax is imposed at the time of building permit issuance to meet the needs and mitigate the impacts of new development.

The City annually reviews and updates the Public Facilities Needs Study and if necessary adjusts the license tax to maintain consistency with the General Plan and respond to changing development characteristics. Exhibit 31 shows public facilities throughout Rancho Mirage.

### Public Buildings and Facilities Goals, Policies, and Programs

#### GOAL PS&F 10

A coherent, compatible, and aesthetically satisfying integration of public buildings and facilities into the overall planning for Rancho Mirage.

#### POLICY PS&F 10.1

Site public buildings and facilities that house City government to provide functional, aesthetically pleasing, and convenient places for residents and city officials to conduct business.

#### POLICY PS&F 10.2

Coordinate with public utilities and special districts to assure the least intrusive and most compatible integration of related buildings and facilities into the land use pattern in Rancho Mirage.

#### POLICY PS&F 10.3

Conduct the siting of equipment storage and maintenance yards and facilities in a manner that is sensitive to and has a minimum impact on surrounding existing and future land uses.

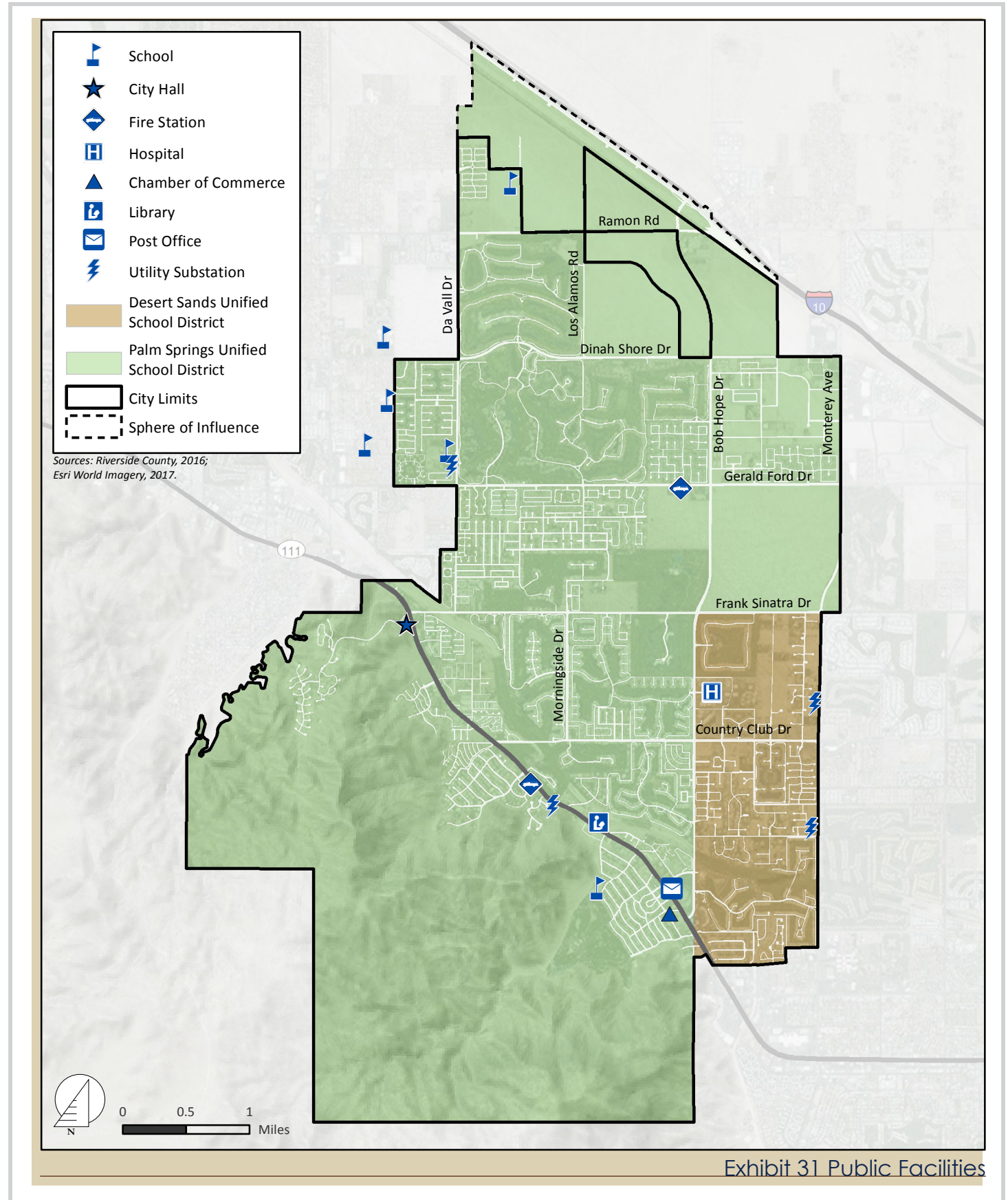


Exhibit 31 Public Facilities

PROGRAM PS&F 10.3A

In updating the Zoning Ordinance, the City shall develop specific design standards and guidelines regulating the siting, location, and screening of utility boxes and facilities.

POLICY PS&F 10.4

The City shall ensure that all public buildings and facilities comply with the same development standards as private development.



Rancho Mirage Fire Station 69.





Rancho Mirage Public Library.

