

**LAND USE ELEMENT**

## LAND USE ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element depicts, in graphic map format, the future anticipated growth areas of the City within the LAFCO approved Sphere of Influence. The Land Use Plan includes those land uses necessary to support a population of 19,500, which is the target population for full implementation of the General Plan in the year 2015.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The nature of land use in the City of Imperial today is linked to Imperial's rural beginnings. Historically, Imperial began as a small, isolated farming community over a century ago. For approximately 100 years, only minimal growth and change occurred. As a result, the community and its development have been relatively stable for many years. However, with the pressure of growth in San Diego and Riverside Counties and the low cost of labor across the border, Imperial could have significant growth pressures brought to bear in the foreseeable future.

### LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

The rural character of Imperial is significantly influenced by the fact that approximately 50 percent of the City is developed in residential units, with a large percentage of the remaining land within the corporate limits being owned by public entities. Much of the industrial land is presently undeveloped and currently in agricultural production. The most dominate features of the City, at present, are the Imperial County Airport, the California Mid-Winter Fairgrounds, and the Imperial Irrigation District general headquarters. In addition, two new single family residential developments have been built within the last three years, the Sunset Ranch subdivision and the Sandalwood Glen subdivision. Several

other major housing subdivisions are in the planning phase. A new commercial/light industrial development was recently approved on the northeast corner of Aten Road and Highway 86. New commercial and light industrial uses (General Dynamics) have also been built on the north side of Aten Road and west of La Brucherie Road in close proximity to the airport.

### Future Land Uses

Future land use changes in Imperial are centered around the development of new commercial uses, both in the City Center Village area and on the existing outskirts of the City adjacent to Highway 86 and Aten Road, the development of a new auto mall, and the continuing development of new industrial uses adjacent to the airport. New residential developments are and will continue to be important in the future, when existing agricultural land is converted to urban uses. The Land Use Plan anticipates the growth of Imperial through the year 2015. The Land Use Plan projects that the Imperial County Airport will continue to be a viable airport facility through the year 2015. However, the plan does not anticipate any expansion or enlargement of the existing airport.

### General Land Use Goals

- A. Land uses should be planned and located to promote and retain the urban/rural residential character of Imperial through continuing to provide urban level services and uses in the developed areas, while providing development direction and growth management for the rural areas of the City. All development should be provided with adequate public services and facilities which promote the character of the area.
  
- B. Appropriate mixes of land uses should be provided to ensure that adequate land is available for needed future development, and to ensure that the City plans for the projected 19,500 population in the year 2015, by encouraging

the production of affordable housing and the creation of new jobs.

## Distribution of Land Uses

### Objective 1

*Land use distribution should be accomplished in a manner that protects the existing urban and rural areas of Imperial while meeting the goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan. The land use distribution should be such, that the integrity of the existing land use is maintained and/or enhanced. Also, the new land uses should be distributed to encourage the development of residential uses at appropriate densities, to implement the quantified objectives for housing construction as contained in the General Plan Housing Element.*

### Policy 1

- A. Appropriate densities shall be established for new development projects, so that they will be compatible with the existing surrounding development.
- B. New urban development shall be adjacent to existing urban development on at least one side. Where questions of adjacency exist, it shall be determined by the City Council upon recommendation of the Planning Commission.
- C. New rural development shall be adjacent to existing rural development on at least one side. Where questions of adjacency exist, it shall be determined by the City Council upon recommendation of the Planning Commission.

- D. Encourage new commercial development at appropriate locations throughout the City, such as at major intersections, where traffic can be adequately accommodated and where residential development would not be desirable due to environmental factors such as noise.
- E. Restrict new residential development to those areas with less than 65 dba noise exposure levels from airport, traffic, rail or stationary noise sources.
- F. Discourage the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses by preventing urban sprawl development patterns.
- G. Establish new commercial areas along the Highway 86 corridor, both north and south of Barioni Boulevard, within the revised Sphere of Influence Planning Area.
- H. Encourage the County of Imperial to construct a new regional airport in an outlying area of the County where environmental impacts from noise will not affect existing urban areas.

### Land Use Compatibility

#### Objective 2

*Land use distribution should create a pattern which organizes land uses in order to maximize compatibility with adjacent land uses.*

## Policy 2

- A. Where land uses conflict, there shall be adequate buffering and/or setbacks required.
- B. The Land Use Compatibility Matrix (Table LU-1) shall be used to determine general levels of compatibility.
- C. In the event a question of compatibility exists between two uses/intensities, the lower intensity use shall take precedent.
- D. The City Council, upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, shall make the final determination in those areas of questionable land use compatibility.

## Public Service Constraints

### Objective 3

*The land use pattern and population of Imperial should be consistent with the capabilities of existing and planned public services and facilities.*

## Policy 3

- A. The number of dwelling units in the City shall be limited to those which can be adequately served by public services or facilities.
- B. The City shall maintain current information concerning the capabilities of the public services and facilities it provides.

- C. The City shall encourage other public service agencies to keep their capacity information current.
- D. Land uses and development review applications that are inconsistent with the capability of any public service agency to provide cost-effective service shall not be approved.
- E. Major extensions of services or utilities to facilitate land use change shall not be approved without a thorough review of all social, economic and environmental factors and appropriate mitigation measures implemented, if necessary.

#### Natural and Man made Hazard Constraints

##### Objective 4

*The distribution of land uses shall consider the health, safety, and welfare of the community in regard to manmade and natural hazards.*

##### Policy 4

- A. Floodways shall be kept free and clear of any structure or other obstructions.
- B. Floodplains, if developed, shall meet Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements.
- C. Public or quasi-public (churches, schools, hospitals) structures shall be located in low-risk seismic or geologic hazard areas appropriately designed to withstand a major seismic event.

- D. New residential land uses shall not be established within the runway protection zones or within the approach zones at a distance closer than one-half mile from the ends of the runways. Existing residential uses shall be allowed to remain within these areas.
- E. Commercial and industrial uses may be established within the approach zones or runway protection zones as allowed by the zoning district regulations, provided that heights shall be restricted to comply with FAA part 77 requirements.
- F. Existing land uses located within the runway protection zones or approach zones may be expanded, or new uses may be established, as permitted for the zone in which the land is located, however, FAA part 77 height restrictions shall be complied with. Residential uses shall comply with policy 4(D) as outlined above.

## Rural Character

### Objective 5

*The rural character of Imperial should be preserved and enhanced through encouraging land uses and development that is consistent and promotes the rural lifestyle and image.*

### Policy 5

- A. Development in outlying agricultural areas should be primarily rural, with residential parcels of one-half acre or larger.

- B. Preservation of prime agricultural land uses should be encouraged.

## Rural Residential

### Objective 6

*Rural residential land uses should be encouraged with one-half acre minimum parcel sizes.*

### Policy 6

- A. Existing rural residential land use areas shall be encouraged to grow within the limits of public service constraints.
- B. One half acre lots should be the minimum parcel size in rural residential areas.
- C. Neighborhood commercial activities may be located on the border of rural residential and urban land use areas.
- D. Lots created as a result of a planned residential development shall not be further subdivided.
- E. Mobile homes certified under the provisions of the National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act may be allowed on permanent foundations in rural residential areas where the mobile homes will be compatible with existing or future single family homes. Standards of placement on lots should be developed as specified in California State Law

(Government Code Section 65852.3).

Single Family Residential

Objective 7

*Low density single family residential land uses should be encouraged for in-fill areas to provide family oriented housing in a wide range of sizes and costs.*

Policy 7

- A. Single family residential land uses are encouraged to be located in in-fill areas adjacent to equivalent densities.
- B. New single family residential projects shall be encouraged to have a variety of housing types and styles.
- C. Manufactured housing units may be allowed in single family residential areas.
- D. Mobile homes certified under the provisions of the National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act may be allowed on permanent foundations in single family residential areas where the mobile homes will be compatible with existing single family homes. Standards for placement on lots should be developed as specified in California State Law (Government Code Section 65852.3).
- E. Lots created as a result of a planned residential development

(PRD) shall not be further subdivided.

### Multiple Family Residential

#### Objective 8

*Multiple family residential developments of varying types and densities are encouraged where compatible with existing land uses and the provision of public services.*

#### Policy 8

- A. Multiple family residential land uses shall be located in areas where compatible with existing land uses and in close proximity to adequate circulation systems, transit availability, commercial areas, and provision of public services and facilities.
- B. Multiple family residential projects should provide sufficient open space to balance the developed areas of the site.
- C. Multiple family residential projects should provide sufficient recreational uses and activities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and pools.
- D. Adequate parking based upon the number of bedrooms in individual units shall be provided.
- E. Adequate access shall be provided onto improved, City maintained roadways that can accommodate the increased project related traffic.

- F. Condominium projects shall be limited to densities not to exceed 30 dwelling units per gross acre. Approval of projects at the maximum density for this category shall be made on the basis of the findings by the Planning Commission and their recommendation to the City Council that the project under consideration meets and exceeds the standards of the General Plan and zone.
- G. Condominium projects shall include enhanced design features such as garages, increased number of parking spaces, and recreational facilities such as pools, spas, and ball courts.
- H. Apartment projects shall be limited to 30 dwelling units per acre excepting provisions for low income housing as noted.

Approval of projects at the maximum density for this category shall be made on the basis of the findings by the Planning Commission and their recommendation to the City Council that the project under consideration meets and exceeds the standards of the General Plan and the zone.

- I. Apartments should be designed to accommodate both families and singles.
- J. Senior citizen apartments in the Multiple Family Residential category may receive a bonus of up to 5 units per gross acre, to a maximum of 35 units per gross acre.

Approval of projects at the maximum density for this category shall be made on the basis of the findings by the Planning

Commission and their recommendation to the City Council that the project under consideration meets and exceeds the standards of the General Plan and the zone.

- K. Multiple family residential complexes may be eligible for a density bonus as a result of providing low and moderate income housing (see Housing Element Program).

### Planned Residential Development

#### Objective 9

*Planned residential developments (PRD), may be developed where design flexibility is desired and/or necessary and for the mitigation of on-site adverse physical conditions.*

#### Policy 9

- A. The density allowed in planned residential development land use areas shall be set by conditional use permit and shall be based upon the density of existing surrounding land uses, site conditions, and the availability of public services.

### Mobile Home Parks

#### Objective 10

*Mobile home parks should be encouraged where compatible with existing land uses and public services to provide alternate housing arrangements.*

Policy 10

- A. Mobile home park land uses should be located in areas with similar existing uses and densities.
- B. Mobile home park land uses shall be located in areas where compatible with existing land uses and in close proximity to circulation systems, transit availability, commercial areas, and the provision of public services and facilities.

Commercial

Objective 11

*Commercial land uses, that are balanced in regard to size, type and distribution of goods with the current and future needs of the City, should be encouraged.*

Policy 11

- A. Imperial Avenue and Main Street should be designated to function as the Village Center and act as the primary commercial area of the City.
- B. Imperial Avenue should be revitalized as the City's primary commercial area based upon the results of the Imperial Community Survey.
- C. The City should initiate and complete an Auto Mall Specific Plan that will address the following issues:

- Market Characteristics
- Circulation
- Site Design and Landscaping
- Redevelopment
- Signage
- Phasing of Improvements
- Lighting
- Noise
- Overall Streetscape
- Parking
- Financing Methods

The primary area of emphasis for development of an auto mall should be along the Highway 86 or Aten Road corridors.

- D. Neighborhood commercial centers should be designated and located in such a way so as to complement and not conflict with adjoining residential areas.
- E. Community commercial land uses that will service the entire community or subregion in which Imperial is located are encouraged in the Village Center adjacent to existing uses of similar intensity.
- F. Service and retail oriented commercial uses such as restaurants, financial institutions, supermarkets, drug stores, discount stores, and highway oriented retail stores should be encouraged along Highway 86 and Aten Road.

## Industrial

### Objective 12

*Industrial land uses that provide a full range of industrial and manufacturing services are encouraged where they are compatible with existing land uses; industrial parks are encouraged with a specific plan of land use or planned development within a master planned community.*

### Policy 12

- A. Industrial uses shall be located so as not to create adverse impacts on surrounding land uses and/or the City circulation system.
- B. Heavy Industrial land uses should be primarily designed for manufacturing, assembly, packaging, processing, fabrication, and storage. Retail sales should be limited to 25 percent of overall floor area. These uses should be located adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks or the Imperial County Airport.
- C. Industrial land uses shall be adequately screened with landscaping and masonry walls to reduce glare, noise, dust, and vibrations.
- D. Noise attenuation measures such as buffer zones or noise attenuation walls shall be used to reduce outside noise levels when existing residential developments are located adjacent to new or existing industrial developments. Outside noise

levels at the property line should be 60 dba CNEL or less.

- E. All outside storage areas shall be completely screened from view.
- F. Light Industrial land uses shall be approved through a conditional use permit process.
- G. The industrial park environment should be well designed and include functional buildings with abundant landscaping.
- H. The types of activities that should be allowed in industrial park developments include: light industrial uses, office and administration facilities, research and development laboratories, warehousing, as well as support commercial services.

#### Airport Land Use

##### Objective 13

*In the event that Airport Management receives a substantial number of complaints regarding increases in noise levels, the City of Imperial may request noise abatement procedures be established and implemented.*

##### Policy 13

- A. The City should work with the Airport Management to encourage and attract compatible users and uses on and around the airport.

- B. Significant changes in land uses on and around the airport should be referred to the Airport Land Use Commission for their action and consideration, if required.

### Land Use and Circulation

#### Objective 14

*Land uses should not overburden the City circulation system.*

#### Policy 14

- A. No land use should be approved that will increase the traffic on a City roadway above the roadway's existing design capacity at service level "C".
- B. The City should continuously monitor the impact and intensity of land uses on circulation systems to ensure that the circulation system is not overburdened.
- C. The land use pattern should encourage the use of public transportation by City residents.

### Agricultural Development

#### Objective 15

*The City should support and promote the continuation of on-going agricultural uses which provide economic return to the City directly or indirectly.*

Policy 15

- A. The City should encourage agricultural production on vacant lands master planned for other land use, as an interim use until development occurs.
- B. The City should periodically evaluate the viability of the economics to continuing the agricultural use.

Regional Land Use Planning

Objective 16

*The City should support and promote the efforts made to provide a reasonable regional land use planning program.*

Policy 16

- A. The City should support and participate in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) regional land use planning programs.
- B. The City should evaluate the impact on regional land use planning when considering major changes to its land use planning program.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

### Objective 17

*The City should encourage the coordination of land use planning programs among the local, regional, state, and federal jurisdictions.*

### Policy 17

- A. The City should evaluate the land use planning programs of neighboring jurisdictions when considering changes to its land use planning program.
- B. The City should notify affected jurisdictions of changes to the City's land use planning programs that may affect them.
- C. The City should cooperate with adjoining jurisdictions through review and comments on changes to land use plans that may affect Imperial.

## Sphere of Influence

### Objective 18

*The City should review its current Sphere of Influence area at appropriate intervals (a minimum of once every two years) to assure that the sphere continues to delineate the logical areas of future City growth.*

### Policy 18

- A. The City Sphere of Influence shall be the logical extension of the areas of future City growth.
- B. The City should work with the Local Agency Formation Commission and the County of Imperial to maintain and establish Sphere of Influence boundaries.
- C. The Sphere of Influence delineation should have physical or topographic boundaries easily discernable on the landscape.
- D. Expansion of the Sphere of Influence boundaries should also take into consideration the logical extension of Imperial's public services such as water, sewer, police protection, fire protection, schools and commercial services.

### Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan for Imperial is one of the most important documents for the control of the direction of development that the City has. It serves as a graphic summary of the General Plan text depicting the provisions of each of the elements and illustrates the arrangement of land uses at full development of the City; referred to as "ultimate build-out". The Land Use Plan does not establish specific time frames for the phasing of future development. Land use policies and the like are fully detailed in the text of the Plan and are applied on a City wide basis.

The Land Use Plan includes several land use categories. These include Residential categories and Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, and Public Facility categories. Public and quasi-public uses such as City Hall, the California Mid-Winter

Fairgrounds, existing parks, the Imperial Irrigation District Headquarters, and existing schools are included in the Public Facility category. Future development areas are designated according to the planned land use for the area.

The City's Land use Plan takes into consideration the airport approach zones, high noise zones, and runway protection zones to ensure adequate protection of the public health and safety, by minimizing the public's exposure to high noise levels and high risk aircraft crash areas. Commercial and industrial uses are planned in high noise areas adjacent to the airport as these uses are generally not as noise sensitive as residential uses or uses such as schools, churches or hospitals.

### Land Use Categories

#### Residential

##### Rural Residential

The Rural residential category is single family residential at 0.5 to 1 dwelling unit per acre. It is intended to permit the continuation of agricultural and farm uses while allowing the development of single family residential units at a very low density.

##### Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential category is a transitional area between the Rural Residential areas and other higher density residential areas. The density of this category is 1 to 2 dwelling units per acre.

### Medium Density Residential

The medium density residential category covers the existing single family residential areas within the current City limits and also includes those new developments with 6,000 square foot or larger lots. The density of this category is 2 to 5 dwelling units per acre.

### Residential Condominium

The Residential Condominium category bridges the housing gap between the Single Family Residential and the Multiple Family Residential categories. This category represents an opportunity for the first time homebuyer or the retired person to enter into the ownership market at a reasonable cost. Units within this category are generally developed as an attached product with densities ranging from 5 to 30 dwelling units per acre.

### Multiple Family Residential

The Multiple Family Residential category represents those areas of the City which are located along high traffic corridors or adjacent to concentrations of commercial or industrial land uses. This category includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and other multiple dwelling unit buildings. This category has a density range from 20 to 30 dwelling units per acre and is generally developed as an attached product.

### Mobile Home Park

The Mobile Home Park category is used to designate specific areas

for the exclusive development of mobile home units within a park environment. Density in this category ranges from 5 to 8 dwelling units per acre.

## Commercial

### Village Commercial

The Village Commercial category represents the portion of the City around Main and Imperial Avenue. The purpose of this designation is to bring the focus of the City back to the center of the community and to reintroduce retail commercial shopping back to Imperial. Standards for development in the Village Commercial area are focused on providing for those uses identified in the Community Survey. Additionally, the standards provide for the provision of pedestrian facilities, consolidation of automobile parking and introduction of landscaping and street furniture.

### Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial category provides for the location of shopping centers approximately ten acres in size, situated at major intersections within residentially planned areas, in order to serve the community with major grocery, drug store and related retail service shopping.

### Auto Mall

The Auto Mall category provides for the development of auto dealerships and related uses in the southern and northern portions

of the City along the State Highway 86 and Aten Road corridors. This category coupled with the designation of the area as a redevelopment project area, along with an aggressive marketing program, will provide needed retail sales tax revenue to the City.

#### Commercial Office

The Commercial Office category is designated along the northerly and southerly portions of the Village Center and at the southwest corner of Aten and Highway 86. In addition to permitting offices within this category, uses such as restaurants, theaters, health clubs and ancillary retail commercial uses are permitted.

#### Industrial

##### General Industrial

The General Industrial category is located around the airport and provides for uses which take advantage of the airport for part of their business. These uses can range from light industrial office parks to research and development, to incubator industrial, to warehousing, to distribution centers. Development in this category is envisioned to be concrete tilt-up construction or block construction. Fabrication, assembly, packaging, processing and storage in conjunction with limited retail is also envisioned in this category.

##### Rail-Served Industrial

The Rail-Served Industrial category represents a continued commitment of the City to the agricultural production of the Imperial

Valley. Currently, there are numerous operations within the City. Additionally, it provides for an opportunity to locate major rail-served industrial users.

#### Agriculture

##### Agriculture

The agriculture category represents a continuing connection with the heritage of the City while also providing a holding area for future development.

#### Public Facility

##### Public Facility

The Public Facility category is for use on all publicly owned property, such as land owned by the City, County, State, and public agencies and/or districts. Uses such as schools, police stations and IID headquarters are included in this category.

# STANDARDS FOR POPULATION DENSITY AND BUILDING INTENSITY

## I. INTRODUCTION

The standards for population density within the Imperial General Plan area are expressed in terms of numbers of persons per acre for each of the residential and agricultural land use categories defined in the General Plan. Some areas within the City will have a greater population density than others. Research has shown that population densities have a direct correlation to the number of dwelling units per acre. In all types of housing, including both single family and multi-family, it was found that the average household size is 3.1 persons per household, according to the 1990 census data for Imperial County. Therefore, when referenced in terms of persons per acre, the following units per acre for each of the residential land use designations can be expressed in terms of persons per acre as outlined below.

## II. STANDARDS FOR POPULATION DENSITY

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Units per Acre</u>	<u>Persons per Acre</u>
A. Rural Residential	.50 to 1.0	2 to 4
B. Low Density Residential	1 to 2	4 to 6
C. Medium Density Residential	2 to 5	6 to 16
D. Residential Condominium	5 to 30	16 to 93
E. Multiple Family Residential	20 to 30	62 to 93
F. Mobile Home Park	5 to 8	16 to 25
G. Agricultural	1 DU per 2.5 acre	1 to 3

As can be seen from the above outlined data, the maximum density of 93 persons per acre would only occur in the multiple family residential area or in the residential condominium area.

### III. STANDARDS FOR BUILDING INTENSITY

The standards for building intensity within the Imperial General Plan area are expressed in terms of the maximum percentage of a lot or parcel that may be covered by buildings and accessory structures, and by the maximum height of buildings and accessory structures allowed within each land use designation as outlined below.

<u>Land Use Designation</u>	<u>Maximum % of Lot Coverage</u>	<u>Maximum Building Height</u>
A. Rural Residential	35%	35 FT
B. Low Density Residential	35%	35 FT
C. Medium Density Residential	50%	35 FT
D. Residential Condominium	50%	35 FT
E. Multiple Family Residential	60%	35 FT
F. Mobile Home Park	55%	35 FT
G. Agricultural	35%	35 FT
H. Village Commercial	40%	35 FT
I. Neighborhood Commercial	60%	35 FT
J. General Commercial	60%	35 FT
K. General Industrial	60%	35 FT
L. Rail Served Industrial	60%	35 FT

Height limits in the vicinity of the Imperial County Airport are restricted by FAA Part 77 requirements.

Table LU-1

**LAND USE COMPATIBILITY MATRIX**

	RURAL RESIDENTIAL	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	PUBLIC FACILITY
RURAL RESIDENTIAL		C	I	P	I	C
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	C		P	P	P	C
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	I	P		C	C	C
COMMERCIAL	P	P	C		C	C
INDUSTRIAL	I	P	C	C		C
PUBLIC FACILITY	C	C	C	C	C	

C = Compatible

I = Incompatible

P = May be found compatible based upon provisions established through a Conditional Use Permit

