

UNIT OF MATERIAL

GENERAL PLAN

THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

INTRODUCTION

The following is a summary of the information contained in the report...

The report was prepared by the District Attorney's Office...

Very truly yours,

The District Attorney

City of Los Angeles
General Plan

CITY OF IMPERIAL
GENERAL PLAN

I. THE GENERAL PLAN: AN OVERVIEW

The General Plan for the City of Imperial has not had a comprehensive revision since 1989. This update deals with the present conditions of the City, the desires for the future and the desire for the City to continue to be a viable place to work, live and recreate. The update changes the basic way in which the General Plan has been used in the past, creating a clear and concise set of goals, objectives and policies for development and growth management.

The City of Imperial General Plan is a legal document of the City, adopted by resolution of the City Council. The recommendations and requirements contained in the Plan are legally binding and the General Plan is required by State law. The General Plan includes provisions for the long-range or general planning of the City, recommends changes that should be made to the zoning ordinance and other ordinances of the City, and includes an environmental impact report.

A. Historic Perspective

In the late 1800's, with the prospect of Colorado River water coming to the Southern California desert, George Chaffey and L.M. Holt planned and organized the Imperial Land Company. For the first town site, they chose a nice level area. Expecting many settlers, the Imperial Land Company plotted and staked out the "to be" town of Imperial. By early 1901, the company was offering lots for sale. Soon after water was supplied, the town started to grow. By 1904, Imperial had reached a population of 700 and the residents had voted to incorporate. On July 12, 1904, Imperial became a City.

Over the years, Imperial has been the home of many "firsts" in the Imperial Valley; the first church, the first school, the first brickyard, and consequently, the home of the first brick building. Due to poor soil, agriculture was not the expected success and the town grew slowly. Yet because of the town's central location, it was and continues to be ideally suited for industry, business and trade.

B. Local Perspective

From a population of 700 in 1904, the City grew to a population of 4,113 in April 1990, according to the U.S. Census.

The population of Imperial has remained fairly constant over the years, creating a tightly knit community. The 1970 census counted a population of 3,094; in 1980, the census showed an increase of 357 people; estimates by the California Department of Finance put the population as of January 1992, at 4,480 people. Based upon a land use scenario of development within the mid-range, the population of Imperial for the planning area is projected to be 19,500 in the year 2015.

The City is located just 13 miles north of the Mexican border and 3 miles north of the county seat in El Centro. Imperial is the home of the 97 acre California Mid-Winter fairgrounds, the 340 acre Imperial County Airport and the headquarters for the Imperial Irrigation District, the largest water district in the Western Hemisphere.

C. Legal Perspective

The City of Imperial is a "legal subdivision" of the State and is required to perform certain actions in response to California law. There is a large body

of legislative law and judicial decisions regarding city planning and environmental quality that require the City of Imperial to prepare and adopt long-range and short-range planning documents. In particular, the City of Imperial is required by State law to adopt and implement a General Plan (California Government Code Section 65300 et. seq.). General Plan law requires the adoption of seven mandatory elements as part of a City General Plan that address the City's plans for future land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, safety and noise. Other legal requirements placed upon the City of Imperial include provisions for a diverse range of housing opportunities, adequate environmental review, and protection of the public health, safety and general welfare.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

Traditionally, many local general plans are fragmented compilations of several planning documents adopted over an extended period of time in response to the ever-changing nature of California Planning Law. This has resulted in internally inconsistent general plans which do not meet the objectives of California Planning Law and the practical goal of comprehensive community planning. In this case, the City of Imperial is updating all of the mandated elements of the General Plan at the same time.

As stated before, the City of Imperial General Plan combines the City's General Plan and Environmental Impact Analysis into a single unified planning effort. This ensures the internal consistency of the Plan through concurrent preparation, review, analysis and adoption. In addition, there is an added benefit to the user of the General Plan, because it reviews and makes recommendations on all relevant planning issues affecting the City of Imperial in the long-range perspective, within the context of the General Plan and Environmental Impact Analysis.

III. THE GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

Part One of the Comprehensive Plan is the City General Plan. State Law mandates that the City of Imperial adopt a General Plan with a minimum of seven mandatory elements. An element is a certain area or issue for community planning. The seven mandatory elements are:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Open Space
- Conservation
- Noise
- Safety

State Law also suggests that a City consider the inclusion of other optional General Plan elements addressing local concerns or issues. The City of Imperial has included three optional elements:

- Parks and Recreation
- Public Facilities
- Airport

Customarily, general plans are comprised of a separate document or chapter for each element. This has often resulted in a fragmented general plan that is difficult to use. The City of Imperial has developed an organizational structure that combines the ten elements into three chapters that are perceived as the basic components of community planning.

IV. THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan of the City of Imperial is a statement of what the present residents desire and see for their community in the future. Its function is to allow the citizens to consciously consider the course their City will take for the foreseeable future and to preserve and enhance those qualities they presently find so appealing.

This General Plan, with the combination of 10 distinct elements, provides the City with the methods and means to determine the direction, scope, type and amount of future growth and development. This plan recognizes the desires of Imperial citizens to retain the rural and urban residential atmosphere and the present quality of life. Its primary goal is to ensure the above, while planning for local commercial needs; parks, recreational facilities, preservation of resources and public facilities, including schools, streets, water and sewer.

The Imperial General Plan accomplishes the above by setting forth broad goals, translating these goals into specific policy statements and specifying implementation measures to accomplish the objectives of the plan.

The Imperial General Plan should be viewed as a blueprint for the future. It is intended to be dynamic in nature and a precursor of change. Its primary purpose is to outline the future, and provide for the controlled growth of Imperial while preserving the best for the people of Imperial.

Except for the State requirement for an annual report to the local legislative body, this document establishes no specific schedule of review simply for the sake of revision. As amendments to the General Plan are needed, such amendments will be considered by future residents and their representatives.

ORGANIZATION

The General Plan is organized into three chapters:

Chapter 1, Community Development

Community Development presents City policies for land use and development. It includes the areas of land use, circulation, housing and public facilities. It establishes policies for the utilization of the City's land resources, the provision of public services and housing opportunities.

Chapter 2, Environmental Management

Environmental Management presents policies for the preservation and use of natural and man-made resources. It includes the areas of land and water resource conservation, open space, and parks and recreation.

Chapter 3, Hazard Management

Hazard Management presents policies for the protection of the public health and safety. It includes the areas of geologic hazards, airport hazards, seismic hazards, and noise. It establishes policies for those aspects of the natural and man-made environment that relate to the long-term health and safety of Imperial's residents.

CITY OF IMPERIAL

LAND USE		HOUSING		COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	
CIRCULATION		PUBLIC FACILITIES			
OPEN SPACE					
CONSERVATION					ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
PARKS & RECREATION					
NOISE	AIRPORT	SAFETY		HAZARD MANAGEMENT	

GENERAL PLAN