



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Murrieta General Plan is a document required by California law that provides a foundation for City policies and actions. It guides both the physical development of Murrieta and the provision of public infrastructure and services.

This General Plan places particular emphasis on economic development and keeps Murrieta in front of current policy topics, including sustainability and health. It is rooted in ten community priorities that were developed through an extensive community involvement process.

1.2 ABOUT THE GENERAL PLAN

GENERAL PLAN TOPICS

California law requires each city and county to have an adopted General Plan. State law specifies that each jurisdiction's General Plan address seven "elements," or topics: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Cities are also allowed to include additional elements on matters of particular importance within that community.

The Murrieta General Plan includes the following chapters:

- **Introduction:** Purpose and contents of the General Plan, its relationship to California law, background on Murrieta, the planning process that was followed for the General Plan Update, and the community priorities that shaped the General Plan goals and policies.
- **Vision:** Context for the General Plan, including major policy initiatives behind the General Plan Update.
- **Land Use Element:** Growth, development, redevelopment, conservation, and preservation. Parameters and desired locations for land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, civic/institutional, parks, and open space are mapped and described.
- **Economic Development Element:** Strength and diversity of the economy, jobs, retail, and revenue for public services.

- **Circulation Element:** Transportation systems within the City that provide for automobile, truck, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian movement.
- **Conservation Element:** Biological resources, cultural resources, energy resources, solid waste reduction, sustainable development, and green building.
- **Recreation and Open Space Element:** Open space and recreation opportunities including natural open spaces, linear open space, trails, and public and private recreation facilities.
- **Air Quality Element:** Air pollution and greenhouse gases.
- **Noise Element:** Noise from various sources, including transportation corridors and commercial areas.
- **Infrastructure Element:** Facilities for water, wastewater, flood control, and drainage.
- **Safety Element:** Natural and manmade hazards including seismic hazards, flood potential, hazardous materials incidents, fire hazards, transportation hazards and crime.
- **Healthy Community Element:** Ensuring a healthy community by addressing such topics as pedestrian and bicycle safety, access to nutritional foods, mental health, physical activity and environmental justice.
- **Housing Element:** The Housing Element was updated in a separate process but is part of the updated General Plan. It addresses local and regional needs for housing.

USE AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The role of each community's General Plan is to act as a constitution for development and the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based. Land use decisions encompass not only zoning, but also circulation, infrastructure, design, open space, and other factors. The Murrieta General Plan is a policy document to assist and guide local decision-makers. The General Plan also identifies land uses and their distribution throughout the City. To be considered consistent with the General Plan, a project must not only be consistent with the Land Use Plan, but it must also further the goals of all elements of the General Plan and must meet the intent of its goals and policies.

The General Plan is to be used by the City Council to make funding and budget recommendations and decisions. City Staff will use the General Plan to regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects to the Planning Commission and City Council. The General Plan will also be used by residents, neighborhood groups, City Council and Commissions, and developers to understand the City's long-range plans, to evaluate land use changes, and to evaluate specific development proposals.



A General Plan is a legal document that must meet specific State requirements for content. The Murrieta General Plan meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in the *California Government Code* Section 65300 et seq. The General Plan is an integrated, internally consistent statement of the official land use policy for the City of Murrieta. The Plan addresses each issue prescribed by State law as it applies to Murrieta. The Plan contains land use and circulation maps. It also contains text that identifies goals, sets forth policies, and identifies implementation strategies.

The *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)* requires all local and State governmental agencies to consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have a discretionary authority. CEQA Statutes (*Public Resources Code* Section 21065) define a project as “an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” Therefore, the City of Murrieta, as the lead agency, was required to prepare and certify an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update.

The General Plan EIR is a public document that assesses the overall environmental effects of the Plan update at a program level of detail and indicates ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage. The Program EIR generally analyzes the broad environmental effects of the General Plan Update, and provides a baseline, or “first tier,” against which future projects implemented under the General Plan 2035 horizon will be evaluated. Where subsequent CEQA documentation is required for a future project, the City must implement the applicable mitigation measures developed in the Program EIR, and focus its analysis on site-specific issues that cannot otherwise be addressed at a program or policy level of analysis.

The Program EIR is to be used as a companion document with the General Plan.

ADMINISTERING THE GENERAL PLAN

It is the intent of the City Council to implement this General Plan by establishing planning goals and policies based on the Plan, developing ordinances and regulations to implement the Plan, and providing the requisite staff resources. The City Council is also aware that its intention to implement this General Plan is based on the availability of funding and that some goals, policies, and programs may take longer to achieve if funds are unavailable.

Once adopted, the General Plan does not remain static. As time goes on, the City may determine that it is necessary to revise portions of the text, amend the land use map, or add policies or programs to reflect changing circumstances or philosophy.

State law provides direction on how cities can maintain the General Plan as a contemporary policy guide: it requires each planning department to report annually to the City Council on “the status of the plan and progress in its implementation” (*Government Code* Section 65400[b]). The City Council may respond to the Development Services Department review by setting goals for the coming year.



AMENDING THE GENERAL PLAN

It is necessary to periodically review, update, and revise the General Plan. State law permits General Plan amendments up to four times per year for each mandatory element (*Government Code* Section 65358[b]). Optional elements are permitted by State law (*Government Code* Section 65303), and once adopted, the optional elements carry the same legal weight as the seven mandated elements.

1.3 ABOUT MURRIETA

SETTING

The City of Murrieta is located in southwestern Riverside County, between the Santa Ana Mountains and San Jacinto Mountains, where the I-15 and I-215 Freeways meet. This scenic area with creeks, hot springs, and rolling hills has been the site of various settlements dating back to prehistoric times, and Murrieta's downtown reflects the history of the town site that was established in 1884. Incorporated in 1991 with a population of approximately 24,000, Murrieta is now home to over 100,000 people.

Surrounding communities include Menifee, Temecula, Wildomar, and unincorporated Riverside County; refer to *Exhibit 1-1, Regional Location Map*. The San Diego County border is just south of Temecula, and Orange County lies on the other side of the Santa Ana Mountains to the west.

Murrieta's "crossroads" location has made it possible for many people to live here and enjoy affordable housing, excellent schools, and "small town feeling" lifestyle while commuting to jobs elsewhere. Originally founded as a stop along the California Southern Railway, the City looks forward to an extension of the Metrolink commuter line from Corona or Perris into southwest Riverside County, and to a potential station for California's High Speed Rail that has been proposed in the vicinity of the I-15/I-215 junction.

LANDSCAPE

The City's Corporate Boundary and Sphere of Influence comprises 41.96 square miles, of which 33.61 square miles is located within the City Limits. The average elevation within the City is approximately 1,110 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

Murrieta sits below the Santa Rosa Plateau of the Santa Ana Mountains. The Hogbacks Ridge runs through the northeastern part of the City. Other mountain ranges are visible in the distance: the San Jacinto Mountains to the east, and the Santa Margarita and Agua Tibia ranges to the south.

The two main creeks and their tributaries flowing through Murrieta are Murrieta Creek in the western portion and Warm Springs Creek to the east. Open space lines these waterways. Murrieta Hot Springs Road got its name from mineral-rich springs that once attracted travelers who sought their healing properties.



For most of the twentieth century, Murrieta was most notable for dry farming and producing grain and other agricultural products. In the 1960s, the area was known for the breeding of fine racehorses. This heritage is still reflected in the large-lot rural areas near the base of the Santa Ana Mountains and along Los Alamos Road, and in the remaining agricultural land.

By 2009, approximately one-third of the land within Murrieta's City limits was developed with residential uses. Commercial centers and business parks are located along the freeways and major streets, while industrial uses are found in the South Murrieta Business Corridor and west side of the City. Murrieta is still growing, with just over one-third of the land considered to be vacant.

HISTORY

Paleo-Indian Period. Archaeological research and tribal oral traditions in the Murrieta-Temecula area suggests that prehistoric occupation of the valley dates back thousands of years. There are a number of long-term village complexes and habitation sites located in Murrieta, which are valuable resources. The remnants of early villages as well as the local art and ethnographic accounts provide an important record of Murrieta's early occupation by Native Americans.¹

Late Period. It is generally assumed that the Late Period began approximately AD 500 to 750, and its termination is widely accepted as AD 1769, the date of the beginning of permanent European occupation of California. The Luiseno Peoples occupied the Murrieta-Temecula area and called themselves Payomkawichum before the influx of European settlers and the Mission Period. There are also many Luiseno place names within the Murrieta area. Several village complexes were located within the City's boundaries; one that has been definitively identified by the Tribe is Qengva, which is in the southwest part of Murrieta. To the north of Qengva is 'avaa'ax, referring to the cottonwood trees along Murrieta Creek. To the east is the "The Owls' Nest" or Muula Putee, which is located on what residents know as the Hogbacks in the Los Alamos area. Flowing beside these prominent hills to the south is the Santa Gertrudis River or Totpa, a very important water source.²

Spanish and Mexican Periods. Both the San Luis Rey and the San Juan Capistrano Missions claimed the territory for cattle raising and used local vaqueros to manage their cattle herds. They likely used Los Alamos Road to travel from the Alamos grasslands to the missions. Soon after Spain lost control of Mexico and the missions closed, the entire Murrieta area was divided among three land grants: Rancho Temecula, San Jacinto Rancho, and Rancho Santa Rosa.³

American Period. As travel along the Santa Fe Trail and Southern Emigrant trails during the early American Period brought more settlers, settlement occurred along the Santa Ana and San Jacinto waterways. The Southern Pacific Railroad line from Los Angeles through the San Geronimo Pass was completed in 1876. In 1883, the California Southern Railway allowed for

¹ City of Murrieta *General Plan*, June 21, 1994.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



travel through the Cajon Pass and down to San Diego through what is now western Riverside County.

By the late 1880s and early 1890s, there was growing discontent between Riverside and San Bernardino, its neighbor 10 miles to the north. After a series of instances in which charges were claimed about unfair use of tax monies to the benefit of the City of San Bernardino only, several people from Riverside decided to investigate the possibility of a new county. Joined by San Diego County residents in the Temecula and San Jacinto Valleys and the desert region who were tired of living so far from their county seat, they petitioned the State legislature, held an election, and on May 9, 1893 formed Riverside County.

Further developments in Riverside County included Banning and Beaumont in the San Geronimo Pass; Hemet south of San Jacinto; Moreno Valley east of Riverside; Perris, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta and Temecula along the California Southern Railroad; Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Indio and Coachella along the Southern Pacific route to Yuma; and Blythe on the Colorado River. The trains were used to transport settlers into the area, creating a period of agricultural and land development. Transportation, agriculture, and the control of water have continued to be central themes in the settlement, development, and growth of Riverside County.⁴

The Murrieta area was originally included in Mission San Luis Rey's lands as part of Rancho Temecula. After secularization, other ranchos were carved from Rancho Temecula, including the Pauba, La Laguna, and Little Temecula Ranchos. By the mid-19th century, Murrieta's land area was bisected by the Southern Emigrant Trail, which ran through western Riverside County in a similar alignment to the current I-15 Freeway. The trail, which also served as the route of the Butterfield Overland Stage, went through a major stop called "Alamos," the Spanish word for cottonwoods, located near the present-day intersection of Cherry and Jefferson Avenues in Murrieta. Another branch of the Southern Emigrant Trail veered northward from Temecula to Box Springs near present-day Moreno Valley, roughly following the present-day route of I-215 Freeway.⁵

The City of Murrieta was named after Don Juan Murrieta, a Spaniard who originally settled in the Merced region of the San Joaquin Valley. Don Juan Murrieta eventually drove his herds of sheep southward to southern California, and after bringing 100,000 sheep to southwestern Riverside County (along with several business partners), purchased 52,000 acres of the Temecula and Pauba ranchos from Vincent de Laveaga of San Francisco in 1873. Juan and his brother Ezekiel Murrieta deeded a right-of-way to the California Southern Railway in 1882 and soon thereafter announced their plans to subdivide a town called "Murrietaville" along the railroad.^{6,7}

⁴ Robinson, W.W. 1979. *Land in California*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

⁵ Lech, Steve. 2004. *Along Old Roads. A History of the Portion of Southern California that Became Riverside County, 1772–1893*. Published by the Author.

⁶ Garrison, Arlean V. 1963. *My Children's Home—A History of Murrieta, California*. Published by the author.

⁷ Ibid 4.



In 1884, before they could make their plans a reality, the Murrieta brothers were bought out by the Temecula Land and Water Company, which immediately subdivided a portion of its new holdings. The subdivided lands included 14,500 lots that were generally 40 acres in size, as well as some larger tracts ranging from 200 to 4,000 acres each for large-scale agriculture.⁸ At the heart of the subdivision was the Murrieta town site, which consisted of 160 acres divided into 537 lots near the railroad depot. The original grid layout of streets included Kalmia, Juniper, and Ivy Streets which ran northeast to southwest; and Washington, Clay, and Hayes Streets, which ran northwest to southeast. The town increased rapidly during the boom years that affected many railroad-adjacent towns in southern California in the late 1880s.⁹

By 1886, the town included a post office, depot, large hotel, restaurant, two general stores, a hardware and furniture store, school, livery stable, lumber yard, butcher shop, laundry, blacksmith shop, church, newspaper called *The Era*, and two physicians. By 1890, the town had a population of 800.¹⁰ When Riverside County was formed in 1893, Murrieta was designated one of 12 original judicial townships and the 40th election precinct.¹¹



Washington Avenue, 1917. Credit: E. Hale Curran Collection.

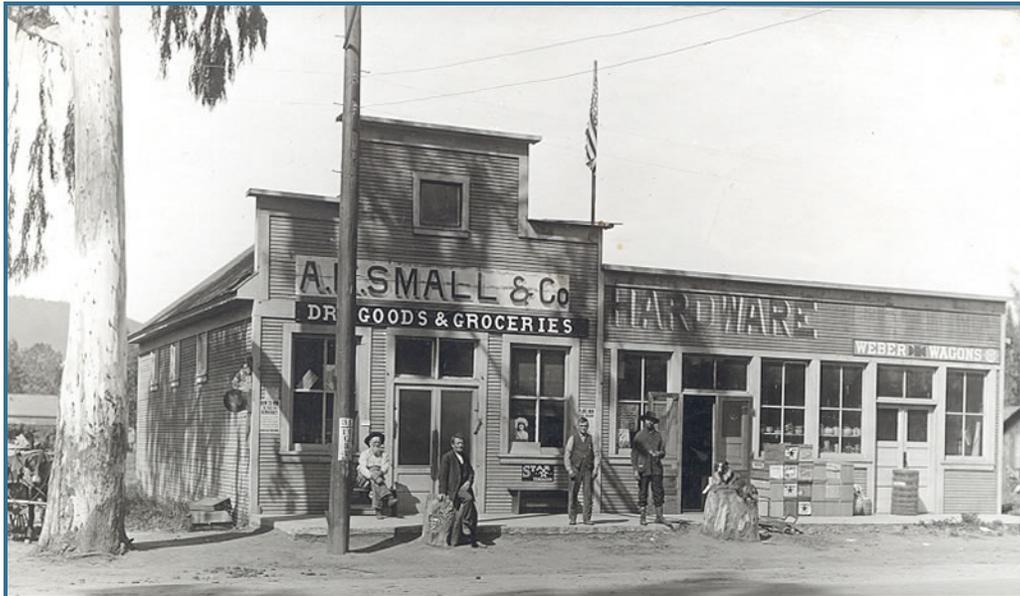
⁸ Ibid 6.

⁹ Ibid 5.

¹⁰ Ibid 6.

¹¹ Gunther, Jane Davies. 1984. *Riverside County, California, Place Names: Their Origins and Their Stories*. Rubidoux Printing Co., Riverside, California.





Washington Avenue, 1917. From left to right, H.C. Thompson, A.K. Small, Dr. Sturgis, and Harry Thompson.

This building still stands, although the façade has changed over the years. Credit: E. Hale Curran Collection.

The Santa Fe Railroad acquired California Southern Railway after a wet winter in 1883–1884 ruined a large stretch of their newly-created railway through the Temecula Valley. The connection was reconstructed; however, their purchase was not financially profitable. After they completed a line through the San Jacinto Valley, the California Southern alignment became somewhat redundant as well. In 1891, after a wet winter flooded and washed out the California Southern tracks in Temecula Valley, Santa Fe drastically curtailed rail service through Murrieta. Murrieta became the end of a rail spur from Corona and not a stop along any major thoroughfare.¹² This, in addition to the broader southern California real-estate bust in the 1890s, dampened Murrieta’s growth as a town. After a short-lived attempt in the 1890s to attract “gentleman planters” to the area with an irrigation district aimed at supporting widespread groves of deciduous fruits, the area settled into a more bucolic existence.¹³ Daily train service continued into Murrieta until 1935, after automobile use had become a well-established alternative to train travel in southern California.¹⁴

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid 5.

¹⁴ Ibid 6.





Murrieta Depot, 1898. Standing in front are Depot Agent O.W. Miller and his daughter Evelyn.
Credit: E. Hale Curran Collection.

After the close of the rail line in 1935, the land boom ended. By 1947, the town had an estimated population of 1,200. In that same year, the Murrieta Fire Protection District was formed. Civic accomplishments in the 1950s included a new town hall (1956) and the formation of the Murrieta Valley Chamber of Commerce (1959). In the 1960s, the area became known for the breeding of fine racehorses.

From the 1890s through the late 20th century, Murrieta's land use and local economy was largely based on dry-farming grains (barley, wheat, and oats), and Murrieta's identity was influenced by established farms of vast rolling fields of seasonal grasses. Murrieta was largely a town consisting of grain farmers who drove huge teams of horses pulling combine harvesters over the fields of the Antelope Valley, the Santa Rosa Plateau, and the Alamos district. Murrieta farmers also grew potatoes, alfalfa, vegetables, and grape vineyards, as well as orchards of olive, cherry, pear, apple, fig, and nectarine trees.¹⁵

¹⁵ Alter, Ruth C., Kathleen A. Crawford, and Scott A. Moomjian. 2004. Murrieta Historical Resources Inventory Update. Prepared for the City of Murrieta by Archaeos, May 2004.





Built in 1918, the grain elevator is pictured here in 1958. It was operating until 1983 and still stands, west of downtown. Credit: E. Hale Curran Collection.

One exception to the community's dominant agricultural identity was the regionally-popular Murrieta Hot Springs. Located along present Murrieta Hot Springs Road just east of I-215, the mineral-rich springs have been used by people for thousands of years. The Luiseño called the springs Cherukanukna Hakiwuna and their extensive use of the springs is reflected in the numerous habitation sites and artifacts identified nearby. Visitors in the late 19th century determined that the springs had healing properties, and Murrieta Hot Springs became part of a rapidly growing network of Southern California destinations for health-seekers. In 1887, a Pasadena syndicate bought the hot springs, along with over a thousand acres of land. After several years of new owners, Murrieta Hot Springs was purchased by Fritz Guenther in 1902. It prospered under the family's ownership for nearly 70 years, expanding from 200 acres of ranch land and a few decrepit buildings into over 500 acres of prime resort spa, complete with



bathhouses, tiled pools, hotels, great halls, stables, gardens, and hiking trails; however, by 1969, profits declined due to laws prohibiting gambling, and affordable air travel enticed families to take their vacations elsewhere. Murrieta Hot Springs was sold again, continuing its decline over the years until the spa was closed in 1990 and the resort was auctioned off.¹⁶ Since that time, the Murrieta Hot Springs have been acquired by the Calvary Chapel Bible College, who has been restoring many of the buildings to their former glory.

City Incorporation. Renewed residential growth in Murrieta began in the 1980s with the improvement of I-15 and I-215 Freeways and subsequent migration of thousands of San Diego and Orange County residents' farther inland in search of affordable suburban housing. The 1980 Census recorded approximately 2,200 residents in Murrieta; however, by 1990, the population had soared to over 24,000 residents. This rapid residential growth between 1980 and 1990 led Murrieta to incorporate as a general law City in 1991.

Following incorporation, Murrieta started its own police department and took control of the 46-year-old Fire Protection District. The first Murrieta General Plan was adopted in 1994. The City of Murrieta established its own public library in 1998 and built a larger facility for it in 2007 in Town Square, a 34-acre site on the edge of downtown where Murrieta's City Hall, Police Department, Fire Department, Senior Center, and Library encircle a town green and amphitheater. The first building completed in Town Square was the Police Department, in 2002. Murrieta's first park intended to serve the entire City soon started taking shape, with the first phase of Los Alamos Hills Sports Park completed in 2006.

Murrieta's residential growth continued to increase the population, to approximately 44,280 people in 2000 and 85,000 in 2005. As of 2009, the City's population is estimated to be 100,714.¹⁷

PEOPLE

As described above, the City of Murrieta's total population has approximately quadrupled in size since its incorporation, from 24,334 in 1992 to 100,714 in 2009.

The largest age group for the City of Murrieta is the mature working age population of people from 35 to 64 years of age. According to 2006-2008 American Community Survey estimates, this age group comprised about 35 percent of the total population in the City. Children made up the second largest age group, with about 31 percent of Murrieta's population under 18. Residents from 18 to 34 years old made up about 25 percent of the population, representing the entry level and less experienced working age population. Older adults over 65 years old made up the smallest age group for the City of Murrieta at approximately 9 percent in 2008.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ California Department of Finance, 2009.



The 2006-2008 American Community Survey estimated that over one-quarter of the people in Murrieta identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, of any race. Of the remaining population, over one-half of the residents were White, between 5 and 10 percent were Asian, and 4 to 6 percent identified themselves as Black or African American. Census 2010 will provide more exact information on the age and ethnicity of Murrieta residents.

ECONOMY

In 2009, employment opportunities in Murrieta are primarily driven by local household demand for products and services. The largest employment sectors are retail trade, with large employers such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot; local government, which includes schools and the City of Murrieta; and health care, including Southwest Healthcare. Together, such local-serving businesses provide nearly 78 percent of the jobs in Murrieta in 2008.¹⁸

The remaining 22 percent of jobs in Murrieta are export-base, meaning that their products or services are demanded outside Murrieta at the regional level or beyond. This type of business brings outside dollars into the community. Large employers in this sector include American Industrial Manufacturing Service and Cryoquip, Inc.

Murrieta has an educated, skilled labor force that is not accommodated by local jobs. Instead, 87 percent of the local labor force commutes outside of Murrieta to work.¹⁹ This mismatch presents an opportunity to develop Murrieta's economic base by promoting economic diversification, particularly within the manufacturing, professional, scientific and technical, information and finance, and insurance sectors.

Economic Catalysts

A look at the surrounding regional economy indicates that Murrieta has the potential to attract firms that offer higher skilled jobs — especially due to its educated and skilled resident labor force, land use development opportunities, existing regional freeway accessibility, and plans for future transit.

Building on an existing strength, Murrieta is seeking to offer more opportunities for higher education closer to home. An extension facility of Azusa Pacific University is already located in Murrieta, and extension facilities of other institutions are found in neighboring cities. A satellite campus for California State University (CSU) San Marcos opened in Temecula through a cooperative effort by the City of Murrieta, City of Temecula, and Temecula Valley Unified School District, in which Murrieta provided a grant for tenant improvements. This cooperative effort brought the first four-year California State University to the Temecula Valley. In December 2008, the Murrieta City Council approved an 11.5-acre project called the Murrieta Education Center that is envisioned to accommodate satellite facilities for several colleges as well as a workforce development center. Located in the South Murrieta Business Corridor, the complex

¹⁸ Source: Stanley R. Hoffman Associates.

¹⁹ Ibid.



will house these facilities in two five-story buildings, with complementary retail planned for another building.

The opening of Loma Linda University Medical Center-Murrieta in 2011 is another economic catalyst as it expands the existing health care cluster. This teaching hospital will be poised for development that complements the facility.

A high-speed rail station in Murrieta, if constructed, would become a major catalyst for growth. Such a station is tentatively planned near the I-15/I-215 interchange.

1.4 2011 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INPUT

In August 2009, the City entered into a contract with RBF Consulting to undertake a comprehensive General Plan Update, which culminated in the 2011 General Plan.

UNDERSTANDING MURRIETA

In this initial phase, the General Plan Team reviewed existing plans and studies, conducted site visits, and collected new data needed for the General Plan.

VISIONING PROCESS

The first phase of community participation in the General Plan Update was called “visioning” because it asked the community to help define a vision of what Murrieta should be in the future. Participation opportunities included workshops and surveys, as described below. The input received from the community through these various opportunities shaped the community priorities that are described in the Vision Chapter, and which were originally presented in the Community Vision Report.

Outreach

In January 2010, the City of Murrieta kicked off an outreach campaign to raise public awareness of the General Plan Update process and opportunities to participate. Early outreach efforts included “information centers” at City Hall and the Library, presentations to business groups, and staffed tables at local retailers (Wal-Mart) and the City’s Recreation Expo. Outreach continued throughout the process with updates to the project website, press releases, and email newsletters.



Online Survey



Residents were invited to participate in an online survey from January 8 to February 8, 2010 and describe what about Murrieta they wanted to stay the same, the challenges they felt Murrieta needs to overcome, and their hopes for Murrieta's future (Treasures, Challenges, and Visions). There were 94 responses to the visioning survey.

Workshops

Visioning workshops began with the same questions as the survey, asking for ideas on Treasures, Challenges, and Visions. Participants then worked in groups to provide further direction on the popular topics. Students at Vista Murrieta High School participated in a youth visioning workshop which engaged 48 students from grades 9-12 on January 22, 2010 and led students to create vision statements for Murrieta. This was followed by two workshops for the community at large, held at Murrieta Mesa High School on the evening of Thursday, January 28, 2010 and duplicated on the morning of Saturday, January 30, 2010. Over 60 people participated in these community workshops, suggesting objectives and action steps for several topics.



A visioning workshop was held for the rural Los Alamos area on April 13, 2010. Approximately 50 participants did a Treasures, Challenges, Visions exercise and then worked in groups to write vision statements for the Los Alamos area.

Feedback on Community Priorities

A summary of the initial visioning input was placed online and provided a detailed description of participation in the survey and workshops. In that summary, the General Plan Team distilled all input into several "community priorities" for the future of Murrieta. The public was then asked to provide feedback on these community priorities through a second online survey and a room-wide polling exercise at the land use workshop on March 27, 2010.

A *Community Vision Report* presented the ten final community priorities, a summary of visioning activities, and verbatim input from the community. The report was posted on the General Plan Update website in August 2010.



LAND USE DIRECTION

The next major phase in the planning process considered and analyzed different scenarios for land use change, with many opportunities for community input.

Before commencing work on the General Plan Update, the City Council decided on four “Focus Areas” that were targeted for land use change:

- North Murrieta Business Corridor
- Clinton Keith/Mitchell Area
- Golden Triangle North (Central Murrieta)
- South Murrieta Business Corridor

These areas included key locations along freeway corridors that are suitable for major land development and redevelopment to carry out the City Council’s economic development strategy. It also included rural residential areas north of Clinton Keith Road that are adjacent to major new development along I-215.

Through the General Plan Update process, three additional areas were identified:

- Multiple Use 3 (MU-3) – Land Use Change
- Historic Murrieta Specific Plan – Policy Input
- Los Alamos Hills – Policy Input

Community Workshops

The General Plan Team sought input on land use changes in five Focus Areas from local residents, property owners, and other stakeholders by holding a series of land use workshops from March to June 2010. A community workshop was held on March 27, 2010 in which participants worked in groups to provide general direction on land use in the five Focus Areas.



Local meetings were held in each of the Focus Areas to discuss land use in those areas. Formats of these meetings were tailored to the needs for each area. Generally, the first meeting for each area asked participants for open-ended input on land use, and a follow-up meeting presented land use alternatives for additional feedback. These meetings were held as follows:

- North Murrieta Business Corridor – March 23 and June 2, 2010
- Clinton Keith/Mitchell – March 25 and June 8, 2010
- South Murrieta Business Corridor – March 29, 2010
- Multiple Use 3 (MU-3) Area – April 22 and June 7, 2010
- Golden Triangle North – May 3 and June 10, 2010



The input received at those meetings, and submitted in writing, was summarized in the *Land Use Summary Report: Community Workshop and Land Use Area Meetings*, which was posted on the General Plan Update website in June 2010.

City Council and Planning Commission Workshops

Joint meetings of the City Council and Planning Commission were held on June 23, 2010 and July 6, 2010, so these officials could review a series of land use alternatives for five Focus Areas and provide direction to City Staff and the General Plan Team on a Recommended Land Use Alternative.

GOALS AND POLICIES / GENERAL PLAN DRAFTS

“Goals for a Healthy Murrieta” Workshop

A public workshop on October 21, 2010 had the dual purpose of obtaining direction on General Plan Update goals and hearing ideas on how Murrieta can be a healthy community. A brief presentation at the beginning of the workshop reviewed the purpose and progress of the General Plan Update. The presentation then described the relationships between the built environment and health, and provided information on health in Murrieta. Groups of participants were asked to write goals that could help the City to achieve the Community Priorities derived in the visioning process, and to suggest ways to promote health while pursuing those goals.

City Council and Planning Commission Workshops

Two joint workshops of the City Council and Planning Commission were held on November 30, 2010 and January 11, 2011 to provide a preview of the major features of the updated General Plan, in anticipation of the release of the public review draft. Presentations at these workshops reviewed some of the draft goals and policies, and introduced the concept of separating the land use map from the zoning map. Public comments were received at both workshops.

1.5 2020 FOCUSED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INPUT

In 2019, the City contracted with RICK Engineering to prepare a Focused General Plan Update. Major components of the 2020 Focused General Plan Update include:

- Additions, deletions, or modifications to the 2011 General Plan goals, policies, exhibits and implementation to address changes in State law enacted since the adoption of the 2011 General Plan.
- Update of General Plan development projections to the year 2035.



- Update of the Land Use Element with a new land use designation (Innovation) and a revised mix and location of land use designations in six key areas.
- Revisions/streamlining of focus area goals, policies, text, and exhibits

New policy issues that are addressed in the 2020 Focused General Plan Update include:

- Wildfire Risks and Preparation (SB 1249),
- Climate Adaptation and Resiliency (SB 379),
- Transitions to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis away from Level of Service (LOS) (SB 743), and
- Environmental Justice (SB 1000).

The first public workshop (Workshop #1) was held at the Multi-Purpose Room, Vista Murrieta High School, 28251 Clinton Keith Road, Murrieta on November 17, 2018 (10 am – 1 pm).

Workshop #1 presented information on key topics including:

- Project Overview
- Land Use Planning Program
- Changes in State Law since 2011
- Climate Change
- Circulation
- Water Resources

Workshop #1 afforded opportunities for members of the public to speak with the Project Team and to provide input on the various topics presented at the workshop. Approximately 60 individuals attended workshop #1 and a great deal of feedback was received.

Members of the Project Team and City staff also provided a tent at the City's annual Festival of Trees celebration on December 1, 2018 (5 pm – 7 pm) in order to reach out to the community and discuss the Project. The Project Team presented the same materials that were included at Workshop #1 to interested members of the public that stopped by the tent.

During November and December 2018, 31 surveys were received from property owners and/or members of the public which helped the Project Team and City staff to prepare the land use plan for the following public workshop in March 2019.

The second public workshop (Workshop #2) was held at the City of Murrieta Senior Center 5 Town Square, Murrieta on Saturday, March 16, 2019 (10:00am – 1:00pm). Workshop #2 presented information on key topics including:

- Project Overview
- Project Updates on the General Plan
- The Draft General Plan Land Use Policy Map 2035
- The Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)



During Workshop #2, the Project team and City staff gave project updates, presented the draft land use plan and collected feedback from the community. Approximately 50 people attended the workshop.

1.6 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The ten community priorities below describe the vision that members of the public provided for the future of their community during the preparation of the 2011 General Plan. The priorities guided the goals and policies in the 2011 General Plan and the 2020 Update.

- **Sustainable Economy.** Pursue economic vitality and longevity by attracting higher education and growing a base of clean industry, while maintaining the current housing affordability.
- **Transportation.** Improve roadway networks to reduce traffic, and provide a citywide system of bicycle lanes and recreational trails that improve accessibility without a car.
- **Infrastructure and Services.** Improve health care within the City, and continue to provide excellent school, police, fire, library, and recreation services.
- **Community Character.** Protect and foster a strong sense of community and safety, as well as the “small town” feeling.
- **Governance.** Promote community involvement and provide for a fiscally sound future.
- **Recreation and Culture.** Provide abundant parks and facilities for recreational activities, and cultural amenities.
- **Natural Environment.** Protect the natural beauty of the mountains, hills, and waterways.
- **Historic Downtown Murrieta.** Create a vibrant, prosperous Historic Downtown that serves as a community center and provides a variety of quality shopping and dining experiences.
- **Youth Amenities.** Provide ample activities for all ages of youth, and jobs for teens.
- **Rural Areas.** Preserve elements of Murrieta’s rural heritage.



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Pursue economic vitality and longevity by attracting higher education and growing a base of clean industry, while maintaining the current housing affordability.

Community members expressed a desire for economic development that would lead to more jobs—including high-paying jobs and jobs for teens—and fully occupied retail centers. Participants hoped to see development in Central Murrieta. They noticed local signs of the economic downturn, expressing concerns about commercial vacancies, foreclosures, and lower housing values. However, participants also considered the affordability of housing in Murrieta to be an asset.

To stimulate economic development, workshop groups suggested providing higher education, infrastructure, and incentives, as well as promoting downtown. One group felt that high-speed rail could provide an opportunity. Another group suggested constructing office buildings for large employers. Some areas of growth the groups identified were medical and bio-tech industries, “green” businesses, mixed use, and hotels. Hotel locations were suggested near the Loma Linda University Medical Center and in Central Murrieta, north of Murrieta Hot Springs Road between the 1-15 and 1-215 Freeways. Participants saw opportunities for Murrieta due to assets such as freeway access and an educated workforce.

Participants recognized the role of the City and the General Plan in directing land use and growth. They expressed the need to manage growth in order to provide adequate infrastructure and services, or to preserve certain qualities of the community that they value.

TRANSPORTATION

Improve roadway networks to reduce traffic, and provide a City-wide system of bicycle lanes and recreational trails that improve accessibility without a car.

Transportation systems are important to Murrieta residents to help them reach other regional destinations and to travel within the city. Participants said that Murrieta was conveniently located, but many would rather be able to work, shop, dine, and recreate in Murrieta instead of driving out of town.

Time spent in the car is clearly an issue for Murrieta residents, with many participants citing traffic as a concern — both on local streets and at freeway interchanges. Even teens brought up traffic as a challenge for the community. As individuals and in groups, participants suggested more connections for Clinton Keith, Diaz, Winchester, Washington, and Ynez, as well as more freeway overpasses and north/south connectivity to Temecula. Participants asked for more roads to be paved.



Community members also hoped to see a City-wide system of bicycle lanes. They sought recreational trails (including equestrian trails) that connect parks and open space, hoping that they could access these amenities without needing to drive. As discussed in the Natural Environment section above, a workshop group proposed a park with trails along the Murrieta Creek from Wildomar to Temecula. Another group echoed this group’s suggestion of linking trails to Historic Downtown.

Groups discussing transportation also suggested developing other modes of transportation: Safe Routes to School, wheelchair-accessible connectivity, a trolley, golf carts in Historic Downtown, improved bus service, and rail connections to San Diego and Orange County.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Improve health care within the City, and continue to provide excellent school, police, fire, library and recreation services.

Many participants considered Murrieta’s school system to be a community treasure, and hoped it would continue to be strong in the future. They also valued the police and fire departments, recreation services, library, and senior center.

Health care was a concern — in particular, hospital services — and participants looked forward to the new Loma Linda University Medical Center. Participants desired more opportunities for higher education. They made suggestions for infrastructure, including facilities for water, sewer, and stormwater. Services suggested by participants included services for the homeless or near-homeless, and animal shelters.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Protect and foster a strong sense of community and safety, as well as the “small town” feeling.

Community members described Murrieta as safe, and placed importance on keeping it that way. Participants felt that Murrieta was great for families and wanted the community to be a safe, healthy environment for children in the future. Teens strongly valued the safety and sense of community they felt in Murrieta.

Residents expressed that Murrieta had a “small town” feel and sense of community. They valued community events and considered other people in Murrieta to be an asset.

Participants, including teens, referred to Murrieta as “clean,” adding suggestions for more trees or landscaping, and image improvement. Participants expressed a desire for Murrieta to have a distinct identity.



GOVERNANCE

Promote community involvement and provide for a fiscally sound future.

Participants valued the opportunity to be involved in their community, including the General Plan Update workshops. They expressed concern about interference in Murrieta from special interests or excessive regulation from higher levels of government. Participants hoped for a fiscally sound future for Murrieta. They wanted leaders with vision, a responsive local government, communication with residents, and coordination with neighboring communities.

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Provide abundant parks and facilities for recreational activities, and cultural amenities.

Many comments related to recreation and culture. Community members value parks and outdoor activities. Suggestions for additional recreational facilities included a dog park, aquatic facility, and a skating rink. One workshop group suggested building a campground and also suggested that volunteers could contribute to recreation, for instance through an “adopt a trail” program.

Participants expressed a need for more dining and night life in Murrieta. Others hoped for more arts and culture events and facilities, such as a concert hall. One workshop group wanted to see cultural amenities that would attract residents aged 18-30.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protect the natural beauty of the mountains, hills, and waterways.

Community members value the natural beauty and clean air of Murrieta. Mountains, hills, and waterways were listed as treasures, with several calling out the Santa Rosa Plateau in particular. Participants cited open space as a treasure, and participants including youth expressed that natural areas should be retained in the future.

Participants identified that preservation would need to be balanced with development and the need to prevent flooding around waterways. Participants also identified property rights as a concern as it relates to preservation.

A workshop group that focused on open space and trails cited several benefits of quality of life, property values, sense of community, recreation, and wildlife preservation. This group suggested that connections between open space should be designed to work for people as well as for wildlife, and proposed a park with trails along the river from Wildomar to Temecula; they also suggested removing cement from the riverbed to allow groundwater recharge.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MURRIETA



Create a vibrant, prosperous Historic Downtown that serves as a community center and provides a variety of quality shopping and dining experiences.

Participants placed importance on Murrieta’s historic downtown and Town Center, describing their envisioned downtown as “magical,” “bustling,” “prosperous,” and “vibrant.”

YOUTH AMENITIES

Provide ample activities for all ages of youth, and jobs for teens.

The General Plan Update Team heard directly from youth at Vista Murrieta High School, in a workshop attended by 48 students. These teens valued the schools, parks, programs and activities available in Murrieta, but felt a great need for more options in recreation, night life, and shopping. Teens wanted activities that they could do with their families, as well as with their friends. They also wanted more jobs, and opportunities to be involved in the community.

Teen participants suggested a teen night club, while a group of younger workshop participants asked for a pre-teen dance club. Another popular youth suggestion was a recreation/teen center. Teens also wished for more variety in shopping, and healthier restaurant options.

Suggestions from adults regarding youth included a teen center, activities, sports, mentoring and job skills training. Teens wrote their own vision statements for Murrieta, presented below.

Youth Vision Statements
Written by Vista Murrieta High School Students –
January 22, 2010

“Murrieta is a diverse community in which the inhabitants can enjoy fine dining, activities, entertainment as well as the safety and security to raise families. It is also a place with a healthy environment and thriving economy. It is well designed, efficient and aesthetically pleasing.”

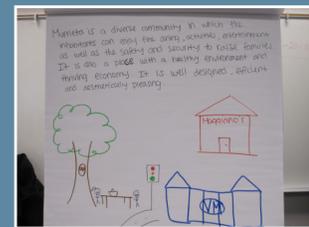
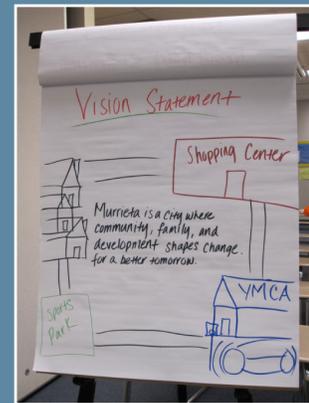
“Murrieta is still a safe place with a variety of entertainment and safe activities for families and kids to enjoy together.”

“The City of Murrieta is a safe and secure place to raise families and offers outstanding education in our great school districts. It is a diverse community that offers job opportunities and entertainment for kids as well as young adults.”

“Murrieta is a city where community, family, and development shapes change for a better tomorrow.”

“Murrieta is a city with an emphasis on safety, education, and opportunity in order to progress into an ideal society. Youth are able to feel close to those around them in the community while having a good time. Murrieta is a place that meets the wants and needs of the people.”

“Murrieta is now a community with positive family and youth recreations, where education and safety is valued and first priority. Where there is less traffic, more economical opportunities for growth, and a clean environment.”



RURAL AREAS

Preserve elements of Murrieta’s rural heritage.

Community members value the “small town” feel around Murrieta, although they want the preservation of rural areas to be balanced with urban growth. Participants also expressed a need for additional infrastructure in rural areas, such as roads, water, and sewer.

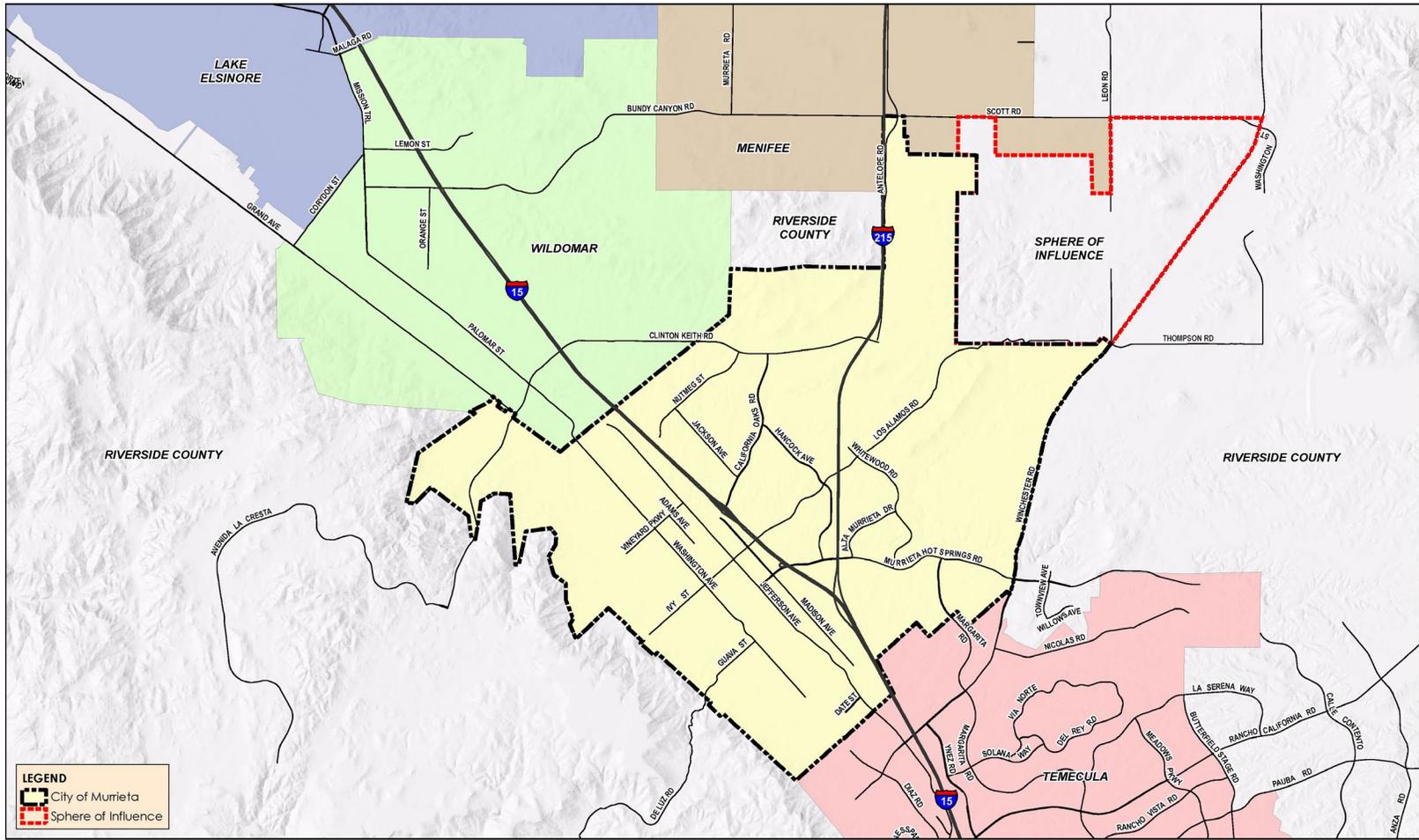
There were several different components of this “small town” character that participants valued. Some wanted a feeling of openness, space, and country landscapes. Others cited the freedom to keep animals, ride horses, and grow food—or to have more privacy.

Residents in the Los Alamos area offered visions for their neighborhood that sought these types of rural elements, as well as large lot sizes and limited regulation, while providing more urban infrastructure.

Other participants suggested maintaining a rural feel by using elements such as split-rail fences, swales instead of curbs, greenways, and trails. One workshop group suggested ensuring compatible land uses near rural and agricultural areas. A survey participant proposed a living farm museum.



Exhibit 1-1, Regional Location Map



Regional Location Map
 Exhibit 1-1

