

**OCOTILLO/NOMIRAGE  
COMMUNITY AREA PLAN**

**Prepared By:**

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Approved by:

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**NOTE: For the Most Current Zoning Designations, Please see Imperial County Land Use Ordinance (Title 9) Division 5.**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Preface**

The Land Use Element of the Imperial County General Plan designates the townsite of Ocotillo, and communities of Nomirage, Painted Gorge, Yuha Estates, and the surrounding area generally bounded by the Jacumba Mountains and the San Diego County line on the west, Coyote Mountains on the north, Elsinore Fault/Laguna Salada Fault on the east, and the U.S./Mexico international boundary on the south as the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

This document, known as the "Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan" supersedes and replaces the "Current Land Use Plan for the Yuha Desert Planning Unit" adopted March 20, 1973, by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors. It is incorporated into the Land Use Element of the County of Imperial General Plan and shall serve as a guide to the decision makers, staff and the public to address the distribution, general location and extent of uses of land for housing, commerce, industry, open space and public facilities.

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan describes existing land uses with the planning area and the facilities and services, which provide public infrastructure to support these uses. Also stated are goals and objectives for future growth, and environmental resource protection and constraints; and, policies and programs necessary to guide future growth.

### **B. Purpose of the Community Plan**

The primary purpose of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan is to identify the goals, policies, and standards that will guide the physical growth of the planning area. It is prepared pursuant to California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan designates the proposed distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, including natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid waste disposal facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan includes a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity for the various land use categories covered by the plan. The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan also identifies the areas which are subject to flooding.

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan shows in a very general way, a range of uses for land within the planning area, without projecting when or how a use will be developed. The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan is based in part on the five basic goals adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 2, 1973. The purpose

of this plan is to help citizens to secure a better life than would be possible without the efforts of government in their behalf.

The five basic concepts adopted by the Board in support of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan are:

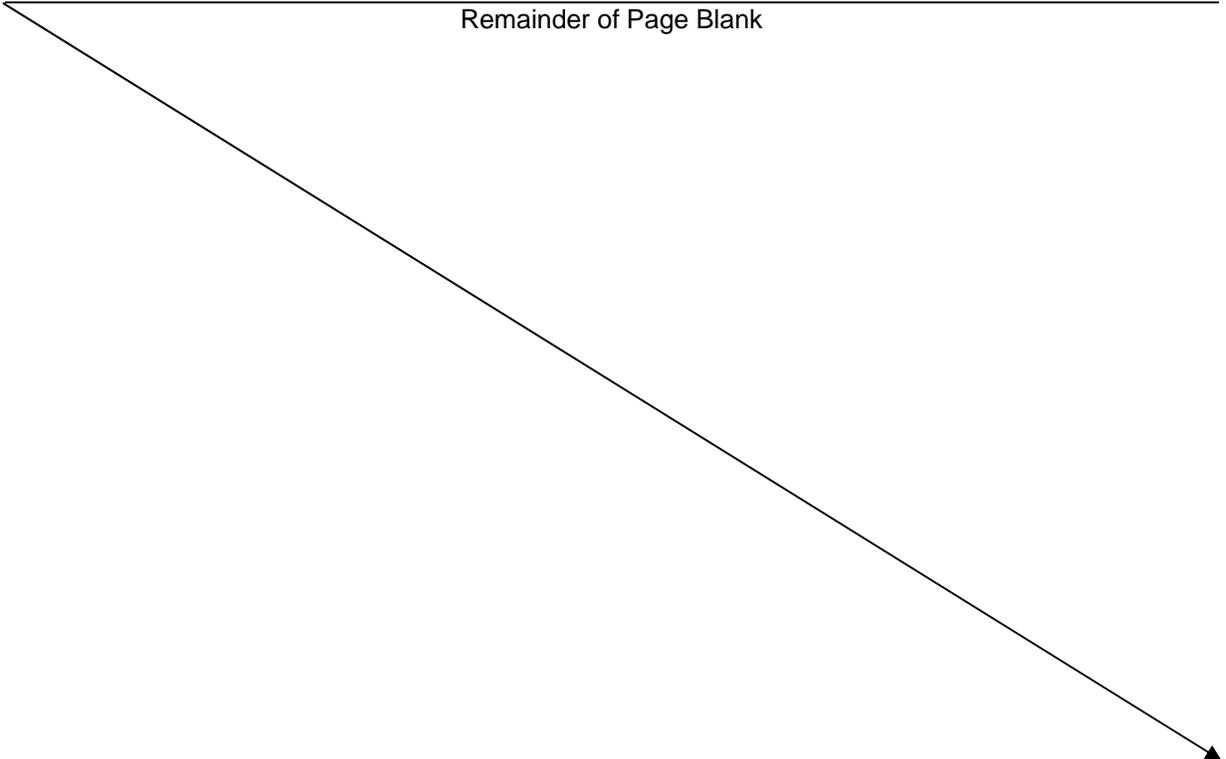
1. Safety for people and property.
2. Wide selection of social and economic opportunities.
3. Efficient use of natural, human and financial resources.
4. Clean air, water and land.
5. Quiet, beautiful communities and rural areas.

The intent of the California legislature was and is to provide effective and efficient land uses in an orderly and well planned manner. In keeping with this intent, the County shall use this plan to guide its development and to plan for necessary improvements for public facilities and services.

The intent of Imperial County in preparing the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan is to maintain and protect the existing rural character of the area and to preserve its natural resources.

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## **II. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

### **A. Preface**

Knowledge, experience and reasoned expectations of future conditions determines the scope of the issues that the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan must address. This chapter includes a generalized description of existing physical, cultural and land use features within the planning area, from both a historic and expected future perspective.

### **B. Land Use**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan comprises approximately 108,000 acres of land under the jurisdiction of Bureau of Land Management, state land, and private land. The planning area includes the townsite of Ocotillo, and the communities of Nomirage, Painted Gorge and Yuha Estates. Within the townsite of Ocotillo, the existing land use consist primarily of single family homes, including a significant number of mobile homes on individual lots. There are 366 dwelling units in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area (based on 1990 Census figures).

Three RV parks are located in Ocotillo: Jackson's Hide-A-Way Adult RV Park located at the southwest corner of Via de Coyote and Shell Canyon Road with 18 spaces; Ocotillo Trailer and RV Park with 12 spaces; and, Ocotillo Motel and RV Park has 16 spaces and four motel rooms.

There are approximately 50 lots within the townsite of Ocotillo zoned C-2, General Commercial, not including the 34.86 acres east of the townsite along Old Highway 80 in Tract 63. Several of these commercial lots are used exclusively for residential purposes. It is recommended that commercial lots used for residential purposes be rezoned to R-1, Single Family Zone. At the northeast corner of Imperial Highway and Smoketree Avenue are 14 lots zoned C-1, Neighborhood Commercial. In the Inkopah area, the Desert Tower is situated on a 27.12 acre parcel zoned C-2. Two other surrounding properties totaling 66 acres, are also zoned C-2. Ocotillo appears to have sufficient commercial zones to meet the needs of the local population and travelers on Interstate 8 and S-2.

North of I-8, west of Imperial Highway, along Old Highway 80 are two lots known as Lots 17 and 18 Block 12, zoned M-1. In the Inkopah area, south of the Desert Tower, a portion of Tract 42, containing approximately 29.79 acres are presently zoned M-1. These are the only existing parcels zoned for light industrial uses in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area. Just south of Tract 42, in Tract 43, lies 6.05 acres zoned "S" Open Space presently under consideration for a change of zone to M-1.

Presently, a large number of parcels within the planning area are zoned A-2, General Agricultural and A-1, Light Agricultural. The A-2 and A-1 Zones are not compatible with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan due to the area's dependence on groundwater. All parcels zoned A-1 or A-2 shall be rezoned to be compatible with the plan.

All parcels currently zoned R-1-T within the planning area shall be rezoned R-1. Due to their substandard size, all parcels presently zoned R-2 within the Ocotillo townsite are considered nonconforming. These parcels shall be rezoned R-1. All parcels currently zoned R-1 shall be maintained.

There are presently eight lots zoned R-4-T, Mobile Home Park Zone totaling approximately 60 acres within the Ocotillo area. Except for the three lots (Jackson's RV Park) located at the southwest corner of Shell Canyon Road and Via de Coyote, these lots are all located within the existing flood hazard area and therefore will be considered to be nonconforming.

The Bureau of Land Management administers approximately 93,000 acres of public lands within the planning area. Approximately 15,000 acres are privately owned. The townsite of Ocotillo contains approximately 575 acres; Nomirage contains approximately 225 acres.

### **C. Population**

According to the 1990 census, the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area had a population of 460 people. This number includes residents in the townsite of Ocotillo, Nomirage, Painted Gorge and Yuha Estates. Historically, the population of the area has been older retired and semi-retired persons, and seasonal residents. Recently, there has been a gradual influx of permanent younger residents, probably influenced by the close proximity of the area to the Imperial Valley South State Prison. Due to water constraints, it is not anticipated the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area will experience a significant amount of population growth.

### **D. Water/Sewer**

The entire planning area is dependent on groundwater. Historically, water has been of good quality. Recently, however, data seems to indicate a possible decline in water quality in some areas of the basin.

The community of Nomirage, Yuha Estates, and Unit 3 in Ocotillo are serviced by individual water wells. Four private water companies service the remainder of the townsite: Coyote Valley Mutual Water Company, has 125 meters; Ocotillo Water Company No. 1, 80 meters; Shell Canyon Water Company with 16 meters; and West Wind Water Company (Elfring) which supplies Painted Gorge residents. An acre-foot of water supplies a family of five per year.

Other water users include: Val-Rock six (6) acre-feet; Farmers Land Leveling (Idgit Corporation) eight (8) acre-feet; and, U.S. Gypsum approximately 379 acre-feet per year (1992).

Preservation and conservation of groundwater is one of the major concerns of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan. Water use, quality, quantity and protection are key issues in planning for the area. All land use proposals shall be reviewed to determine their impacts on groundwater quantity and quality.

The area is not served by a sanitation district or sewer treatment facility. Instead, the area relies on individual septic systems for each household, business and RV park.

#### **E. Solid Waste Facilities**

The Imperial County Department of Public Works operates a Class III landfill to serve the planning area. The landfill accepts non-hazardous waste only. The facility is located on property under Bureau of Land Management administration and is located approximately 1 1/2 miles north of Imperial Highway on Shell Canyon Road. The disposal capacity of the existing facility is considered to be sufficient until the year 2003.

#### **F. Schools**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area is served by the Imperial Unified School District in the City of Imperial, approximately a distance of 30 miles. As of December 1992, there were 19 elementary school students and 17 high school students from this area.

#### **G. Natural Resources**

Sand and gravel is one of the most important natural resource within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area. The resource is not only important to the area but, also to the construction industry of the County. Sand and gravel are the raw products used in the construction industry for the maintenance of State highways, County roads and city streets. The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area will continue for the foreseeable future to be an important source of sand and gravel for the County.

The Coyote Mountains located north of Ocotillo are an important source of sand and gravel. Several operators including Caltrans, the County Department of Public Works, Granite Construction Company, Farmers Land Leveling and Val-Rock currently have material sites within this area. Other sand and gravel material sites within the planning area include: Painted Gorge (Public Works); Coyote II (Public Works); and Yuha (Caltrans).

The location of sand and gravel pits north of the townsite of Ocotillo has sometimes created a land use conflict between surface mining operators and townsite residents. Trucks transporting the material typically travel along Shell Canyon Road, Imperial Highway and I-8. Townsite residents frequently complain of the traffic, noise, dust and exhaust emissions associated with the trucks. Residents of Ocotillo have also raised concerns regarding the use of groundwater for dust control by the surface mining operators and possible contaminate of groundwater by surface mining related activities.

## **H. Housing**

There are a total of 366 housing units within the planning area. The average number of persons per household is approximately 1.3. Overall, the condition of most housing units in the townsite of Ocotillo range from fair to good. Most housing units in the townsite are either single-family homes or mobile homes. Overcrowding is not perceived to be a problem. The community of Nomirage has several pre-existing travel trailers that are considered nonconforming uses. Painted Gorge, due to its remoteness, has several substandard housing units ranging from poor to fair condition.

Due to the lack of sewer facilities and water constraints, it is not expected that large residential subdivisions or multiple-family housing units will be developed within the planning area. In general, the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area has a sufficient amount of land zoned for residential uses to accommodate future growth and housing needs.

## **I. Circulation**

Interstate 8, State Highway 98, Evan Hewes Highway (Old Highway 80), and Imperial Highway (S2) are the major transportation routes that serve the area. Traffic volumes on I-8 at the junction with Highway 98 are presently 8,600 average daily traffic (ADT) and predicted to increase to 18,300 ADT by the year 2015. Highway 98 is primarily a two lane east/west route separating from I-8 near Ocotillo. Daily traffic volumes on the route average 1,800 ADT at the western junction of I-8 and Imperial Highway. Traffic volumes on this facility are projected to increase to 6,100 ADT by the year 2015. Evan Hewes Highway east of Imperial Highway presently has traffic volumes of 300 ADT and it is projected that this figure will increase to 400 ADT by the year 2015. Traffic volumes through the townsite of Ocotillo along Imperial Highway are currently 1000 ADT and are expected to increase to 1500 by the year 2015. At the intersection of Shell Canyon Road and S-2, traffic volumes are approximately 400 ADT and expected to increase to 600 ADT by the year 2015.

## **J. Seismic and Public Safety**

This section of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan identifies potential hazards in order to minimize the risks associated with hazards. Potential hazards

must be addressed in the planning process to avoid dangerous situations. For example, the risk associated with dangerous flooding can be avoided by not allowing development in flood hazard areas.

The main purpose of this section of the plan is to reduce the loss of life, injury and property damage that might result from a disaster or accident.

## **1. Earthquakes**

The Elsinore-Laguna Salada Faults form the north and eastern boundary of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area. The Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone Act is enforced by the Planning/Building Department to ensure that homes, offices, hospitals, public buildings and other structures for human occupancy which are built on or near active faults, or if built within special study areas, are designed and constructed in compliance with the Division 7, Geologic Hazards, Imperial County Codified Ordinance and the Uniform Building Code. Fortunately, the existing earthquake faults in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area are located in remote and unpopulated areas. The official Earthquake Fault Zones as delineated by the State Geologist are available for public review Imperial County Planning/Building Department or Imperial County Public Works Department.

## **2. Flooding**

Several areas of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area are subject to flash floods. Flash floods are not unusual in desert and mountainous areas. These type of floods occur when sudden downpours over the mountains and/or desert create high peak flows that follow normally dry streambeds and mountain washes.

The townsite of Ocotillo and to a lesser degree the community of Nomirage are at risk due to their location at the base of an alluvial fan originating at the base of Myer Creek. Myer Creek is located in the southwestern portion of Imperial County and flows in a northeasterly direction through the townsite of Ocotillo, draining over 21.8 square miles.

Floodway management is the key component to effective flood control within Imperial County. The Federal Insurance Administration delineates areas of special flood hazards; the risk premium zones, and floodways in its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The FIRM form the basis for the County's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance which is applied to those subject to periodic flooding. Official FIRM are available for public review at the Planning/Building Department.

## **K. Public Facilities**

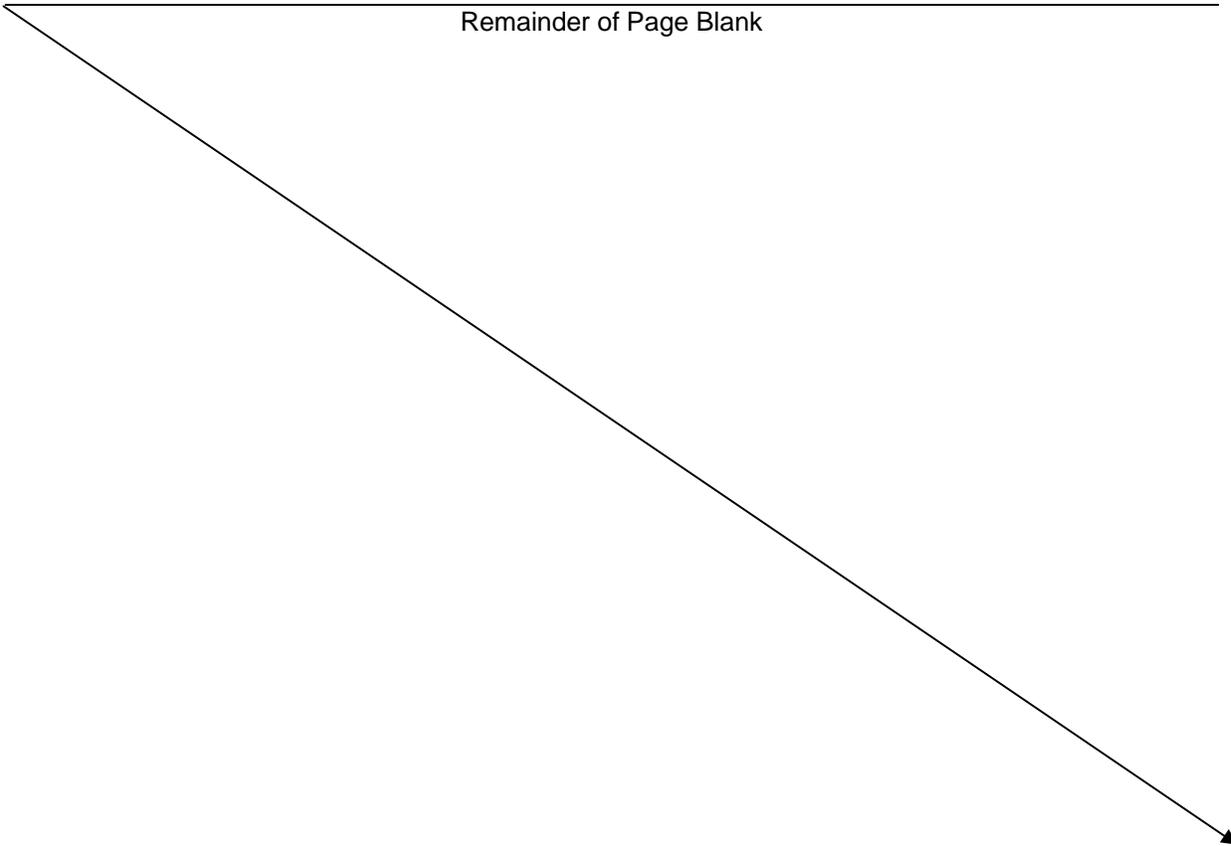
Public services and facilities located in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area include the following:

- fire station operated by the Ocotillo Fire Department, comprised of a salaried fire chief and a team of volunteer fire fighters;
- County Sheriff deputy substation;
- U.S. Post Office;
- County library;
- community center operated by the Ocotillo Community Council;
- church; and,
- cable television company.

The proposed Imperial Valley College Desert Museum will eventually be located in Ocotillo, immediately south of Interstate 8, west of Imperial Highway.

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### **III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **A. Preface**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan serves as the primary policy statement by the Board of Supervisors for implementing development policies and land uses in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area. This section of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan presents the goals and objectives relative to all land uses within the planning area.

The Goals and Objectives, together with the Implementation Programs and Polices in Chapter IV, are the statements that shall provide direction for private development as well as government actions and programs. The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan Goals and Objectives are intended to serve as long-term principles and policy statements representing ideals which have been determined by the citizens as being desirable and deserving of community time and resources to achieve. These Goals and Objectives are important guidelines for land use decision making. It is recognized, however, that other social, economic, environmental, and legal considerations are involved in land use decisions and that these goals and objectives should be used as guidelines but not doctrines.

#### **B. Goals and Objectives**

##### **Towns and Communities**

Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the distinct character of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

Objective 1.1 Preserve and enhance the townsite of Ocotillo and community of Nomirage.

Objective 1.2 Encourage distinctive community identities.

Objective 1.3 Maintain and require compatible land uses with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

Objective 1.4 Prohibit the establishment of non-residential uses in predominantly residential neighborhoods and require effective buffers when appropriate non-residential uses are proposed.

## **Economic Growth**

Goal 2: Provide employment and economic opportunities in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area to serve the needs of area residents while preserving the unique character of the area.

Objective 2.1 Provide adequate space and land use classifications to meet current and projected economic needs for commercial development.

Objective 2.2 Encourage the development of neighborhood commercial land uses in areas currently designated and zoned C-1 and C-2.

Objective 2.3 Prohibit the rezoning of additional land for C-2, General Commercial.

Objective 2.4 Encourage the development of tourist-oriented commercial land uses that are compatible with existing adjacent land uses.

## **Housing Opportunities**

Goal 3: Encourage the development of various but compatible housing types to accommodate expected population growth and special housing needs.

Objective 3.1 Provide and maintain sufficient, suitable residential sites and housing supply to meet the projected housing needs of all segments of the population.

Objective 3.2 Promote affordable housing for residents of all income groups, including low and moderate income households.

Objective 3.3 Encourage the infill of existing lots rather than expansion of existing boundaries except at very low densities.

## **Industrial Development**

Goal 4: Limit the expansion of industrial development within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

Objective 4.1 Discourage the rezoning of additional land to M-1, Light Manufacturing unless the proposal meets all development standards.

Objective 4.2 Prohibit the rezoning of land to M-2, Heavy Manufacturing.

Objective 4.3 Existing industrial land uses will be monitored to ensure land uses do not pose a environmental threat and/or cause a contamination of groundwater.

### **Protection of Environmental Resources**

Goal 5: Preserve significant natural, cultural, and community character resources, air quality and water quality.

Objective 5.1 Preserve as open space those lands containing watersheds, aquifer recharge areas, floodplains, important natural resources, sensitive vegetation, wildlife habitats, historic and prehistoric sites, or lands which are subject to seismic hazards.

Objective 5.2 Reduce and prevent risk and damage from flood hazards by appropriate regulation.

Objective 5.3 Protect the groundwater in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area from overdraft and saline conditions.

Objective 5.4 Ensure that new development proposals do not contribute to overdraft or increase salinity of groundwater.

Objective 5.5 Eliminate agricultural zoning and commercial agricultural land uses within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

Objective 5.6 Prohibit the development of new RV or mobile home parks unless development can show through a geohydrology study that adequate water would be available for the project and remain available for public use.

Objective 5.7 Stringently enforce the rules for new development, expansion or reconstruction in floodways to ensure that structures will not adversely affect, hinder, restrict, or alter the water capacity of the floodway and will not result in increased flood levels during the occurrence of a 100-year flood.

Objective 5.8 The County will work with U.S. Gypsum and the Imperial Irrigation District to examine other water sources that can be used at the USG manufacturing plant and reduce their dependence on groundwater.

- Objective 5.9 Prohibit land uses which consume large quantities of water such as golf courses, water theme parks, aquaculture etc.
- Objective 5.10 Impose a limit of 1.5 acre-feet of water per dwelling unit in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.
- Objective 5.11 Encourage the registration of all non-permitted water wells and the installation of flow meters.
- Objective 5.12 Prohibit land uses that may cause groundwater contamination such as farming, landfills, agriculture, geothermal, faulty septic systems and illegal dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes.

### **Extractive Resources**

Goal 6: Identify and protect areas of regionally-significant mineral resources which are in areas suitable for surface mining activities.

- Objective 6.1 Provide adequate space and land use classifications to meet current and projected economic needs for extractive activities.
- Objective 6.2 Ensure that surface mining operations are operated to avoid air and water quality degradation, including groundwater, soil erosion, wildlife and habitat destruction, and other adverse environmental impacts, and that all surface mining operations comply with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) and County Surface Mining Ordinance.

### **Community Vision**

Goal 7: Achieve balanced economic and residential growth while preserving the community's character and natural resources.

- Objective 7.1 Maintain and improve the quality of life, the protection of property and the public health, safety, and welfare of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.
- Objective 7.2 Ensure that future growth and development is orderly, safe and does not cause an overdraft, contamination or increased salinity of the ground water aquifer.
- Objective 7.3 Ensure safe and coordinated traffic patterns, contiguous growth within the townsite of Ocotillo and community of Nomirage.

Objective 7.4 Coordinate planning activities with the Bureau of Land Management.

### **Seismic and Public Safety**

Goal 8: Include public health and safety considerations in land use planning.

Objective 8.1 Ensure that data on geological hazards is incorporated into the land use review process, and future development process.

Objective 8.2 Regulate development within flood-way areas in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Objective 8.3 Regulate development adjacent to or near all mineral deposits.

Objective 8.4 Require, where possessing the authority, that avoidable risks be avoided; and, that measures, commensurate with risks, be taken to reduce injury, loss of life, destruction of property, and disruption of service.

Objective 8.5 Require reclamation of lands where mining, irrigation, landfills, solid waste, hazardous materials/waste storage or disposal, and natural erosion has occurred, so as to pose no danger to public health and safety.

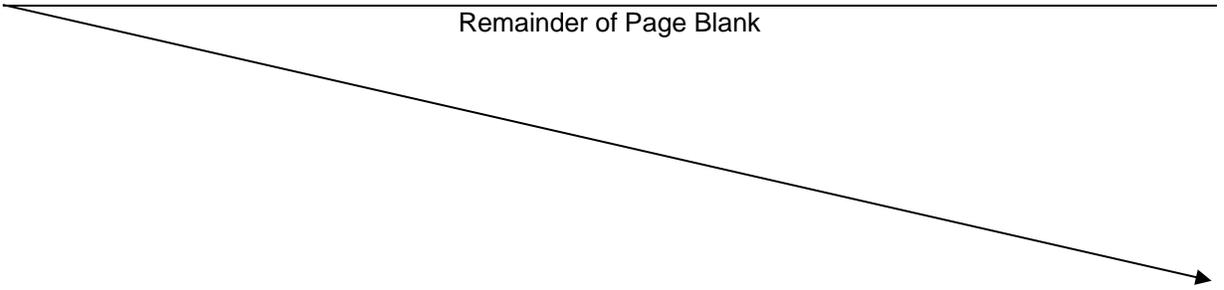
Objective 8.6 Recognize that certain lands are unsuitable for high or medium density development and that prohibition or restriction of such uses are in the public interest, health and safety.

### **C. Relationship to the General Plan**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan shall be consistent with the Imperial County General Plan.

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## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM AND POLICIES**

### **A. Preface**

Recent legal opinions and court decisions have stressed the importance of land use regulation including the density and intensity of land uses. Each land use classification identified herein has development standards that include population density and building intensity. Specific regulatory standards to implement the land use categories are contained with the County Zoning Ordinance.

Population density is defined as "the relationship between the number of dwelling units per acre and the number of residents per dwelling." Building intensity may be based upon a combination of variables such as maximum dwelling units per acre, permitted uses, height and size limitations. Quantifiable standards must be stated for each land use category.

### **B. Land Use Designations and Standards**

In order to define a clear distribution of development and preservation, the following categories have been established:

1. Desert Residential;
2. Low Density Residential;
3. Residential;
4. Commercial;
5. Recreation;
6. Light Industry
7. Special Purpose Facility;
8. Government/Special Public
9. Open Space;
10. Floodway; and,
11. Earthquake Fault.

## **1. Desert Residential**

The Desert Residential category represents very low density residential land uses in the outlying areas of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area where water and sewer service is limited or nonexistent. Residential units may consist of a single family dwelling or mobile home. A second dwelling may be allowed upon approval of a conditional use permit. The keeping and raising of farm animals for domestic use is permitted under restrictions defined in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Residential Development Standards:**

New residential development must be consistent with the existing character of the community.

Residential land uses at a population density of one (1) dwelling unit per 40 acres.

Legal parcels existing on the adoption date of the plan which are smaller than forty (40) acres are exempt therefrom.

Residential building intensity is limited by water use, and septic systems and other factors which may effect the site.

An on-site potable water supply system must be approved by the County Health Department is required for all residential development.

A site-specific geohydrology study is required if a proposed major subdivision is to be served by groundwater.

Maximum height is 35 feet for single family homes.

### **Commercial Development Standards:**

Commercial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

### **Industrial Development Standards:**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

### **Agricultural Development Standards:**

Agricultural zoning and commercial agricultural land uses are prohibited. Vegetable gardens, private greenhouses, flower gardens, fruit and nut trees strictly for domestic purposes are allowed within this category.

### **Open Space/Recreation Standards:**

Open space land uses consist of environmentally sensitive areas, fault zones, floodways and parks. Only passive recreational uses are allowed.

### **Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal Facilities:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

## **2. Low Density Residential**

The Low Density Residential category represents residential land uses in community of Nomirage and the surrounding area outside the townsite of Ocotillo. Typically, these areas have limited water and sewer services. Residential units may consist of a single family dwelling or mobile home. A second dwelling may be allowed upon the approval of a conditional use permit. The keeping and raising of farm animals for domestic use is permitted under restrictions defined in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Residential Development Standards:**

New residential development must be consistent with the existing character of the community.

Residential land uses at a population density of one dwelling unit per five acres.

Legal parcels existing on the adoption date of the plan which are smaller than five (5) acres are exempt therefrom.

Residential building intensity is limited by water use, and septic systems and other factors which may effect the site.

An on-site potable water supply system must be approved by the County Health Department is required for all residential development.

A site-specific geohydrology study is required if a proposed major subdivision is to be served by groundwater.

Maximum height is 35 feet for single family homes.

**Commercial Development Standards:**

Commercial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

**Industrial Development Standards:**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

**Agricultural Development Standards:**

Agricultural zoning and land uses are prohibited in this category. Vegetable gardens, private greenhouses, flower gardens, fruit and nut trees strictly for domestic purposes are allowed within this category.

**Open Space/Recreation Standards:**

Open space land uses consist of environmentally sensitive areas, fault zones, floodways and parks. Only passive recreational uses are allowed.

**Solid Waste Facility Development Standards:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

**3. Residential**

The Residential category represents low density residential land uses within the existing townsite of Ocotillo where water service is limited and septic systems are required on individual lots. Residential units may consist of a single family dwelling or mobile home. A second dwelling may be allowed upon approval of a conditional use permit if the lot meets size requirements for septic systems.

**Residential Development Standards:**

New residential development must be consistent with the existing character of the community.

Residential land uses at a population density of one (1) dwelling unit per 0.5 acres.

Legal parcels existing on the adoption date of the plan which are smaller than 1/2 (0.5) acre are exempt therefrom.

Residential building intensity is limited by water use, and septic systems and other factors which may effect the site.

An on-site potable water supply system approved by the County Health Department is required for all residential development.

A site-specific geohydrology study is required if a proposed major subdivision is to be served by groundwater.

Maximum height is 35 feet for single family homes.

**Commercial Development Standards:**

Commercial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

**Industrial Development Standards:**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

**Agricultural Development Standards:**

Agricultural zoning and land uses are prohibited in this category. Vegetable gardens, flower gardens, fruit and nut trees strictly for domestic purposes are allowed within this category.

**Open Space/Recreation Standards:**

Open space land uses consist of environmentally sensitive areas, fault zones, floodways and parks. Only passive recreational uses are allowed.

**Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal Facilities:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

**4. Commercial**

**Residential Development Standards:**

Residential zoning and land uses are not allowed in this category, except for legal pre-existing non-conforming residential uses.

### **Commercial Development Standards:**

Low to medium intensity commercial land uses, which can be shown to be compatible with adjacent existing or planned residential uses.

Only C-1, neighborhood commercial uses are allowed.

General commercial (C-2) land uses are prohibited.

A site-specific geohydrology study is required if a proposed commercial development is to be served by groundwater and the amount of water requested exceeds five (5) acre feet per year.

Maximum floor area ratio not greater than 2:1 (i.e., two square feet of gross building area per one square foot of area within the lot or building site).

Building height maximum of 35 feet.

A minimum of 10 percent of the lot area shall be landscaped. A greater percentage of landscaping may be required for projects involving discretionary review.

### **Industrial Development Standards:**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are not permitted in this category.

### **Agricultural Development Standards:**

Agricultural zoning and land uses are prohibited in this category.

### **Open Space/Recreation Standards:**

Open space land uses within this category consist of environmentally sensitive areas, fault zones and floodways. Only passive recreational uses are allowed.

## **5. Recreation**

The Recreation category represents the designation applied to the existing RV Parks in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

### **Residential Development Standards:**

Residential zoning and land uses are not allowed in this category.

**Commercial Development Standards:**

Low intensity commercial uses appurtenant to the RV Park and which can be shown to be compatible with adjacent existing or planned residential uses. Only neighborhood commercial uses are allowed in this classification.

**Industrial Development Standards:**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are not allowed in this category.

**Agricultural Land Use Standards:**

Agricultural zoning and land uses are prohibited in this category.

**Open Space:**

Open space land uses within this category consist of environmentally sensitive areas, earthquake fault zones and floodways. Only passive recreational uses are allowed.

**Recreation Standards:**

Existing recreational vehicle parks.

**Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal Facilities:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are prohibited within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

**6. Light Industry**

Manufacturing/industrial zoning and land uses are generally not permitted in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area. Light Industry land uses within this category consist of light manufacturing land uses located in areas with the necessary supporting infrastructure and located away from conflicting existing or planned land uses. Generally these lands are located adjacent to major transportation systems. The Light Industry classification will also be applied to all existing light manufacturing uses within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.

**Residential Development Standards:**

Residential land uses are limited to one single family dwelling unit if appurtenant to a permitted industrial or commercial use and occupied by a caretaker, custodian, or night watchman when on the same lot as the industrial

use and only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit by the Planning/Building Department or Planning Commission.

**Industrial Development Standards:**

Light manufacturing land uses.

Maximum floor area ratio of 3:1 (i.e., three square feet of gross building area per one square foot of area within the lot or building site).

A minimum of ten percent (10%) of the lot area shall be landscaped.

Building height maximum of 35 feet.

Industrial uses should locate in areas where high noise levels will not impact existing or planned noise sensitive land uses.

Prior to any zone reclassification to allow light industrial use, potential impacts associated with the proposed rezone and appropriate mitigation measures shall be identified pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Light industrial uses within this category should locate in areas having access to major transportation systems.

Zone reclassifications to allow industrial uses, will only be allowed on a conditional basis.

**Commercial Development Standards:**

Neighborhood commercial uses, which can be shown to be compatible with adjacent existing or planned residential uses.

Maximum floor area ratio not greater than 2:1 (i.e., two square feet of gross building area per on square foot of area within the lot or building site).

Building height maximum of 35 feet.

A minimum of ten percent (10%) of the lot area shall be landscaped.

**Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal Facilities:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

## **7. Special Purpose Facility**

This designation may be applied to lands which are necessary for basic governmental services which have physical or operational characteristics that are incompatible with most other land use categories, e.g., landfills. In particular, noise, odors, air and water quality impacts, aesthetics, and traffic may create dangerous or objectionable conditions.

This designation shall be applied to the existing Ocotillo landfill facility operated by the County Department of Public Works. No new landfills are not allowed in this land use category. It is the intent of this designation that the existing facility be protected from encroachment by development or incompatible land uses.

### **Solid Waste Facility Development Standards:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

## **8. Government/Special Public**

This designation indicates lands generally owned by public agencies which are presently, and for the foreseeable future, used for a specific governmental purpose. This designation includes military bases and public parkland and may also be applied to airports, sewer and water facilities, cemeteries, and other public utilities and facilities.

## **9. Open Space**

The Open Space designation will be applied to the all land future and present, that are under the administration of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. Except for limited mining activities and utility corridors, most private enterprises or land uses are not allowed in this classification.

### **Solid Waste Facility Development Standards:**

Landfills and hazardous waste storage and transfer stations are not allowed within this category. Municipal solid waste transfer and recycling stations may be permitted with appropriate zoning and environmental review.

## **10. Floodway**

The Floodway designation represents those areas within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area that have been identified and known to be subject to periodic flooding pursuant to the official Flood Insurance Rate Map (F.I.R.M.). Official Flood

Insurance Rate Maps are available for public review at the Planning/Building Department.

## **11. Earthquake Fault Zone**

In accordance with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, the Office of the State Geologist has delineated earthquake fault zones which encompass potentially and recently active traces of major faults. The Earthquake Fault land use category represents those areas in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area located within the Elsinore Earthquake Fault Zone.

It is the intent of this category to ensure that homes, offices, hospitals, public buildings, and other structures for human occupancy which are built on or near active faults, or if built within special study areas, are designed and constructed in compliance with the Division 7, Geologic Hazards, Imperial County Codified Ordinance.

### **C. Implementation Policies and Programs**

Implementation of the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan is intended to be a continual process involving amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Maps, and discretionary review of proposed subdivisions, conditional use permits, mining permits and reclamation plans; and establishing ministerial review procedures to ensure that proposed development will not cause an overdraft or increased salinity, has adequate sewage disposal, and to determine that no hazard to public health or safety will result from flooding, earthquakes, unstable soil or other natural hazards.

#### **1. Agriculture**

##### **Policy**

Commercial agricultural practices due to the use of large quantities of water and the application of pesticides and fertilizers, are not compatible within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan due to the potential to cause an overdraft of the groundwater aquifer, increased salinity or increased risk for contamination of groundwater.

##### **Program**

- Existing areas zoned A-1, A-2 or A-3 will not be considered in conformance with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan and shall be rezoned to an either Desert Residential or Low Density Residential with a minimum lot size of either forty or five acres.

##### **Program**

- Existing commercial agricultural land uses including crop farming and the keeping of farm animals will be considered legal pre-existing non-conforming and will be allowed to be maintained and continued provided there is no expansion of the non-conforming use and no increase in the use of groundwater for irrigation.

## **2. Industry**

### **Policy**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area does not have the infrastructure or other necessary facilities to support heavy manufacturing land uses. There is a major concern that industrial land uses may lead to contamination of groundwater resources. The County supports limiting light industrial land uses to those presently existing, including the current proposal in the Inkopah area on a conditional basis.

### **Program**

- The M-1 Zone is generally not compatible with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan, but could be found to be compatible under unique and unusual circumstances. Such circumstances would include zoning needed to accommodate an existing legal or legal non-conforming use; when additional density or use restrictions can be included by use of an "overlay" or "combining" zoning; or where a Specific Plan, conditional use permit (CUP) or other discretionary permit can be required for a proposed use and mitigating measures can be imposed to reduce or eliminated potential land use conflicts.
- Heavy manufacturing uses are prohibited.

o

The light industry designation and light manufacturing zoning in the Inkopah area will be maintained until the present use expires. Once the present use is abandoned or terminated, the County will reclassify and rezone the area to neighborhood commercial.

## **3. Commercial Development**

### **Policy**

The Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area has sufficient land zoned and designated for commercial land uses to serve the current and project needs of the community. The C-2 Zone has been determined to be incompatible with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area designation of the General Plan however, existing General Commercial parcels will remain as presently zoned. It is the intent of the plan to

maintain the existing character of the community by discouraging regional commercial land uses in order to preserve groundwater resources from overdraft and contamination.

### **Program**

- Prohibit the rezoning of land to C-2 within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area.
- General commercial land uses will only be permitted on parcels presently zoned C-2.

## **4. Residential**

### **Policy**

The existing R-4-T Zone located in the floodway is not in conformance with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan and shall be rezoned to another appropriate use. The existing parcels zoned R-2 do not meet the minimum lot size requirement of 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit to accommodate two dwelling units.

### **Program**

- Existing areas zoned R-4-T located in the floodway and R-2 Zones will not be considered in conformance with the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan and shall be rezoned to another appropriate zone compatible with the plan.

## **5. Community Beautification**

### **Policy**

A primary concern for the County and area residents is the maintenance of property to prevent the accumulation of junked automobiles, tires, old appliances and other unwanted debris. Several highly visible properties with abandoned, vacant houses in the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area are littered with trash and junked cars that create an aesthetic eyesore for the community.

### **Program**

- County staff in coordination with area residents will enforce applicable zoning laws and other appropriate laws and regulations to help beautify the community.

## **Program**

- Any proposed development within the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area visible from Imperial Highway, Interstate 8 or State Highway 98 shall be required to meet architectural standards and landscape requirements.

## **6. Truck Traffic**

### **Policy**

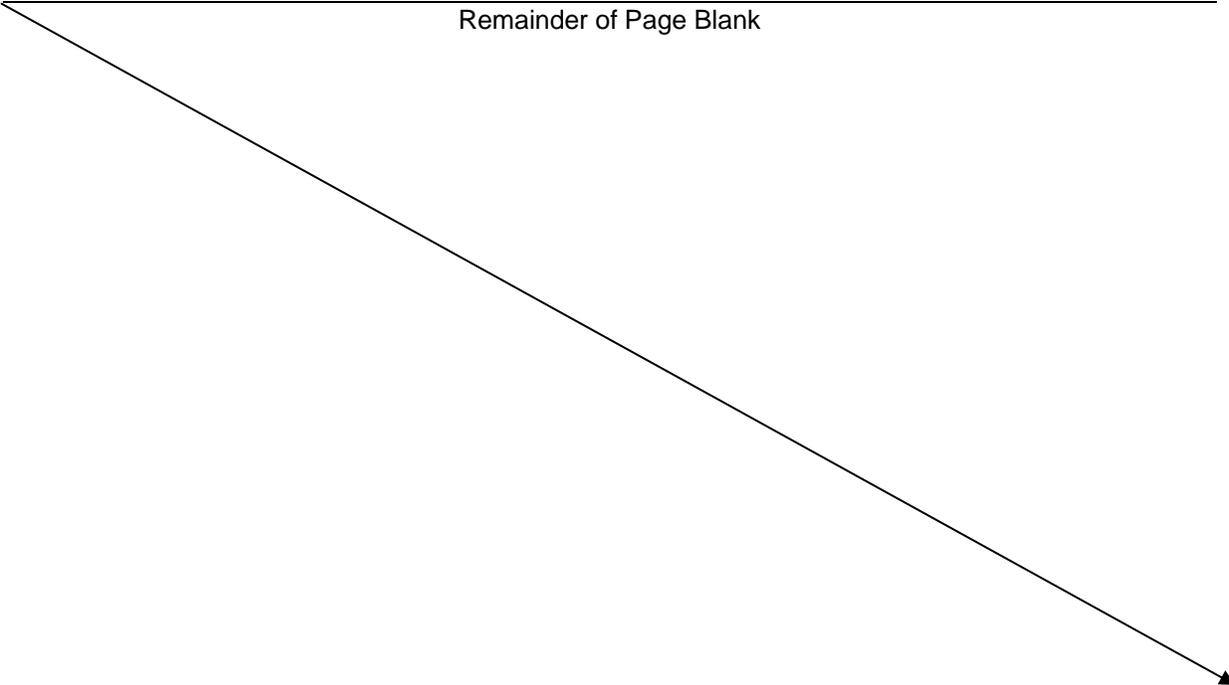
A major concern to residents of the townsite of Ocotillo is the noise generated by the truck traffic from the sand and gravel mining operations at the base of the Coyote Mountains. These operations provide a valuable material for the construction industry of Imperial County. The mineral resources of this area will become increasingly important as other reserves in the County are exhausted. It is important that a long-term solution to this problem be identified.

### **Program**

- The Planning/Building Department will coordinate with other agencies and parties including Public Works, Bureau of Land Management, San Diego Gas and Electric, sand and gravel industry representatives, community residents to consider the feasibility of identifying an alternate truck route that would redirect most of the truck traffic away from the townsite of Ocotillo.

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## V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The County of Imperial gratefully wishes to acknowledge and thank all the residents of the Ocotillo/Nomirage area specifically the following list of individuals, for their participation in the preparation of this plan and for their commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of life:

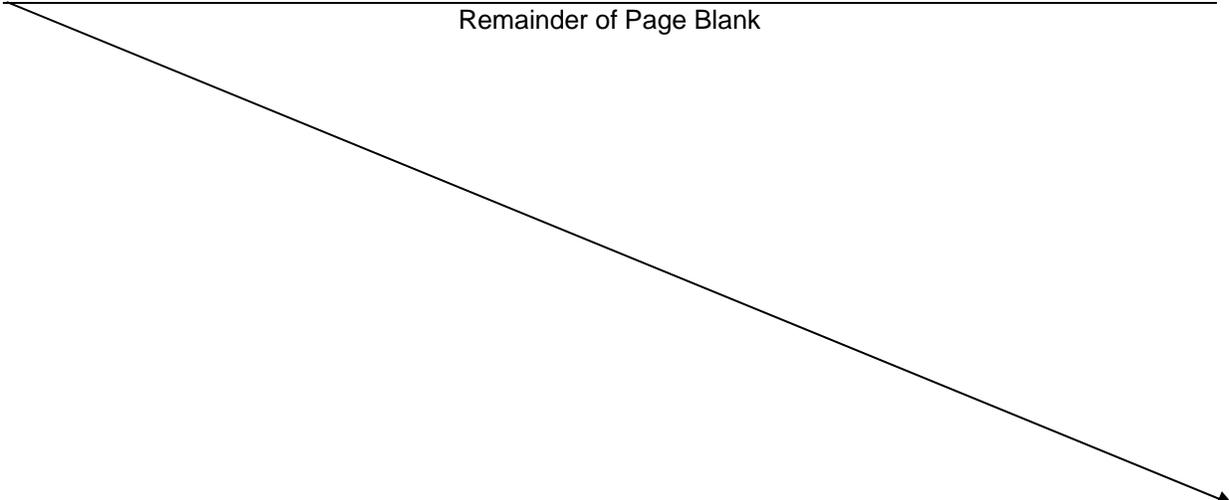
Cecile H. McGowan  
Cindy Sanford  
David Tucker  
Edith Bragg Harmon  
George Williams  
Hallie Cash  
Howard Kelly  
James Harmon  
Jay C. Von Werlhof  
John Payne  
John Twyman  
Keith Foulds  
Macie Apodaca  
Mark Sanford  
Neil Emory  
Richard Hamilton  
Robert Floweree  
Susan Manger  
William Arnett

and special thanks to

Leni Clubb

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## **VI. ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED**

In order to adequately address the issues relating to the Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Plan, the Planning/Building Department staff consulted with and/or requested information from the following organizations and individuals:

### County of Imperial

- Agricultural Commissioner
- Air Pollution Control District
- Buildings and Grounds, Randy Rister (Director)
- Community Economic Development Department
- County Administrative Office
- County Assessor
- County Counsel
- Environmental Health Services
- Office of Emergency Services/Fire Department
- Public Works, S. Harry Orfanos (Director), Neil Jorgenson
- Sheriff Department
- Supervisor Bill Cole, District #2

### State of California

- Caltrans, District 11
- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Regional Water Quality Control Board

### Federal

- Bureau of Land Management
- Naval Air Facility-EI Centro
- Ocotillo Post Office
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Schools

- Imperial County Department of Education
- Imperial Unified School District
- Imperial Valley College

### Community Organizations

- Ocotillo Club

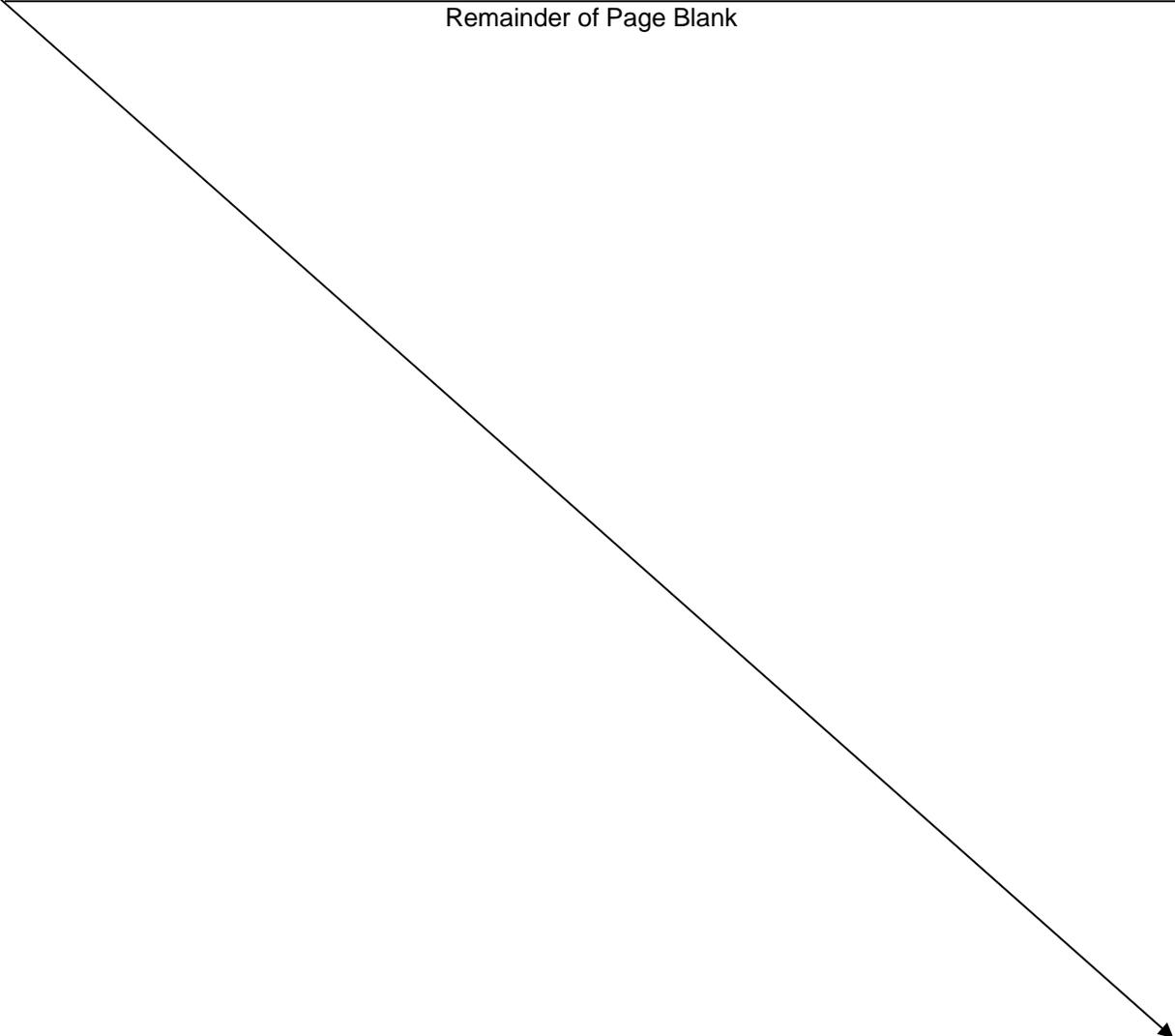
Ocotillo Community Council

Other

Granite Construction Company, Jeff Mercer  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Imperial Valley College Museum, Ray Wilcox  
Masters Construction Company  
Ocotillo Fire Department, John Payne  
San Diego County Planning Department  
San Diego Gas and Electric  
Sierra Club  
United States Gypsum Company, Greg Cork  
Val-Rock Inc, Richard Becker and Glenn Pitts

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## VII. REFERENCES

### County of Imperial

Annual Mobile Home Park Report (1993)  
Community and Economic Development Department Housing Condiytion  
Survey (1992)  
Community and Economic Development Department Overall Economic  
Development Program  
Current Land Use Plan-Yuha Desert  
General Plan and Program Environmental Impact Report (1993)  
Ocotillo Area Zoning Map No. 59  
Ultimate Land Use Plan (1973)  
Zoning Ordinance

### State of California

Department of Finance Population Projects (1993)  
Earthquake Fault Zone Maps  
General Plan Guidelines  
Geology and Mineral Resources of Imperial County, California (1977)  
Planning Zoning and Development Laws (1993)

### Federal

Census Data (1990)  
Flood Insurance Rate Maps  
Map No. 22, Imperial Valley South - Bureau of Land Management

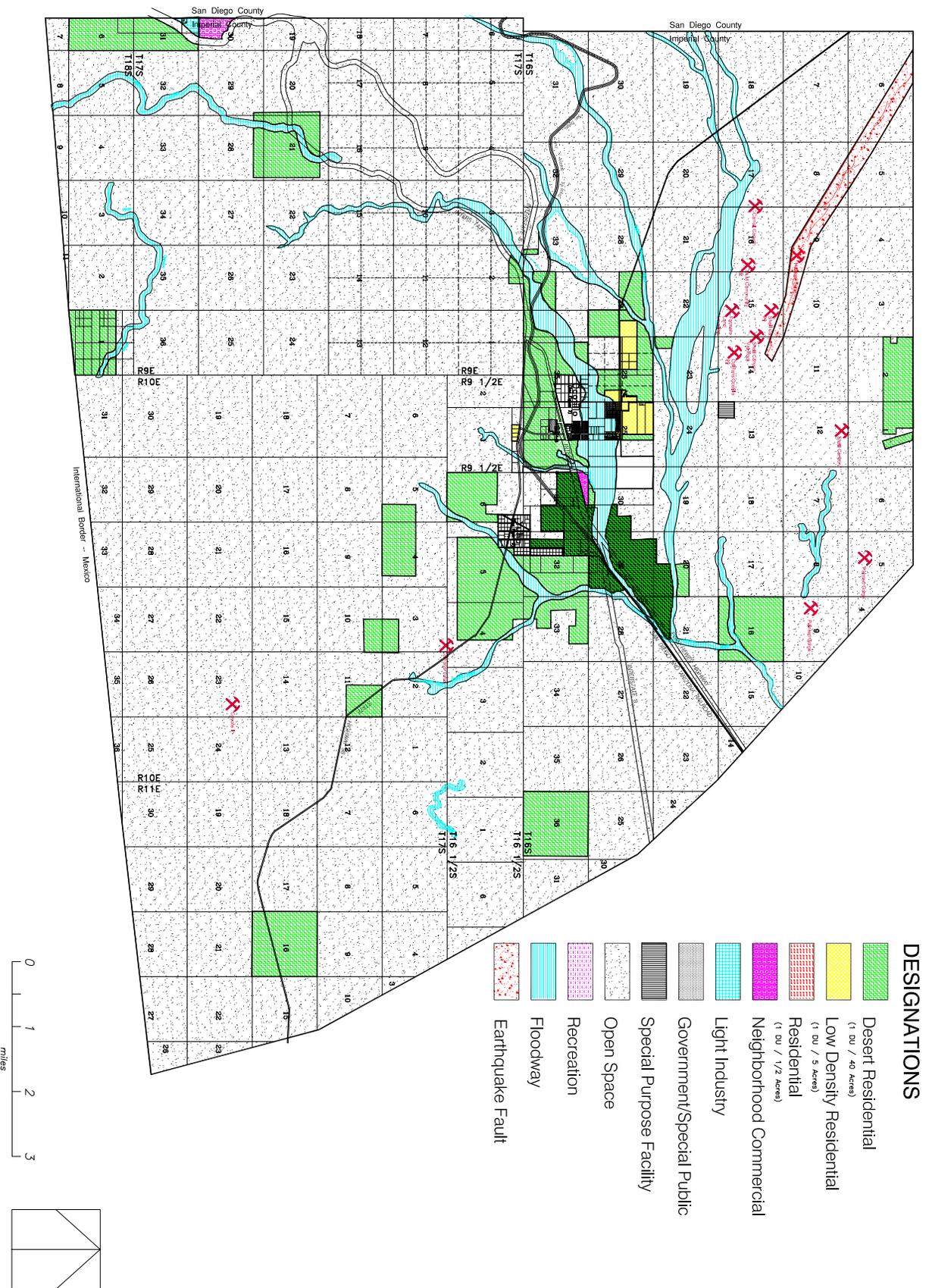
S/CD/JM/GA:OCOTILLO NOMIRAGE COMMUNITY AREA PLAN

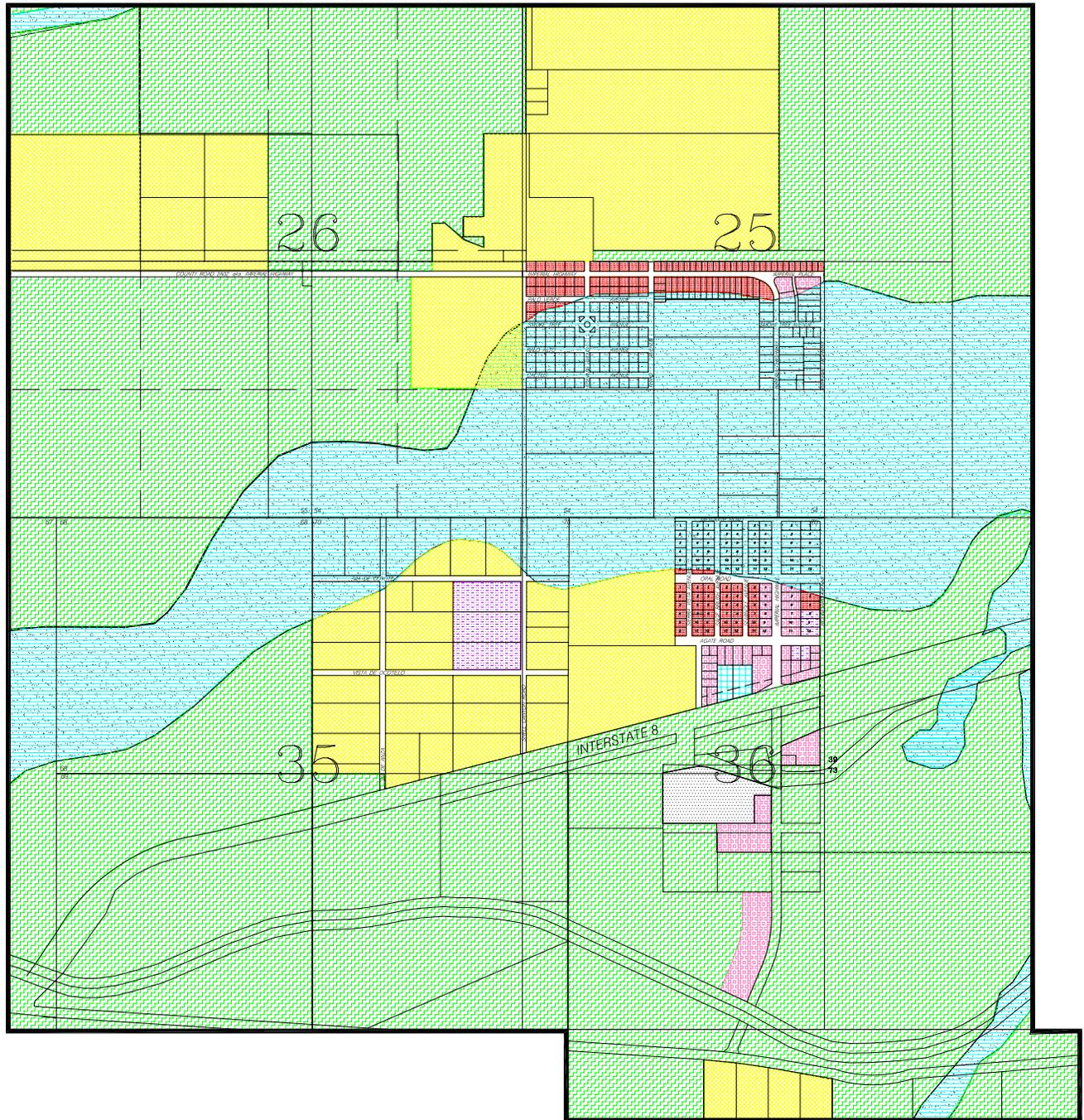
## Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Map

Approved April 12, 1994 by Minute Order # 12

Land Use Element

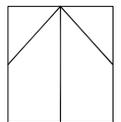
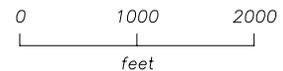
### Figure 1





**DESIGNATIONS**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Desert Residential (1 DU/40 AC)     |  Light Industry            |
|  Low Density Residential (1 DU/5 AC) |  Open Space                |
|  Residential (1 DU/0.5 AC)           |  Government/Special Public |
|  Neighborhood Commercial             |  Floodway                  |
|  Recreation                          |   |





- DESIGNATIONS**
- Desert Residential
  - Low Density Residential (1 su/5 ac)
  - Residential
  - Neighborhood Commercial
  - Recreation
  - Light Industry
  - Open Space
  - Government/Special Public
  - Floodway

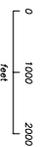


FIGURE 1

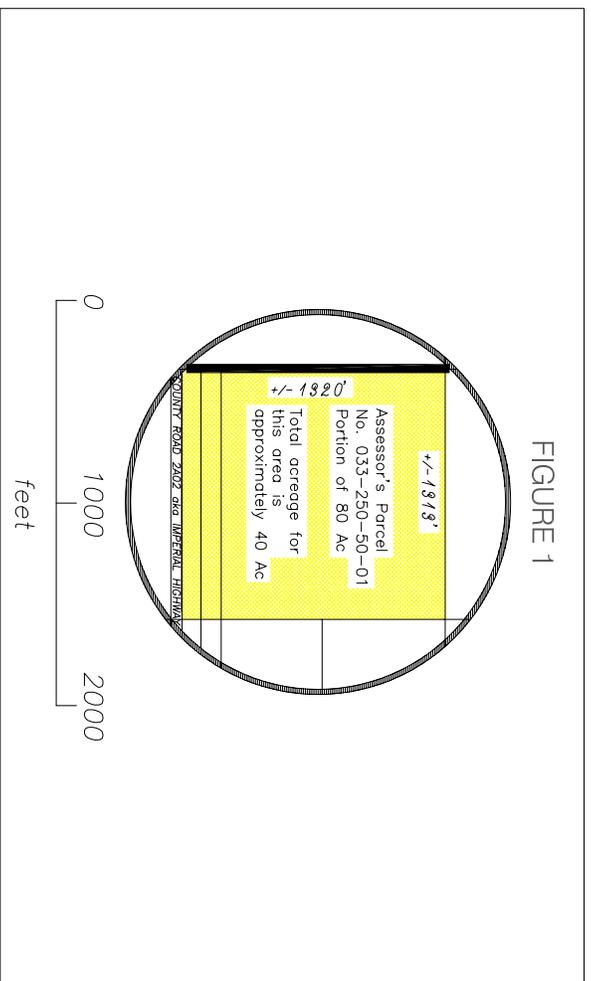


FIGURE 2

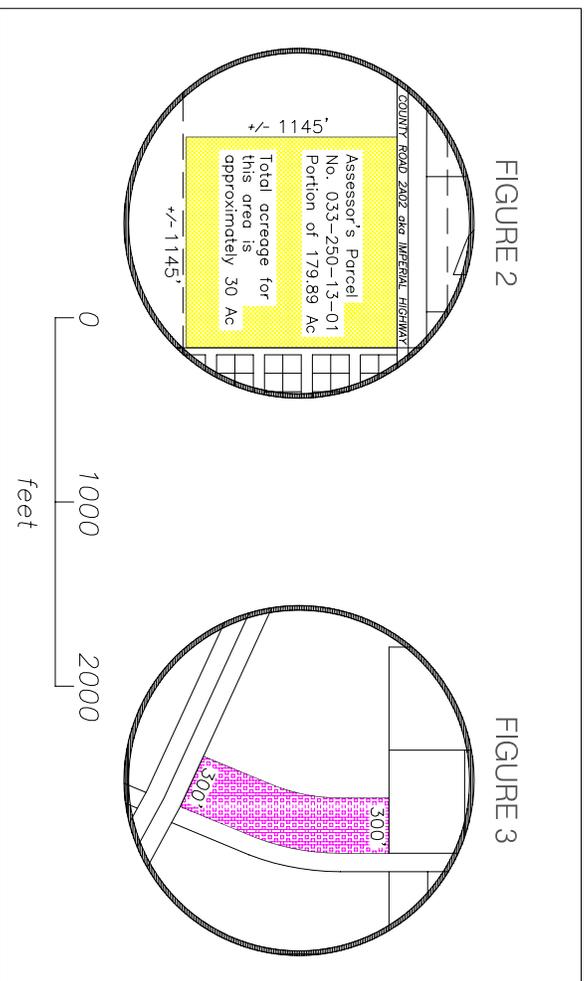
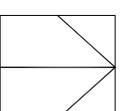
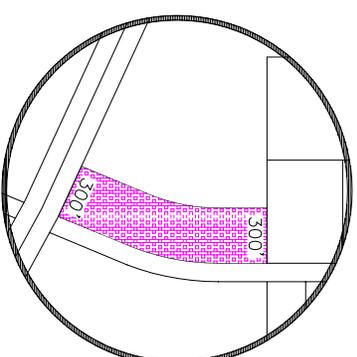


FIGURE 3



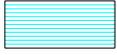
# Imperial County General Plan

## Townsite of Ocotillo Selected Blow-Up Ocotillo/Nomirage Community Area Map

Approved April 12, 1994 by Minute Order # 12

Land Use Element

**DESIGNATIONS**

-  Low Density Residential (1 DU/5 Ac)
-  Floodway

