

III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. PREFACE

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan serves as the primary policy statement by the Board of Supervisors for implementing policies to conserve the natural environment of Imperial County. The County recognizes that the degradation of one natural resource will have a cumulative effect upon the total resource base, including water, vegetation, air, wildlife, soil, minerals, and cultural landscapes. This section of the Element presents Imperial County's Goals and Objectives relative to planning for the natural environment of the unincorporated areas of the County.

The Goals and Objectives, together with the Implementation Programs and Policies in Chapter IV, are the statement that shall provide direction for private development and industry as well as government actions and programs. Imperial County's 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, therefore, are important guidelines for decision making relative to proposed projects and land use planning. It is recognized, however, that other social, economic, environmental, and legal considerations are involved in land use decisions and that these Goals and Objectives, and those of the other General Plan Elements, should be used as guidelines but not doctrines.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Conservation of Environmental Resources for Future Generations

Goal 1: Environmental resources shall be conserved for future generations by minimizing environmental impacts in all land use decisions and educating the public on their value.

Objective 1.1: Encourage uses and activities that are compatible with the fragile desert environment and foster conservation.

Objective 1.2: Coordinate the acquisition, designation, and management of important natural and cultural resource areas in Imperial County with other governmental agencies as appropriate.

Objective 1.3: Develop standards to protect significant natural and cultural resource areas for the purpose of enhancing both the planning and decision-making process.

Objective 1.4: Ensure the conservation and management of the County's natural and cultural resources.

Objective 1.5: Provide opportunities for enjoyment of a quality natural experience to present and future generations.

Objective 1.6: Promote the conservation of ecological sites and preservation of cultural resource sites through scientific investigation and public education.

Conservation of Biological Resources

Goal 2: The County will integrate programmatic strategies for the conservation of critical habitats to manage their integrity, function, productivity, and long-term viability.

Objective 2.1: Designate critical habitats for Federally and State-listed species.

Objective 2.2: Develop management programs, including preservation of habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard, desert pupfish, and burrowing owl.

Objective 2.3: Support investigation of long-term climate change effects on biological resources.

Objective 2.4: Use the CEQA and NEPA process to identify, conserve and restore sensitive vegetation and wildlife resources.

Objective 2.5: Give conservation of sensitive species and habitat a high priority in County park acquisition and development programs.

Objective 2.6: Attempt to identify, reduce, and eliminate all forms of pollution; including air, noise, soil, and water.

Preservation of Cultural Resources

Goal 3: Preserve the spiritual and cultural heritage of the diverse communities of Imperial County.

Objective 3.1: Protect and preserve sites of archaeological, ecological, historical, and scientific value, and/or cultural significance.

Objective 3.2: Develop management strategies to preserve the memory of important historic periods, including Spanish, Mexican, and early American settlements of Imperial County.

Objective 3.3: Engage all local Native American Tribes in the protection of tribal cultural resources, including prehistoric trails and burial sites.

Conservation of Geological Resources

Goal 4: The County will identify and protect geologic, soil, aggregate, and mineral resources for extraction while minimizing the effect of mining on surrounding land uses and other environmental resources.

Objective 4.1: Require use of latest technologies for extraction of mineral and quarry/aggregate resources that protect the natural desert environment.

Objective 4.2: Require that mineral extraction and reclamation operations be performed in a way that is compatible with surrounding land uses and minimize adverse effects on the environment.

Objective 4.3: Safeguard the use and full development of all mineral deposits.

Objective 4.4: Regulate the development adjacent to or near all mineral deposits and geothermal operations due to the potential for land subsidence.

Objective 4.5: Preserve significant geological features such as rock outcroppings, the Algodones Dunes, Imperial Sand Dunes, Salton Buttes, and Shell Beds in Yuha Basin.

Conservation of Visual Resources

Goal 5: The aesthetic character of the region shall be protected and enhanced to provide a pleasing environment for residential, commercial, recreational, and tourist activity.

Objective 5.1: Encourage the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the desert and mountain landscape.

Objective 5.2: Utilize the Code Enforcement process to eliminate visually dilapidated buildings that impact the visual character of rural communities.

Conservation of Water Resources

Goals 6: The County will conserve, protect, and enhance water resources in the County.

Objective 6.1: Ensure the use and protection of all the rivers, waterways, and groundwater sources in the County for use by future generations.

Objective 6.2: Ensure proper drainage and provide accommodation for storm runoff from urban and other developed areas in manners compatible with requirements to provide necessary agricultural drainage.

Objective 6.3: Protect and improve water quality and quantity for all water bodies in Imperial County.

Objective 6.4: Eliminate potential surface and groundwater pollution through regulations as well as educational programs.

Objective 6.5: Reclaim polluted water bodies, such as the New and Alamo Rivers.

Objective 6.6: Ensure protection of water bodies that are important for recreational fishing.

Objective 6.7: Prohibit the inappropriate siting of solid or hazardous waste facilities next to water bodies or over sources of potable groundwater or recharge basins. In association with the cleanup of the New River, all existing landfills in or near the river should eventually be closed.

Objective 6.8: Discourage the use of hazardous materials in areas of the County where significant water pollution could pose hazards to humans or biological resources.

Objective 6.9: Identify and protect watersheds and key recharge areas for the protection of water quality and groundwater.

Objective 6.10: Encourage water conservation and efficient water use among municipal and industrial water users, as well as reclamation and reuse of wastewater.

Objective 6.11: Coordinate with the appropriate agencies for the availability of water to meet future domestic, industrial/commercial and agricultural needs.

Protection of Air Quality and Addressing Climate Change

Goal 7: The County shall actively seek to improve the quality of air in the region.

Objective 7.1: Ensure that all project and facilities comply with current Federal, State, and local requirements for attainment of air quality objectives.

Objective 7.2: Develop management strategies to mitigate fugitive dust. Cooperate with all Federal, State and local agencies in the effort to attain air quality objectives.

Objective 7.3: Work cooperatively with the EPA and CARB in evaluating air quality monitoring in Imperial County.

Objective 7.4: Enforce and monitor environmental mitigation measures relating to air quality.

Objective 7.5: Coordinate efforts with Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC) and other appropriate agencies to reduce fugitive dust from unpaved streets.

Objective 7.6: Explore and assess strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the County.

PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Goal 8: Open space shall be maintained to protect the aesthetic character of the region, protect natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and minimize hazards to human activity.

Objective 8.1: Confine future urbanization within adopted Urban and Community areas.

Objective 8.2: Focus all new renewable energy development within adopted Renewable Energy Overlay Zones.

Objective 8.3: Recognize the regional significance of the development and conservation of recreational opportunities in Imperial County.

Objective 8.4: Provide a broad range of recreational facilities for all ages and economic groups emphasizing family-oriented opportunities.

Objective 8.5: Encourage the acquisition and development of additional County recreational facilities.

Objective 8.6: Recreational activities should be developed in such a manner as to minimize any significant environmental impact on humans and existing natural resources.

Objective 8.7: Encourage the development and improvement of recreational facilities in Imperial County.

Objective 8.8: Coordinate Federal, State, and County agencies for trail-oriented recreational uses.

Objective 8.9: Conserve desert lands, within the County's jurisdiction for wildlife protection, recreation, and aesthetic purposes.

Conservation and Restoration of Salton Sea

Goal 9: The County shall work towards comprehensive restoration of the Salton Sea in order to provide recreation, healthy habitat for wildlife, and economic revitalization in the region.

Objective 9.1: Develop programs in association with County, State, and Federal agencies and the Salton Sea Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to restore the Salton Sea.

Objective 9.2: Encourage renewable energy developments that include Salton Sea restoration components.

Objective 9.3: Coordinate with US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Salton Sea JPA in developing programs to protect and restore migratory bird habitat, desert pup fish, and other sensitive or endangered species associated with the Salton Sea.

Objective 9.4: Develop educational programs to promote a greater understanding of the value and importance of the Salton Sea habitat management areas among County residents.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

Table 2 identifies the relationship between the Conservation and Open Space Element Goals and Objectives to other Elements of the Imperial County General Plan. The Issue Area identifies the broader goals of the Element and the "Xs" identify that related objectives are contained in the corresponding Elements.