

In order to achieve the goal of creating a sustainable family-oriented community implemented through integrated and multi-tiered recreational facilities and a comprehensive neighborhood schools program, 101 RANCH implements a Specific Plan that is consistent with County goals, policies, and objectives.

VII. PROJECT CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

A. COUNTY GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The following discussion evaluates the project's conformance to the applicable goals and policies of each Element of the County of Imperial General Plan. Each General Plan Element was reviewed in detail and those General Plan Goals and/or Objectives that were determined to be relevant to the project are stated below, followed by a statement that addresses the project's conformance. The numbering of each Goal and Objective is per the General Plan. Since not all Goals and Objectives were applicable to the project, numbering is not consecutive.

Based on this evaluation, the 101 RANCH Specific Plan has been determined to substantially conform to the County of Imperial General Plan.

1. CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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 following discussion evaluates the project's conformance to the goals and objectives applicable to the project:

Goal 4 "The County will actively conserve and maintain contiguous farmlands and prime soil areas to maintain economic vitality and the unique lifestyle of the Imperial Valley."

Project Consistency: *The project is located between SR-86 and SR-111, which is an area of new and expanding growth. By concentrating development in a centralized area in close proximity to major transportation routes and providing complementary Specific Plan Areas near each other, as is the case with the 101 RANCH Specific Plan Area and Mesquite Lake Specific Plan Area, surrounding agricultural development will be preserved. The majority of land outside of the SR-86/SR-111 corridor will continue to serve agricultural uses.*

Goal 8 "The County will conserve, protect, and enhance the water resources in the planning area."

Objective 8.4 "Ensure the use and protection of the rivers and other waterways in the County. 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 8.6 "Eliminate potential surface and groundwater pollution through regulations as well as educational programs."

Objective 8.10 “Discourage the use of hazardous materials in areas of the County where significant water pollution could pose hazards to humans or biological resources.”

Project Consistency: *All phases of development within the Specific Plan area are subject to the federal and state water quality regulations of the Colorado River Basin RWQCB. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) has been prepared and Best Management Practice (BMP) recommendations have been incorporated into final project design to ensure that potential water quality impacts have been addressed.*

Objective 8.14 “Coordinate with the appropriate agencies for the availability of water to meet future domestic, industrial/commercial and agricultural needs.”

Project Consistency: *Service availability letters and a report consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill 610 and Senate Bill 221, which requires that the serving agency verify the existence of sufficient water supply, have been issued and certified by the County of Imperial to ensure that domestic water resources will meet the projected needs of this Specific Plan at buildout. See the discussion under Section 5, Water Element (below), for additional detail.*

Goal 9 “The County shall actively seek to improve and maintain the quality of air in the region.”

Objective 9.1 “Ensure that all facilities shall comply with current federal and state requirements for attainment of air quality objectives.”

Objective 9.2 “Cooperate with all federal and state agencies in the effort to attain air quality objectives.”

Project Consistency: *By planning residential development near centers of employment, alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling or walking to work become viable, which results in reduced reliance on automobiles, substantially reduced trip durations, and less traffic congestion. A project-specific Air Quality Analysis and Global Climate Change Analysis was prepared to determine potential air quality impacts associated with the development of 101 RANCH. These studies evaluated the project relative to current federal and state air quality standards. In-depth analysis and mitigation are provided in the Environmental Impact Report certified in conjunction with the adoption of this Specific Plan.*

Goal 10 “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 10.2 “Recognize the regional significance of the development and conservation of recreational opportunities in Imperial County.”

Objective 10.3 “Provide a broad range of recreational facilities for all ages and economic groups emphasizing family-oriented opportunities.”

Objective 10.5 “Any recreational activity must be developed in such a manner as to minimize any significant environmental impact on humans and existing natural resources.”

Objective 10.6 “Encourage the development and improvement of recreational facilities in Imperial County.”

Project Consistency: *The 101 RANCH Specific Plan includes an extensive open space and recreation system, consisting of approximately 183.5 acres of parks, paseos, trails, and open space buffers, which will include, where and as appropriate, water features using reclaimed or non-potable water, if allowed by the County of Imperial and the IID. These elements combine to provide connectivity and recreation within the Specific Plan Area. The open space buffers located between the developed areas and surrounding exterior roadways serve as a buffer to minimize potential hazards to human activity, provide passive recreation opportunities such as walking and hiking, and retain the existing irrigation and canal systems that provide the surrounding agricultural areas with water.*

2. LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element of the General Plan serves as the primary policy statement of the Board of Supervisors for implementing development policies and land uses in Imperial County. The following discussion evaluates the project’s conformance to the goals and objectives applicable to the 101 RANCH Specific Plan:

Goal 3 “Achieve balanced economic and residential growth while preserving the unique natural, scenic, and agricultural resources of Imperial County.”

Objective 3.2 “Preserve agriculture and natural resources while promoting diverse economic growth through sound land use planning.”

Objective 3.7 “Establish a continuing comprehensive long-range planning process for the physical, social, and economic development of the County.”

Project Consistency: *The long-range vision for Imperial County involves non-agricultural development in the corridor between SR-86 and SR-111. A General Plan Amendment and Rezone, approved concurrently with this Specific Plan, has re-designated the project area for residential and commercial development. The majority of land outside of the SR-86/SR-111 corridor will continue to serve agricultural uses. In addition, the Lavender Canal will remain functioning during project development in order to provide continued irrigation water for on-site and off-site farming uses.*

Objective 3.5 “Ensure safe and coordinated traffic patterns, contiguous growth, and promote a planned and consistent development around city/township areas.”

Project Consistency: *This Specific Plan has been developed to maintain and/or provide for a coordinated pattern of traffic using the standards of the Imperial County General Plan Circulation Element and through the crafting of an internal hierarchy of streets that further promotes coordinated traffic patterns and ensures safety. The 5,100-acre Mesquite Lake industrial development lies at the southern boundary of the 101 RANCH Specific Plan, and the proposed Rancho Los Lagos Specific Plan, which consists primarily of a residential golf-based community, place this Specific Plan Area in the center of a planned pattern of growth between the cities of Brawley and*

Imperial/El Centro. This pattern is consistent with and becomes an extension of the existing and/or planned development of these two nearby cities.

Objective 4.5 “Specific Plan Area designation should be used for outlying proposed growth areas in order to better determine appropriate land uses and the timing and financing for needed community facilities.”

Project Consistency: *The 101 RANCH is located between the cities of Brawley and Imperial/El Centro and encompasses about 1,894.7 acres of land that was undeveloped at the time this Specific Plan was adopted. The crafting and adoption of a specific plan for this large land area meets the objective of planning the development of appropriate land uses, and the phasing and financing plans detailed within this Specific Plan ensure that the construction of these uses and the provision of needed community facilities and infrastructure will be or has been completed in a timely fashion through numerous financial methodologies, including but not limited to, developer financing, bonds, proceeds from community facility districts, the MLCSA, and federal and state resources.*

Goal 5 “Encourage the compatible development of a variety of housing types and densities to accommodate regional population projections and special housing needs.”

Objective 5.1 “Provide sufficient, suitable residential sites and housing supply to meet projected housing needs of all segments of the population.”

Project Consistency: *The project provides for the development of 6,986 homes in a wide array of sizes, styles, and price ranges, including garden courtyard, paired homes, townhomes, and single-family detached residences on eight different lot sizes ranging from 4,000 to 8,000 square-feet. Residential densities range from 3.6 to 12.0 du/ac with an overall density of 3.7 homes per acre.*

Objective 8.2 “New developments shall provide improvements to meet the added demands for parks and recreational facilities.”

Objective 8.3 “Ensure that school facilities are adequate to meet the existing and projected needs of the population.”

Objective 8.4 “Ensure that all future proposed private and public facilities are adequate to meet expected population growth and the needed additional services around local cities.”

Objective 8.7 “Ensure the development, improvement, timing and location of community sewer, water, and drainage facilities will meet the needs of existing communities and new developing areas.”

Objective 8.8 “Ensure that the siting of future facilities for the transmission of electricity, gas, and telecommunications is compatible with the environment and County regulation.”

Objective 8.9 “Require necessary public utility rights-of-way when appropriate.”

Objective 8.10 “Provide for the review of public transportation needs in order to accommodate countywide growth.”

Project Consistency: *The 101 RANCH Specific Plan provides an array of passive and active recreation on 183.5 acres of parks, community recreation areas, paseos, trails, and landscape buffers. The project also has established a junior high school and four elementary school sites in order to ensure that school facilities are available. All necessary public and private facilities, including sewer, water, and drainage/retention have been incorporated within this Specific Plan, along with provisions for their timely financing, construction, and phasing. Thorough technical and environmental analysis has been conducted to ensure that the siting, reservation of rights-of-way, and development of electric, gas, and telecommunications facilities are completed in accordance with County regulations and State CEQA guidelines. The 101 RANCH Specific Plan preserves a two-lane transit corridor within the segment of Dogwood Road that traverses the Specific Plan Area along Dogwood Road.*

Objective 9.1 “Preserve as open space those lands containing watersheds, aquifer recharge areas, floodplains, important natural resources, sensitive vegetation, wildlife habits, historic and prehistoric sites, or lands which are subject to seismic hazards and establish compatible minimum lot sizes.”

Project Consistency: *No watersheds, aquifer recharge areas, flood plains, important natural resources, sensitive habitat, or historic or prehistoric sites existed on-site at the time this Specific Plan was adopted. Mitigation implemented by the project for significant impacts to the on-site burrowing owl reduced the impact to less than significant. An open space buffer, paseo system, and retention basins have been established to provide appropriate development setback from the Imperial Fault Line, which generally traverses the site in a north-south direction.*

3. NOISE ELEMENT

The Noise Element of the General Plan establishes the Board of Supervisors provisions for implementing policies to maintain and improve the noise environment in Imperial County. The following discussion evaluates the project’s conformance to applicable Noise Element goals and objectives:

Goal 1 “Provide an acceptable noise environment for existing and future residents in Imperial County.”

Goal 2 “Review proposed projects for noise impacts and require design which will provide acceptable indoor and outdoor noise environments.”

Goal 3 “Provide for environmental noise analysis inclusion in long range planning activities which affect the County.”

Project Consistency: *According to a site-specific acoustical analysis prepared for this Specific Plan, noise generated by the 101 RANCH Specific Plan does not and will not adversely affect the surrounding environment. Likewise, the analysis evaluated compatibility with surrounding land uses and the existing railroad that traverses the central community of the project. Furthermore, required compliance with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCRs) and County of Imperial Noise Ordinance will ensure interior and exterior noise levels will be acceptable.*

4. SEISMIC AND PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT

The Seismic and Public Safety Element of the General Plan is to be consulted in the implementation of development policies and land uses in Imperial County. The following discussion evaluates the 101 RANCH Specific Plan's conformance to the applicable Seismic and Public Safety Element goals and objectives:

Goal 1 "Include public health and safety considerations in land use planning."

Objective 1.1 "Require, where possessing the authority, that avoidable seismic 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 1.6 "Ensure environmental hazards are considered when siting critical facilities."

Objective 1.7 "Require developers to provide information related to geologic and seismic hazards when siting a proposed project."

Objective 1.8 "Reduce fire hazards by the design of new developments."

Goal 2 "Minimize potential hazards to public health, safety, and welfare and prevent the loss of life and damage to health and property resulting from both natural and human-related phenomena."

Objective 2.2 "Reduce risk and damage due to seismic hazards by appropriate regulation."

Objective 2.5 "Minimize injury, loss of life, and damage to property by implementing all state codes where applicable."

Project Consistency: *Division 15 of the County Land Use Ordinance has established procedures and standards for development within earthquake fault zones such as the fault zone that exists within the 101 RANCH Specific Plan. Per County regulations, construction of buildings intended for human occupancy, which are located across the trace of an active fault are prohibited. An exception exists when such buildings located near the fault or within a designated Special Studies Zone are demonstrated through a geotechnical analysis and report not to expose an person to undue hazard would be created by the construction. The recommendations and conclusions within the geotechnical analysis have been incorporated into the project design. In-depth analysis and discussion of the geotechnical report is provided in the Environmental Impact Report certified in conjunction with the adoption of this Specific Plan.*

5. WATER ELEMENT

The County's General Plan Water Element establishes goals that are broad-based statements reflecting the County's values, aims, and aspirations for management of this resource. The following discussion evaluates the project's conformance to the Water Elements' goals and objectives:

Program: "All development proposals brought before the County of Imperial shall be reviewed for potential adverse effects on water quality and quantity, and shall be required to implement appropriate mitigation measures for any significant impacts."

Project Consistency: Potential significant adverse impacts to water quality have been addressed through the NPDES Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) and the required Best Management Practices. The analysis and required mitigation are discussed and analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report certified in conjunction with the adoption of this Specific Plan. Effects to Water quantity have been addressed by the Water Supply Assessment required by Senate Bill 610 and in the Written Verification of Water Supply required by SB 221. Full discussion of the assessment and the letter is included in the aforementioned EIR.

6. CIRCULATION AND SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

The General Plan Circulation and Scenic Highways Element establishes broad-based goals and objectives for the maintenance and establishment of safe and efficient circulation, as well as the preservation of important scenic highways. The following discussion evaluates the 101 RANCH Specific Plan's conformance to this Element's applicable goals and objectives:

Goal 1 "The County will provide an integrated transportation system for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through the County of Imperial with minimum disruption to the environment."

Project Consistency: State Route 86, an existing four-lane highway located on the western edge of the project site, will continue to enable the movement of goods and services to regional, national, and international markets. In the future, it is anticipated that State Route 111, which has been funded and ground broken on its final phase, will replace or supplement this highway's role. Roads within the 101 RANCH Specific Plan have been improved in accordance with the Residential and Local Collector standards established in the County's Circulation Plan, and provisions have been established for the project to construct or cause to be constructed its fair share of adjacent Circulation Element roadways.

Objective 1.1 "Maintain and improve the existing road and highway network, while providing for future expansion and improvement based on travel demand and the development of alternative travel modes."

Objective 1.3 "Ensure safe and coordinated traffic patterns, contiguous with growth, and promote a planned and consistent development around city/township areas."

Objective 1.11 "Improve County circulation system roadways in concert with land development to ensure sufficient levels of service."

Project Consistency: The 101 RANCH Specific Plan provides for the improvement or construction of roads in a manner that maintains or improves the existing road and highway network, while providing for future expansion and improvement based on travel demand. The reservation of two mass transit lanes within the Dogwood Road right-of-way assures an opportunity for development of an alternative travel mode. In addition, bike lanes and paseos have been provided to connect schools, parks and other areas in the community to encourage alternative means of transportation. As indicated in previous Project Consistency comments design features and mitigation

established by the project traffic study ensure safe and coordinated traffic patterns. Project phasing assures that development occurs contiguous with growth and planned development allowing for the accommodation of sufficient levels of service. Responsibility for implementation and funding has been established to ensure timely availability.

Goal 2 “Consider all modes of transportation including motor vehicle, rail, transit, air transportation, and non-motorized transportation.”

Objective 2.1 “Develop a balanced circulation system which will provide for the economical, efficient, and safe movement of people and goods within and through the County.”

Objective 2.8 “Encourage existing railroad corridor right of ways to be preserved for future transportation needs.”

Project Consistency: *In addition to the upgrade of existing roadways and development of internal streets, 101 RANCH preserves and protects an existing railroad easement and dedicates a two-lane public transit corridor along Dogwood Road. Air transportation is provided by Brawley Municipal Airport and Imperial County Airport, located approximately four miles northeast and 6.5 miles southwest of the project site, respectively.*

7. GEOTHERMAL AND TRANSMISSION ELEMENT

The General Plan Geothermal and Transmission Element contains goals and objectives that serve as the primary policy statement by the Board of Supervisors for geothermal land uses and transmission in Imperial County. Although 101 RANCH is not located within a designated geothermal zone, the following discussion evaluates the Specific Plan’s conformance to this Element’s applicable goals and objectives:

Objective 5.1 “Require all major transmission lines to be located in designated federal and IID corridors.”

Project Consistency: *Easements for IID transmission lines are provided along Dogwood Road and the Union-Pacific Railroad, which bisects the 101 RANCH site.*

8. HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element presents the goals and objectives relative to the development, improvement, and maintenance of housing within the unincorporated areas of the County. The following discussion evaluates the 101 RANCH Specific Plan’s conformance to this Element’s applicable goals and objectives:

Goal 1 “Ensure the provision of housing sites in suitable locations and with adequate services that collectively accommodate a range of housing types, sizes and prices meeting the needs of all economic segments of the County’s population.”

Policy 1.2 “Encourage proposed residential development next to cities, schools, and other relevant services, and where availability of transit services is present.”

Project Consistency: *The project provides three different housing product types, including town homes, condominiums, and single-family residences in an area of expanding growth and development between SR-86 and SR-111. Schools, local commercial services, and other relevant services, including the preservation of a mass transit right-of-way have been incorporated within 101 RANCH.*

9. AGRICULTURAL ELEMENT

The Agricultural Element serves as the primary policy statement by the Board of Supervisors for implementing development policies for agricultural land use in Imperial County. The following discussion evaluates the 101 RANCH Specific Plan's conformance to this Element's applicable goals and objectives:

Objective 1.1 "Maintain existing agricultural land uses outside of urbanizing areas and allow only those land uses in agricultural areas that are compatible with agricultural activities."

Objective 1.8 "Allow conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses only where a clear and immediate need can be demonstrated, based on population projections and lack of other available land (including land within incorporated cities) for such non-agricultural uses. Such conversion shall also be allowed only where such uses have been identified for non-agricultural use in a city general plan or the County General Plan, and are supported by a study to show a lack of alternative sites."

Objective 1.10 "Hazard-prone areas such as earthquake faults and aircraft impact zones should remain designated for agricultural uses."

Objective 2.1 "Do not allow the placement of new non-agricultural land uses such that agricultural fields or parcels become isolated or more difficult to economically and conveniently farm."

Objective 2.2 "Encourage the infilling of development in urban areas as an alternative to expanding urban boundaries."

Objective 2.6 "Discourage the development of new residential or other non-agricultural areas outside of city "spheres of influence" unless designated for non-agricultural use on the County General Plan, or for necessary public facilities."

Objective 3.7 "Land use decisions regarding property contiguous to agricultural operations shall give consideration to creation of large parcel sizes to minimize conflicts with such operations."

Project Consistency: *101 RANCH is located in an urbanizing area between SR-86 and SR-111 that has been identified for future development. The Mesquite Lake Specific Plan and expansion areas, which involves 5,100 acres of industrial development, is located adjacent to the southern boundary and the proposed Rancho Los Lagos Specific Plan Area is situated at the northern boundary of this Specific Plan. It is anticipated that these uses will generate over 60,000 employees, who, with their families, will require housing in the Valley. Urban transit in the form of Highway 86 establishes the western boundary of the site. SR 111 provides an additional urban link just to the east of 101 RANCH. Efforts to centralize and concentrate non-*

agricultural development in the project area allows for agricultural uses in the County to remain contiguous and unobstructed by non-agricultural development. Furthermore, agricultural uses within 101 RANCH may operate within the Specific Plan Area as a temporary use until such time as such agricultural use is terminated for purposes of implementing development under the provisions the Specific Plan. Agricultural operation will be regulated by the County of Imperial Zoning Ordinance and any other applicable local, state, and/or federal standards, regulations, or provisions, including the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

Goal 4 “Maximize the inherent productivity of Imperial County’s agricultural resources by ensuring future availability of adequate and affordable irrigation water and by managing water such that it is used effectively and not wasted.”

Objective 4.1 “The County must favor efforts to ensure adequate irrigation water for agricultural areas.”

Project Consistency: *Existing on-site canals and drains will continue to provide irrigation for agricultural uses adjacent to and on-site that remain active during the phased development of this Specific Plan.*

B. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER REGIONAL PLANS

No policies, objectives, goals, or standards contained in other regional plans have been identified that are applicable to the 101 RANCH Specific Plan.