City of Blythe
General Plan 2025

March 2007

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025

Prepared by:

City of Blythe
Planning Department

March 2007

Acknowledgements

Blythe City Council

Robert A. Crain, Mayor
Charles Grotke, Vice Mayor
Alfonso Hernandez
Joseph Deconinck
Beverly Mays

Planning Commission

Leslie Jessop-Watkins, Chairperson
Tim Maley, Vice Chairman
Derek Copple
Jim Vikse
Mark Bolliger

City Staff

Les Nelson, City Manager
Charles Hull, Assistant City Manager
Jennifer Wellman, AICP, Planning Director

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025

City of Blythe
235 North Broadway
Blythe, California 92225

March 2007

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (*Continued*)

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES (*Continued*)

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

Introduction to the General Plan

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

1.1 GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

State law requires each California City and county to adopt a general plan. A general plan is defined as "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning." State requirements call for plans that "comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency."

A general plan is often compared to a "constitution" for local development, and serves as the policy basis for all land use decisions.

While they allow considerable flexibility, State-planning laws do establish some requirements for the issues that general plans must address. The California Government Code establishes both the content of the general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans.

- **The general plan must be comprehensive.** This requirement has two aspects. First, the general plan must be **geographically** comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the **full range of issues** that affects the City's physical development.

- **The general plan must be internally consistent.** This requirement means that the general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. "Horizontal" consistency applies as much to figures and diagrams as to the general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.

- **The general plan must be long-range.** Because anticipated development will affect the City and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every general plan to take a long-term perspective. This Plan has a 20-year time horizon. During the time-horizon at which build-out of the Plan is expected to occur, it is anticipated that the City's natural growth rate will be maintained. No targets on annual growth rates are dictated by the Plan. However, population projections for 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2025 are included as a reference. An on-going review and evaluation process, which enables the Plans' time-horizon to be extended regularly, is provided for in this Plan.

Additionally, general plans are comprised of three basic components:

- The general plan text;
- The general plan diagram (maps);
- The general plan Environmental Impact Report.

Planning Area

City general plans typically embrace more than just the city limits, reaching out into peripheral unincorporated areas. This practice allows general plans, which are updated every 10 to 20 years, to include areas outside the city which: 1) are likely to be candidates for annexation during the life of the general plan, 2) affect, and are affected by, city actions and 3) receive, or might reasonably be expected to receive, city services.

All California cities have a sphere-of-influence, typically encompassing an area broader than the city limits. The sphere-of-influence is useful for purposes of planning service and facility extensions, and for establishing joint city/county land use planning and regulations prior to annexation.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Implementation Actions and Strategies

The general plan is fundamentally a "policy document." The goals, objectives, and policies contained in the general plan will be used to guide the City's physical growth and development during the next twenty years.

By definition, a "goal" is a general expression of community values that sets a direction or ideal future end, condition, or state. An "objective" represents a specific end condition that is viewed as an intermediate step toward attainment of a goal. A "policy" is a specific statement to be used in guiding decision making, based on general plan goals and objectives. "Implementation Actions and Strategies" are directives that carry out general plan policies.

Goals, objectives, policies, and implementation actions and strategies are divided into subject areas based on the various general plan elements. The numbering system is based upon the subject area and type of statement. The following abbreviations are used:

- Goal (G)
- Objective (O)
- Policy (P)
- Implementation Actions and Strategies (I)

1.2 GENERAL PLAN THEMES

The General Plan addresses citywide concerns about growth and conservation. Topics such as resource management, economic development, community design, affordable housing, safety, noise, and community services are included because they all have physical and environmental implications that are critical to the creation of a sustainable community.

The policies of the General Plan reflect eight overall themes:

- **Sustainable development that balances growth and conservation.** Balancing concerns relating planning for growth and those focusing on conservation of resources is a key premise of the Plan. While the Plan does not dictate a growth rate, it seeks to ensure that growth does not erode those qualities of Blythe that make it an attractive place in which to live and work.

- **Resource-based planning.** The Plan seeks to ensure that future growth will be in harmony with Blythe's natural setting. Development in resource-sensitive areas will be permitted only upon

preparation of plans and implementation strategies that will ensure the continued viability of the resources.

- **Protection of agricultural and natural resources.** The General Plan reaffirms the City's long-standing commitment to protect viable agricultural and natural resources. Fieldwork undertaken as part of the General Plan helped identify and establish priorities for protection of significant biotic resources in the Planning Area. The Plan outlines strategies for acquisition and preservation of sensitive habitats and greenways and stipulates criteria for development in resource-sensitive areas.

- **Setting urban growth limits.** Much of the debate that accompanied Plan preparation has centered on where and how growth should occur. The General Plan Diagram reflects the citizens' desire for a compact form, with new development contiguous to existing urban areas. On the westside, the "green-line" is maintained.

- **Enhancement of community character and identity.** An assessment of community character was the first step undertaken as part of the General Plan update. The Community Design Element outlines policies to reinforce the City's identity and to ensure that new development builds on the City's traditional character, and is responsive to pedestrians and bicyclists.

- **Neighborhood-oriented development.** A guiding premise of the Plan is that activities and facilities used on a frequent basis, such as stores and parks, should be easily accessible to residents. The General Plan directs new growth in the form of mixed-use neighborhoods and provides sites for parks, stores and offices in neighborhoods that presently lack them. The Plan provides more, smaller neighborhood centers and restricts larger outlets to appropriate sites in community and regional centers.

- **Economic development. (To Be Added)** In addition to ensuring that adequate sites are available for future commercial and industrial development at appropriate locations, the Plan will propose a comprehensive strategy for job creation and job retention. This will include promotional activities targeted to environmentally sensitive industries, education and training, technical assistance and direct financial aid, and programs to enhance the use of the airport and attract industry to its environs.

- **Fostering development patterns that offer alternatives to automobile use.** Blythe's level topography and mature landscape offer a pleasant environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Yet many of the existing subdivisions create circuitous routes, and the single-use pattern in areas at the city-edge adds distance to trips. The Plan counters these trends by proposing development at intensities that would make transit feasible, land-use patterns to reduce distances between uses, and a renewed emphasis on traditional street patterns providing easy access for all residents, including bicyclists and pedestrians.

1.3 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

While the Plan is long-range and holistic, global issues such as "quality of life" and "community character", and sufficiency issues, such as "ability to provide services" or "adequacy of land to meet future needs", are taken a step farther to establish a specific set of policies and standards to guide decision-making.

Blythe's General Plan has six main purposes:

- To outline a vision for Blythe's long-range, sustainable, and resource-based development that reflects the aspirations of the community and a strategy for accomplishing that vision;

- To provide a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with Plan policies and resource-based standards and consistent with the concept of a sustainable community;

- To provide a basis for continuing consultation with Riverside County on policies and standards that are within the County's jurisdiction;

- To allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical environmental resources, and minimize hazards;

- To provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for a capital improvement program; and

- To promote high quality commercial and industrial development that will provide new jobs for City residents, and strengthen the economic base of the community.

The General Plan articulates a vision for the City, but it is not merely a compendium of ideas and wish lists. Plan policies focus on what is concrete and achievable and sets forth actions to be undertaken by the City. Because of legal requirements that a variety of City actions be consistent with the General Plan, regular on-going use of the Plan is essential. Because the Plan is both general and long-range, there will be circumstances and instances when detailed studies are necessary before Plan policies can be implemented.

Following Plan adoption, an Implementation Program should be prepared. It should outline the overall implementation strategy and the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies and City departments in carrying out the Plan.

The General Plan includes the seven elements required by State law (Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Noise and Safety) and other elements that address local concerns and regional requirements. The state-required mandatory elements are included in the General Plan, as outlined in **Table 1.3-1**.

TABLE 1.3-1
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REQUIRED GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS AND SECTIONS IN THE BLYTHE GENERAL PLAN

Required Elements	Where included in the General Plan
Land Use	Chapter 3: Land Use
Circulation	Chapter 4: Circulation
Conservation	Chapter 6: Open Space and Conservation
Housing (Under Separate Cover)	Chapter 9: Housing Policies
Open Space	Chapter 6: Open Space and Conservation
Safety	Chapter 7: Safety
Noise	Chapter 8: Noise

Organization Of The Elements

Each chapter or element of the General Plan includes a statement of purpose and a description of the requirements of State planning law for general plan adequacy. The relation of each element to other Plan elements is also described. This introductory material is followed by topical sections, which include policies pertinent to the topics.

Guiding and Implementing Policies. The General Plan includes guiding policies and implementing policies. Guiding policies are the City's statements of its goals and philosophy. Implementing policies represent commitments to specific actions. They may refer to existing programs or call for establishment of new ones. Together, the guiding and implementing policies articulate a vision for Blythe that the General Plan seeks to achieve. Guiding and implementing policies also provide protection for Blythe's resources by establishing planning requirements, programs, standards, and criteria for project review.

Explanatory material accompanies some policies. This explanatory material provides background information or is intended to guide Plan implementation. The use of "should" or "would" indicates that a statement is advisory, not binding; details will need to be resolved in Plan implementation. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referred, typically in italics for easy reference.

1.4 THE PLANNING PROCESS

The City's planning process includes monitoring and updating the General Plan and preparation of specific plans, resource management plans, and neighborhood and special plans. An Annual General Plan Report will provide an overview of the status of the General Plan and its implementation programs.

Amendments to the General Plan. As the City's constitution for development, the General Plan is the heart of the planning process. It is intended to be a living document and, as such, will be subject to more site-specific and comprehensive amendments over times. Amendments may also be needed from time to time to conform to State or federal law passed since adoption and to eliminate or modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic due to changed conditions (such as completion of a task or project, development of a site, or adoption of an ordinance or plan).

State law limits the number of times a city can amend its general plan. Generally, no jurisdiction can amend any mandatory element of its general plan more than four times in one year, although each amendment may include more than one change to the general plan. This restriction, however, does not apply to amendments to:

- Optional elements (such as the Community Design or Parks and Recreation Elements);
- Allow development of affordable housing;
- Comply with a court decision;
- Comply with an applicable airport land use plan; or,
- Implement a comprehensive development plan under the Urban Development Incentive Act.

Specific Plans. To provide specific direction for development in certain geographic areas, the General Plan calls for preparation of specific plans. The legal requirements for such plans are established in the Government Code, and topics to be addressed in each specific plan are listed in Chapter 3: Land Use.

The City Council may establish, and from time to time modify, a schedule of fees imposed for the adoption and amendment of specific plans. The City Council, after adopting a specific plan, may impose special fees upon persons seeking government approvals that are required to be consistent with the specific plan. Consistent with State law, these fees would cover the cost of preparation, adoption, and administering the plans.

Resource Management Plans. To protect sensitive biological resources, the General Plan requires preparation of resource management plans before any subdivision or development may be approved that would affect certain sensitive biological resources. The locations of these resources are mapped, and the specific requirements for these plans are presented in Chapter 6. If these plans are prepared as part of specific plans, the City Council may establish fees to recoup plan preparation costs.

Neighborhood and Special Area Plans. The General Plan envisions that, in certain circumstances, neighborhood and special area plans may be prepared to provide specific design guidelines and standards for the conservation and enhancement of neighborhoods and other areas possessing distinctive features or character. Such plans may accommodate new development on infill sites and also provide for the gradual elimination of incompatible uses. Neighborhood and special area plans would be tailored to individual areas and may not necessarily address all of the topics required by state law for specific plans.

Annual General Plan Report. The Government Code requires that an annual report be submitted to the City Council on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report also is to be submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the City's share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of affordable housing. In addition, mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) should be addressed in the Annual Report because they are closely tied to Plan implementation. Finally, the Annual Report should include a summary of all General Plan amendments adopted during the preceding year and an outline of upcoming projects. General Plan issues should be addressed in the coming year, along with a work program and budget.

The Annual Report should be prepared by City staff during the early stages of the budget process and submitted for review to the Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the City Council. Public comments on the Annual Report may be submitted in writing to the Development Services Department. The Planning Commission and the City Council will also hear public comments on the Annual Report at duly noticed public hearings.

Five-Year Review. The City will undertake a comprehensive review of the General Plan every five years after adoption. This review will include:

- Comprehensive evaluation of Plan policies;
- Analysis of the effectiveness of implementation programs and strategies initiated to carry out the Plan;
- Review of five-year growth trends and re-assessment of future urban land needs in light of the Planning Area's carrying capacity and available land inventory; and;
- Systematic assessment of the resource-based thresholds, environmental standards, and resource management plans.

The focus of this five-year review will be to determine how well the General Plan has performed— whether policies related to development and environmental conservation have been effective. A report summarizing City staff's findings and recommendations will be circulated for public comment and then presented to the

Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will review the report on the five-year review and make a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission and the City Council also will hear comments on the report at duly noticed public hearing.

1.5 PROLOGUE AND SUMMARY

Listed below are key guiding policies that, together with the General Plan Diagram (included in Chapter 3), summarize the vision for Blythe's long-range, sustainable and resource-based development embodied in the General Plan. Reference to the full text of the Plan is necessary to determine whether a proposed private or public project is consistent with the Plan. The General Plan also includes additional guiding and implementing policies and explanatory material that will guide Plan implementation, and information on resource-based standards to be used in project review.

▪ Community Design

City Form

Reinforce the compact form of the City.

Create a clear definition of the physical extent of the City.

Emphasize key city entrances.

Minimize the intrusion of Interstate Highway 10 and its interchanges on the visual character and form of the City.

Continuity and Connection

Make improvements to the major corridors traversing the City to heighten their visibility and accessibility; design street and abutting improvements in consideration of their hierarchical role and function within the City.

Restrict the scale and size of major arterials so as to avoid creating barriers within the City and establish design guidelines for scenic roadways.

Heighten the visual prominence of the downtown corridor to establish a sense of orientation and identity within the City.

Neighborhood Conservation and Development

Reinforce the individual character of existing neighborhoods and districts, and encourage neighborhood rehabilitation and improvement.

Promote the development of the urban forest to reinforce the image and identity of the community and its older neighborhoods.

Encourage positive transitions in scale and character where new development and expansion of existing buildings are proposed.

Downtown

Reinforce the physical framework, which defines the downtown district.

Encourage new development that is urban in scale and character, including buildings of minimum height.

Encourage preservation and enhancement of buildings of special historic and/or architectural interest.

Maintain and enhance a strong pedestrian scale and orientation within Downtown.

Improve the physical linkages to the Government Center and Todd Park through bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Encourage special events, festivities, and celebrations within streets and public spaces downtown.

Hobsonway

Support beautification of the Hobsonway commercial strip and encourage infill and adaptive re-use of transitioning commercial buildings.

New Commercial and Industrial Projects

Encourage consideration of the context and potential linkages to surrounding areas in site and building design of new commercial and industrial projects.

Encourage a human scale in the design of large-scale projects, use of high-quality materials and finishes and innovative site design for surface parking.

Incorporate design features that foster a sense of security.

New Residential Neighborhoods

Create new neighborhoods oriented to the pedestrian and establish clear and distinctive neighborhood edges, organized around larger streets and natural features such as the Colorado River and the Mesa with a central focus of activity within each neighborhood.

Mark major entries to neighborhoods, but discourage the use of high walls and gated entries, which isolate areas from one another and create an unfriendly appearance.

Integrate special features as landmarks to heighten a sense of orientation within new neighborhoods, and encourage tree planting.

Encourage diversity in parcel and house sizes, with careful transitions between densities; ensure that higher density development is designed with a street/pedestrian orientation.

Design for greater resident surveillance and visibility of public and semi-public places.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood Cores

Locate mixed-use neighborhood cores centrally within neighborhoods and closely tied to the framework of existing parks and community facilities that structure the neighborhoods.

Ensure that the scale and character of development does not overwhelm the neighborhood, and locate parking areas so they do not detract from the pedestrian environment.

Encourage development of farmer's markets and other seasonal events that attract people.

Mesa Development

Blend mesa development with the surrounding landscape and topography to diminish its visual prominence.

In foothill and mesa areas, allow for streets that are kept to the minimum dimension necessary for access and parking to reduce grading.

Encourage careful alignment of new roads to provide maximum view corridors, to the extent other objectives, such as solar orientation and circulation, are not diminished.

Landmarks and Public Art

Encourage preservation of identified buildings and landscapes of historic significance.

Identify locations for new landmarks and public art at key places within the City's core.

Encourage development of cultural and arts facilities Downtown and within adjacent neighborhoods.

▪ Land Use

Growth and Physical Expansion

Promote orderly and balanced growth and infill development by working with the County to establish long-term growth boundaries for the Planning Area, consistent with Plan objectives. Ensure that new development is at an intensity to ensure a long-term compact urban form.

Maintain boundaries between urban and agricultural uses in the north and south, and urban uses and the mesa hillsides in the west; limit expansion north and south to maintain compact urban form.

Residential Land Use

Preserve the scale and character of established neighborhoods.

Provide incentives for development of mixed-use neighborhood centers in both new neighborhoods and established neighborhoods that lack them.

Allow and encourage small-lot single-family housing development.

Improve the community orientation of new residential developments.

Downtown

Maintain and enhance Downtown's vitality and economic well-being, and its presence as the City's symbolic center.

Encourage development of Downtown as a mixed-use activity center with retail and visitor-oriented uses, business and personal services, government and professional offices, communications facilities, civic uses, and high density residential uses.

Provide incentives for infill development, intensification, and reuse of currently underutilized sites Downtown.

Commercial and Retail Land Use

Maintain Blythe's prominence as the center of retail activity in the Palo Verde Valley.

Promote neighborhood identity and reduce dependence on the automobile by providing local shopping centers that many residents can reach on foot or bicycle.

Encourage pedestrian-oriented design in both new shopping areas and existing centers.

Offices and R&D Facilities

Encourage large-scale office development and research and develop (R&D) facilities to locate in industrial parks.

Encourage professional and administrative offices to locate in and near Downtown, in commercial centers and, in the case of medical offices, near hospitals.

Allow offices serving local needs within the community on "office only" sites and in mixed-use neighborhood cores as secondary uses.

Industry

Provide appropriately located areas for a broad range of manufacturing, warehousing, and service uses to strengthen the City's economic base and provide employment for residents.

Protect the supply of land suitable for industrial use by not allowing incompatible uses to locate in industrial areas.

Provide sites for non-industrial land uses that complement industrial development or that require an industrial environment.

Airport

Protect the City's investment in the Municipal Airport and promote airport-related development in the Airport environs. Prevent development in the Airport environs that will pose hazards to aviation or interfere with or endanger the landing, taking off, or maneuvering of aircraft.

Special Development Areas

Provide policies to guide development at specific sites critical to plan implementation, including the Mesa, along the Riverfront and Downtown.

▪ Circulation

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Develop a system of sidewalks and bikeways that promote safe walking and bicycle riding for transportation and recreation.

Provide safe and direct pedestrian routes and bikeways between and through neighborhoods and other places within the Planning Area.

Work with the Palo Verde Irrigation District to develop a network of bicycle trails along the irrigation canals.

Provide adequate bicycle parking; improve safety conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians through traffic engineering and law enforcement efforts, and provide for shaded pedestrian routes, where possible.

Plan and design pedestrian facilities to meet the needs of disabled persons.

Transportation System Management (TSM)

Establish a minimum 10 percent trip reduction goal.

Ensure that major employers, including the City, implement TSM programs to reduce peak-period trip generation.

Cooperate with public agencies and other entities to promote the development of local and regional public transit serving Blythe.

Standards for Traffic Level of Service

Strive to maintain traffic LOS B on residential streets and LOS C or better on arterial and collector streets and at all intersections during peak hours.

Circulation and Street System

Promote safe and efficient vehicle circulation; make efficient use of existing facilities, and through the arrangement of land uses, improved alternate modes, and provision of more direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, strive to reduce the total vehicle-miles traveled.

Provide fair and equitable means for paying for future street improvements.

Neighborhood Streets

Provide for increased connections between and within neighborhoods for bicycles, pedestrians, and, where appropriate, automobiles.

Parking

Expand public parking programs downtown to alleviate existing and future shortages.

Require all development outside Downtown to provide off-street parking, but limit parking consistent with other Plan policies related to air quality and resource conservation.

Goods Movement

Provide adequate circulation and off-street parking and loading facilities for trucks and facilitate inter-modal goods delivery.

Airport

Maintain and improve Blythe Municipal Airport for commercial and general aviation and for special aviation needs, including facilities for propeller, turbo, motor craft and jet aircraft.

▪ Parks and Recreation

Develop a diversified, high-quality public park system that provides recreation opportunities at a variety of scales for all residents.

Use the irrigation canals as a framework to provide a network of open space.

Locate future neighborhood parks closer to where people live whenever possible.

Engage in cooperative efforts with Palo Verde Unified School District (PVUSD) and Palo Verde Community College (PVCC) to provide recreational facilities.

Educational Facilities

Support the efforts by PVUSD and PVCC to maintain and improve educational facilities and services.

Encourage PVUSD to provide educational facilities with sufficient permanent capacity to meet the needs of current and projected enrollment, and cooperate with PVUSD in coordinating joint use of school facilities for community recreation.

Water Supply and Wastewater Service

Promote orderly and efficient expansion of public utilities to meet projected needs.

Encourage water conservation with incentives for decreased water use and active public education programs.

Coordinating and Funding Infrastructure

Coordinate capital improvements planning for all municipal service infrastructure with the direction, extent, and timing of growth.

Establish equitable methods for distributing costs associated with serving new development, including impact fees, where warranted.

Storm Drainage

Develop a comprehensive storm drainage plan that includes alternative storm control features and use of detention and retention basins.

Establish equitable methods of paying for future storm drainage improvements.

Community Services

Support efforts to improve and expand health and social services for all segments of the community.

Encourage development of adequate, affordable, and quality childcare.

Resource-based Thresholds and Performance Standards for New Development

Establish and maintain standards for public services and facilities to ensure that service demands of new development do not exceed the capacities of streets, utilities and other public services.

Require new development to pay for mitigating impacts on existing public services and facilities to maintain service levels.

▪ Open Space and Conservation

Air Quality

Strive to meet all state, regional, and federal air quality standards; reduce generation of air pollutants.

Promote the use of trees and plants in landscaping to reduce air pollutant levels.

Coordinate air quality, transportation, and land use planning with the County and agencies responsible for air quality management.

Biotic Resources

Protect habitats that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or represent valuable biological resources in the Planning Area.

Preserve and protect areas determined to function as regional wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between sensitive habitats and areas being considered for future conservation because of their high value.

Provide for no net loss of overall wetland acreage; where such losses may be unavoidable at the project level, require mitigation that meets the no net loss goal.

Water Quality

Enhance the quality of surface water resources of the Planning Area and prevent their contamination.

Comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations and standards to maintain and improve groundwater quality.

Where feasible, maintain the natural condition of waterways and flood plains and protect watershed to ensure adequate groundwater recharge and water quality.

Open Space

Maintain hillside and viable agricultural lands as open space for resource conservation and preservation of views.

Preserve and enhance riparian corridors adjacent to the Colorado River as open space corridors for their visual amenity, drainage, fisheries, wildlife habitats, flood control, and water quality value.

Protect aquifer recharge areas needed to maintain adequate groundwater supplies.

Minimize conflicts between urban and agricultural uses by requiring buffers and greenbelts.

Agriculture

Promote continued agricultural use of important farmland outside the urban area.

Continue to work with Riverside County to identify and maintain agricultural lands.

Minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban uses by requiring buffers or use restrictions or by using roads and canals to separate uses.

Mineral Resources

Work with the State and Riverside County to identify and protect significant mineral resources in the Planning Area.

Coordinate mineral resource extraction with other land uses.

Archaeological, Historic, and Paleontological Resources

Protect archaeological, historic, and paleontological resources for their aesthetic, scientific, educational, and cultural values.

Energy Resources

Conserve scarce or nonrenewable energy resources.

Promote energy efficiency in new subdivisions and in building design.

Waste Management and Recycling

Reduce the generation of solid waste, including hazardous waste, and recycle those materials that are used, to slow the filling of local and regional landfills.

▪ Safety

Flooding and Dam Inundation

Minimize threat to life and property from flooding and dam inundation.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Protect lives and property from seismic and geologic hazards.

Fire Services

Improve the level of high quality, effective, and efficient fire protection services for Blythe and its residents.

Minimize the loss of life and property resulting from the hazards of fire, medical and rescue emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, and disaster response and recover.

Law Enforcement

Continue to provide community-oriented policing services that are responsive to citizens' needs.

Increase and maintain public confidence in the ability of the Police Department to provide quality police services.

Emergency Management

Use the City's Emergency Operations Plan as the guide for emergency management.

Miscellaneous Hazards

Protect residents from the potential health dangers of electric and magnetic fields generated by power transmission lines and other sources, and hazards associated with agricultural spraying and wind shear.

▪ Noise

Protect public health and welfare by eliminating existing noise problems where feasible, by establishing standards for acceptable indoor and outdoor noise, and by preventing significant increases in noise levels.

Incorporate noise considerations into land use planning decisions, and guide the location and design of transportation facilities to minimize the effects of noise on adjacent land uses.

▪ Economic Development

Maintain a balanced land use program that provides opportunities for commercial and industrial development.

Actively promote economic development opportunities and knowledge of Blythe in the county, region, and State; maintain a positive small-business climate, and strengthen the City's tax base by encouraging development with tax generation potential.

Promote economic development activities that link residents with businesses in the City, such as job training and job development, and facilitate jobs/housing balance.

Encourage agricultural processing and cooperative distribution and marketing of agricultural products grown locally.

Promote high technology and research and development activities, and enhance aspects of the community that help economic development and draw residents to Blythe.

Encourage businesses in Blythe to make purchases in the community whenever possible to support local firms.

Chapter 2

Community Design Element

2 COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley region comprise one of the most important agricultural areas in Riverside County. The Palo Verde Valley is located at the extreme eastern portion of Riverside County, along the Colorado River. While the first non-Indian visitors to the Valley are believed to have arrived in the latter part of the 18th century, it was not until the latter part of the 19th century that interest in development, specifically agricultural development, began. The original and continuing center of development in the Palo Verde Valley has been the City of Blythe.

The Palo Verde Valley is one of the richest agricultural regions in California, having been created by the continuous flooding of the valley floor by the Colorado River, leaving deep, rich deposits of silt. The region has also become popular and well known for the excellent frontage and access to the Colorado River, and as a gateway to the surrounding desert areas. While expanding to broaden its economic base through the development of its various resources, the City also takes great strides to protect and enhance the rural residential quality of the community, which is highly valued by its residents.

The City of Blythe comprises approximately 27 square miles of incorporated area, a limited portion of which is in agriculture. The City's sphere-of-influence surrounds the incorporated city limits and comprises approximately 29,200 acres. Additionally, there are three planning areas located outside of the existing city limits and sphere-of-influence. Two of the planning areas are located north and south of the existing city limits and/or sphere-of-influence adjacent to the Colorado River. The third planning area is located north and west of the Blythe Municipal Golf Course. The city limits, sphere-of-influence and planning area boundaries are shown in **Figure 2-2**.

This element builds on the positive qualities of being located in the Palo Verde Valley, along the west bank of the Colorado River. It introduces policies aimed at protecting the natural resources of the City and enhancing its livability as it moves into the 21st century. It embraces the concept of agricultural lands preservation around the city and encourages the linkage of the sense of the open spaces into the city. Within the city, the element advances the notion of encouraging a hierarchy of mixed-use districts that can create a model of neighborliness and the design of environments that discourage auto dependence and emphasize transit, pedestrian and bicycle movement.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

Community design is of critical importance to decisions that are made regarding general growth and development, but under State law, community design is not a mandatory element of a General Plan and, where included, frequently has a limited focus. In Blythe, community design is taking a key position in the community planning process by establishing principles at the outset for the formulation of this Plan Element.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Community Design Element is intended to influence the physical form of the community, and express an urban vision for the future. While other Plan Elements provide depth in specialized areas, such as circulation, housing and open space, the Community Design Element is more comprehensive in scope, and brings together

many of the ideas that are discussed in other Plan Elements. The Land Use Element addresses policies related to the physical extent of urban development, residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses, density and intensity, the creation of neighborhood mixed-use districts and requirements for special development areas; the Circulation Element sets forth the functional characteristics of desired circulation patterns and specifically gives guidance for a greater focus on transit, pedestrian and bicycle movement; and the Open Space and Environmental Conservation Elements establish policies related to the integration of natural features within the community, protection of biological resources, and the use of open space for resource protection in new development.

2.1 CITY FORM

Blythe has long played a role as central community within an agricultural landscape and as a focus of trade and commerce within the Palo Verde Valley. This civic role and importance within the region can be heightened through physical improvements to the form, structure and character of the city and a better definition of city edges and entries.

Emphasize the role of downtown as the heart of the community. Downtown Blythe plays an important role in the social as well as economic well being of the community. It is the symbolic centerpiece of the community and focus of civic life and social activity. Policies contained within this element provide for preserving and strengthening the role that the downtown plays in the community.

Enhance the special qualities of existing neighborhoods and districts. For many of Blythe's residents, the livability and attractiveness of the community as a whole is found in its older, core neighborhoods. Much of this attraction can be traced to the individuality of these older neighborhoods. This individuality and distinct characteristics of these older neighborhoods and their quality of life should be maintained and enhanced whenever possible.

Reintegrate transitioning commercial districts. The Plan also sets forth policies for transitioning existing commercial districts such as along east Hobsonway, to reestablish a more positive relationship with the surrounding city. Policies provide for the infill and revitalization of underutilized areas and encourage more attractive development.

Reclaim downtown streets as public space. Streets comprise the major open spaces of cities and can be among the liveliest and most memorable public places within the community. Plan policies are aimed at balancing the need to facilitate auto circulation and parking with the desire for the street to play an important role in creating a sense of place.

GUIDING POLICIES: City Form

1. **Policy:** Reinforce the form of the City. Blythe has a relatively compact focus, contained for the most part within a two-mile ring extending from the intersection of Hobsonway and Broadway. This "ring" roughly circumscribes the outer limits of the urbanized area, or core of the city, today. The "ring" does not represent the desired future urbanization of the community, since it excludes the Riverfront, the lands surrounding the municipal golf course and the airport. However, the "ring" represent the area to be connected to and become a part of as future residential, commercial and industrial development in the outlying areas occurs.

2. **Policy:** Emphasize key city entrances. As shown in **Figure 2-3**, there are a number of entrances that are important in establishing a sense of arrival and departure to Blythe and in creating a

stronger sense of regional identity. There is a clear change of character when arriving at the entrances into Blythe arriving from both the west, through the flat landscape of the desert, and from the east that also come out of the desert into green agricultural fields and orchards (see **Figures 2-4** and **2-5**). These differences should be emphasized and the entries enhanced through the treatment of landscape and built form within these areas.

3. **Policy:** Minimize the intrusion of Interstate Highway 10 and its interchanges on the visual character and form of the city. Although Interstate Highway 10 extends through the length of the city, segments of it are elevated and there are several interchanges and undercrossings. As a result, it does not divide the city as severely as freeways have in other California communities. Although some landscape improvements have been made along parts of the freeway, they should be completed along its entire length through the city so that the highway further recedes within the community.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: City Form

- **Implementation:** Study the feasibility of creating a greenbelt and a transition buffer zone between the more compact urban core and those areas outside the boundary of the city.

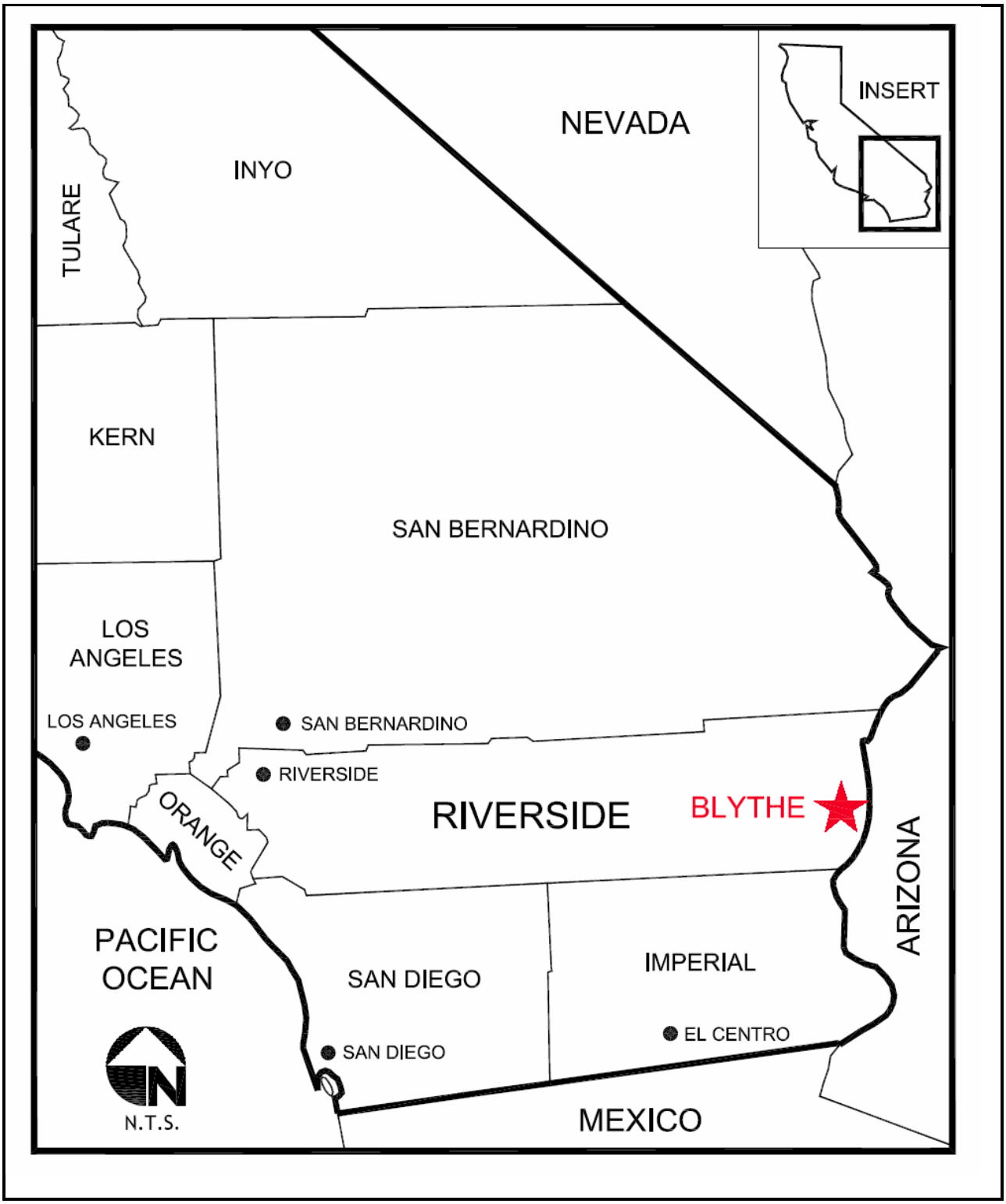
  One of the ways to reinforce the form of the city is to establish a greenbelt. Particularly on the west side of the city, such a greenbelt or open space system should be explored. In other areas, appropriate buffers and transitions should be studied and appropriate standards established in the City's Zoning Ordinance. Details are provided in the Land Use Element and the Open Space Element.

- **Implementation:** Maintain the successive unfolding of views to the mountains and the Mesa from the City and to the City from the Mesa along key routes through design guidelines and standards related to setback, building height, color and materials as well as landscaping along these corridors.

- **Implementation:** In conjunction with CalTrans, pursue public and private sources of funding for the implementation of landscape improvements along Interstate Highway 10 and State Route 95.

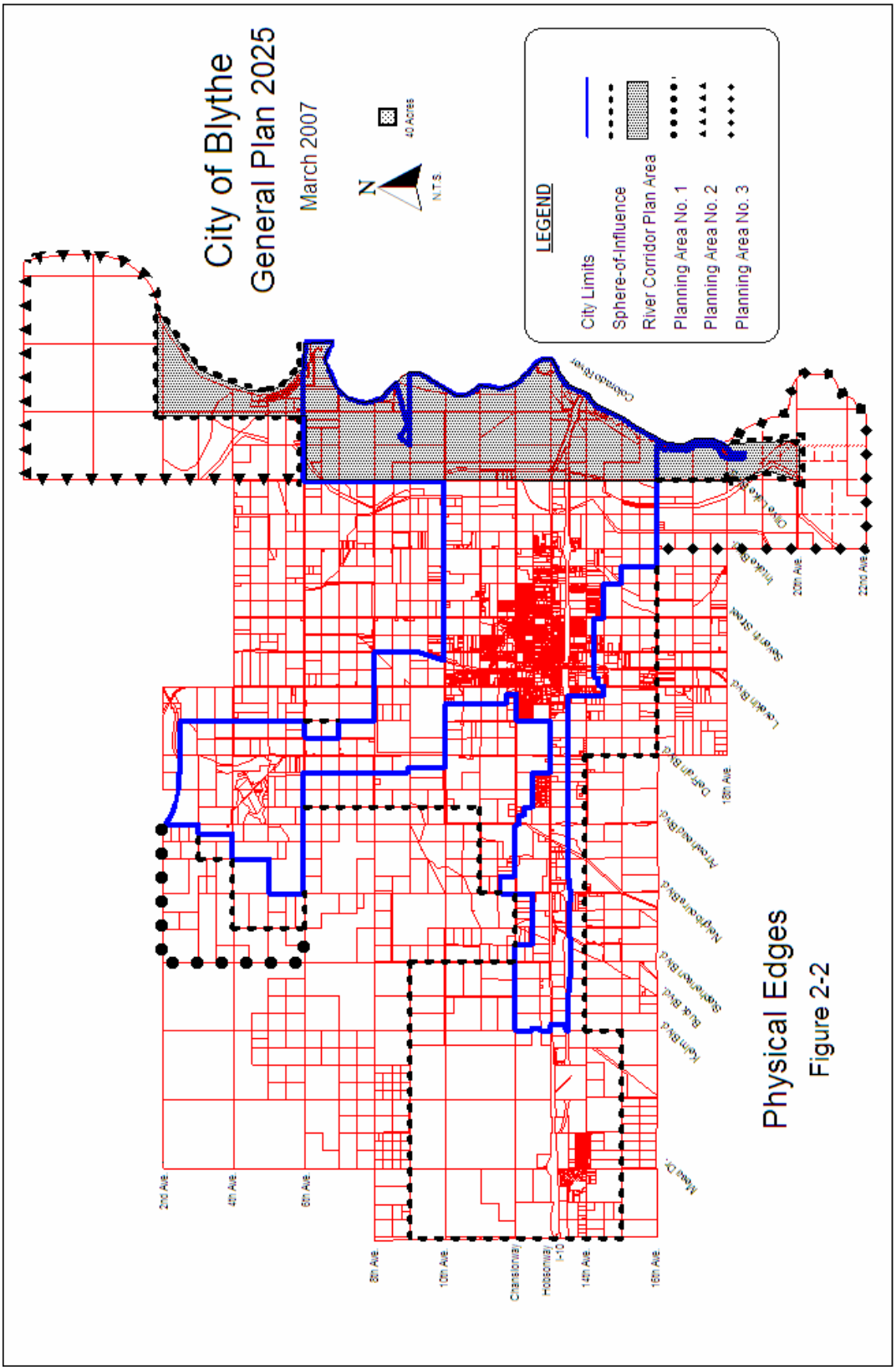
  This could include State grants for the improvements of streets and highways as well as continued requirements for private developers to make landscape improvements at the time of development.

- **Implementation:** Establish planting programs that extend the sense of the agricultural landscape at the western and eastern gateways to the City, and maintain a predominant sense of open land on the south.



Regional Location Map
Figure 2-1

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
City Limits
Sphere-of-Influence
River Corridor Plan Area
Planning Area No. 1
Planning Area No. 2
Planning Area No. 3
Colorado River
Hobsonway
I-10
Physical Edges
Figure 2-2

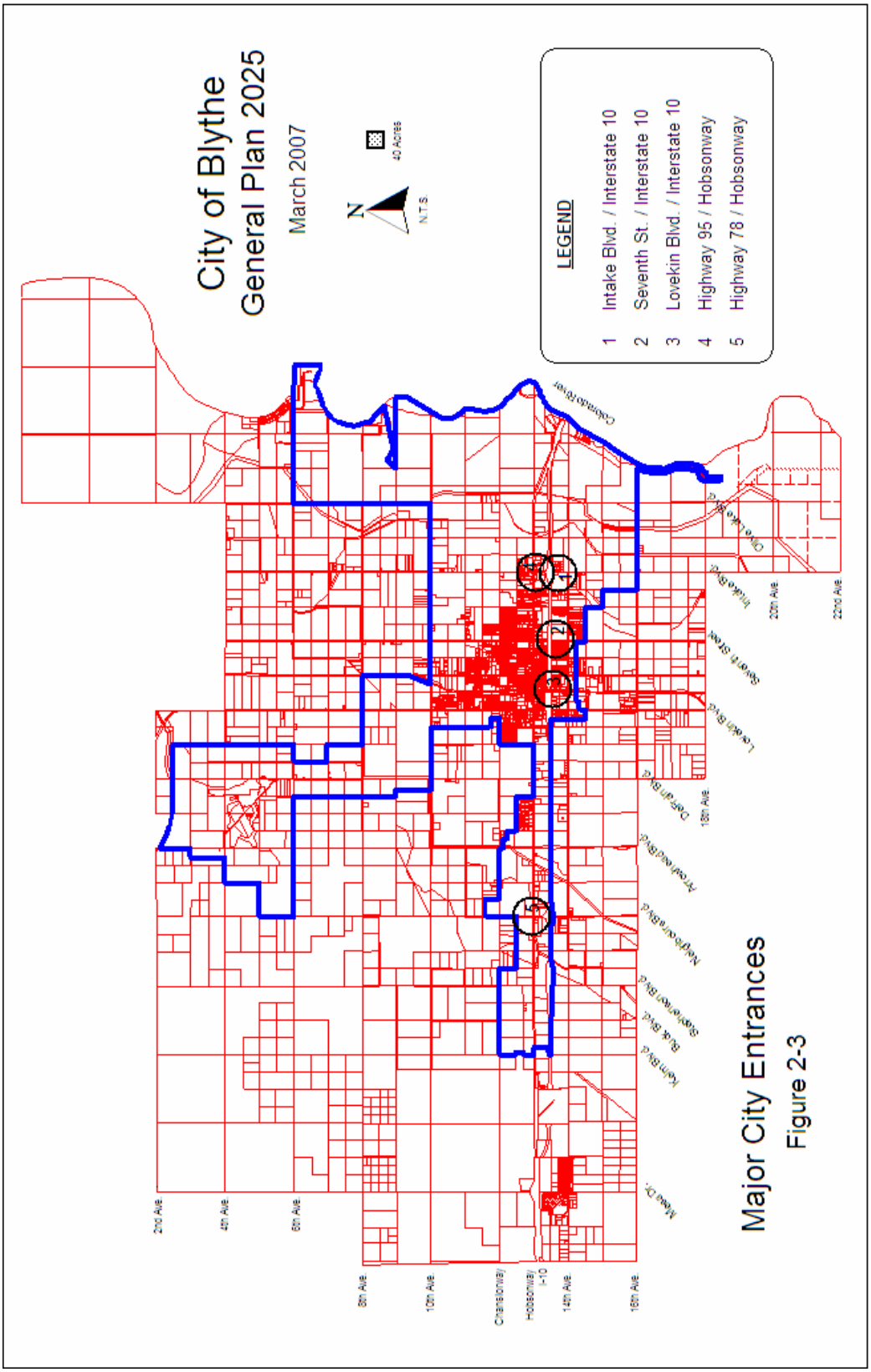

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
1 Intake Blvd. / Interstate 10
2 Seventh St. / Interstate 10
3 Lovekin Blvd. / Interstate 10
4 Highway 95 / Hobsonway
5 Highway 78 / Hobsonway
Major City Entrances
Figure 2-3

Figure 2-4
Entry to Blythe from the East

FIGURE 2-5
Entry to Blythe from the West

2.2 CONTINUITY AND CONNECTION

Clear and continuous linkages through the community, reinforce a sense of community structure and orientation within the urban environment. Within Blythe there are several existing elements-the railroad, the interstate highway, certain streets and the irrigation canals-that can be enhanced and strengthened to provide paths of continuity and connection through the community.

GUIDING POLICIES: Continuity and Connection

4. **Policy:** Make improvements to the major corridors traversing the City to heighten their visibility and accessibility. The major linear corridors are those that extend into and through the entire City. They primarily include Interstate Highway 10, State Routes 95 and 78, the railroad, and certain primary street corridors-Lovekin Boulevard, DeFrain Boulevard, and Hobsonway.

5. **Policy:** Design street and canal side improvements in consideration of their hierarchal role and function within the larger system. It is important to visually convey the relative importance of each corridor. For instance, Interstate Highway 10 maintains prominence within the hierarchy of corridors as does Hobsonway within the system of streets. These concepts need to be carried forth in the basic elements of civic design so that visual appearance is tied more closely to the role of the corridors within the organization of the City.

6. **Policy:** Extend new street patterns that heighten the sense of the canals and are connected to existing patterns of development. The physical patterning of the community can create a stronger orientation to the canals as well as a framework for new development that provides for higher density neighborhoods. The historic grid pattern was generally aligned to the old Highway 60, as shown in **Figure 2-7**. New grid patterns do not necessarily need to be composed of straight, parallel streets with a repetitive scale and grain, but can integrate arching, straight and diagonal alignments, with allowances for topography and interruptions caused by the canals. However, they should open up views and physical access to the canal environments.

7. **Policy:** Place restrictions on the overall scale and size of major arterials, so as to avoid creating barriers within the City fabric. The overall dimension and treatment of streets greatly influences the character of a city and the nature of uses within it. For instance, limiting the paved dimension of streets or the number of lanes within the travelway are effective ways of ensuring that the functions of a street for traffic movement do not exceed the desires of the community for livable, pedestrian oriented streets. In Blythe, streets do not need to exceed four lanes (not including turn lanes) to fulfill necessary traffic functions.

8. **Policy:** Heighten the visual prominence of the irrigation canal corridors which help to establish a sense of orientation and identity within the City. The irrigation canal corridors (see **Figure 2-6**) can be improved to give further identity to the City and create closer ties to the natural landscape. Enhancement of these canal corridors can contribute to the visual structure and ecological diversity of Blythe.

9. **Policy:** Within the developed core of the City, diminish the barrier effect of the canals. The barrier effect of the canals within the urbanized City should be lessened and the canals themselves made more visible and accessible. Canals should become "seams" within the fabric of the City, not separators.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Continuity and Connection

- **Implementation:** Revise design Standards for roads so that they reinforce the role of the street as a public space which organizes the City and provides corridors for the movement of transit, bicycles and pedestrians as well as autos.

  This may apply to the design improvements for both existing and new streets, looking closely not only at the required traffic functions, but also at the desired character relative to surrounding neighborhoods and districts, and the opportunity to encourage increased bicycle and pedestrian movement. Streets may change in character as they traverse different districts, but they should have a sense of continuity along their lengths. Changes to the design standards of individual streets need to be preceded by traffic studies, as appropriate.

  Design guidelines may require, as a minimum, the following:

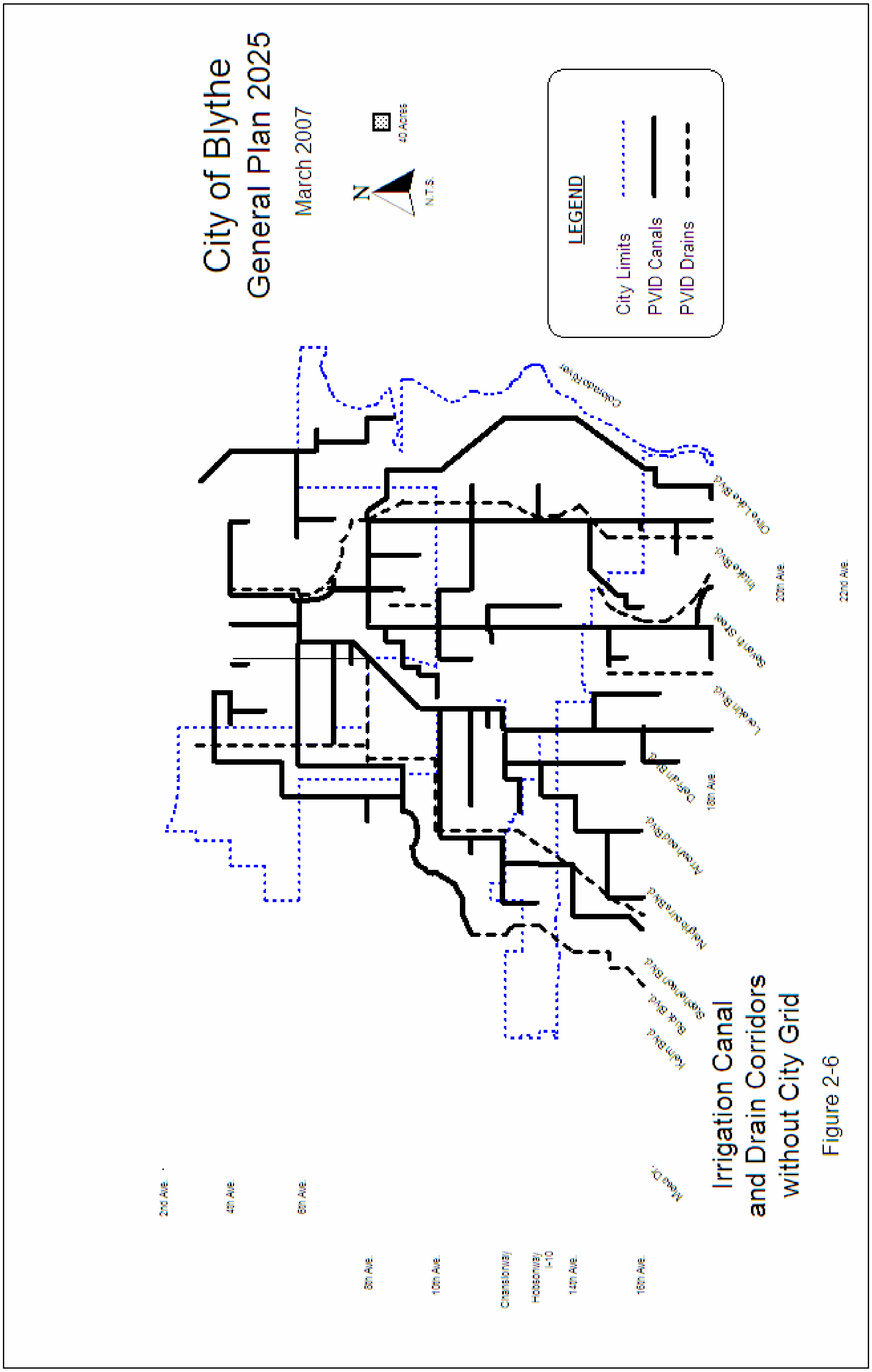
  - Streets that provide linkage, generally discouraging cul-de-sacs and street patterns that are fragmented or overly circuitous within the valley floor;
  - Streets that have continuity, with appropriate streetscape treatments (sidewalks and landscaping);
  - Block sizes that are pedestrian in scale (e.g., no more than 500 feet in length) and which encourage walking; and,
  - Conditions under which curb cuts for driveways are allowed and existing alley improvements encouraged.

- **Implementation:** The Hobsonway corridor connecting Hobsonway, downtown, Main Street, Spring Street, Broadway, and First Street as generally illustrated in **Figure 2-8** should be distinguished by pedestrian-friendly wide sidewalks, bicycle ways, tree canopies and mixed-use commercial development with a focus on sidewalk activity and higher density housing (along portions of the corridor).

- **Implementation:** Prepare and adopt a downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

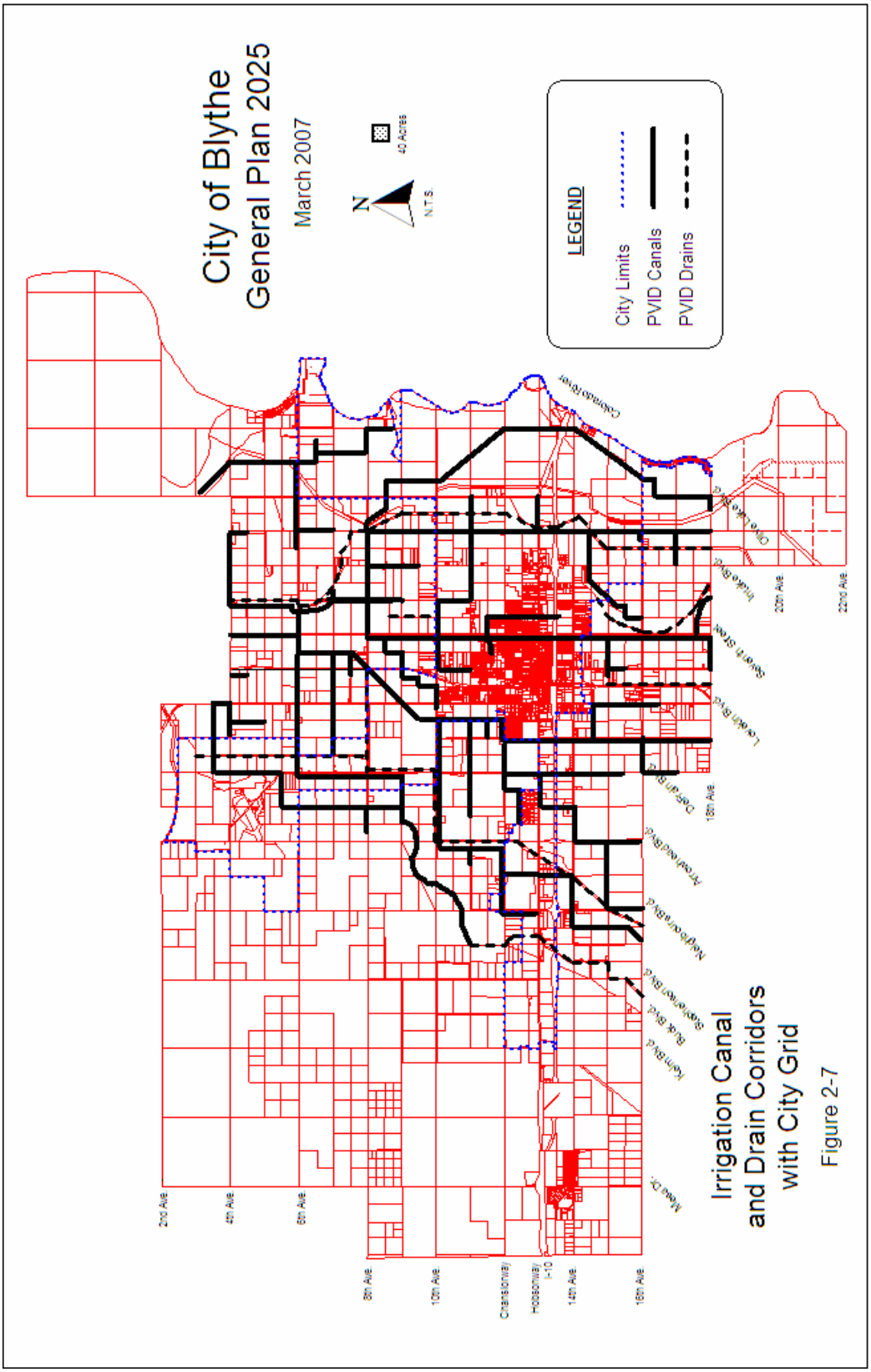
  The Downtown Streetscape Master Plan should include consideration of the following:

  - Provisions for bike trails and pedestrian routes;
  - Guidelines for treatment of the street edge;
  - Encourage parkway strips and innovative treatments which consider water features; and,
  - Guidelines for parking and buildings adjacent to streets.



Irrigation Canal and Drain Corridors without City Grid

Figure 2-6


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
City Limits
PVID Canals
PVID Drains
Colorado River
Irrigation Canal
and Drain Corridors
with City Grid
Figure 2-7

2.3 NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

From a community design perspective, some of the older residential neighborhoods that form the fabric of the community are one of Blythe's greatest assets. Some of the older neighborhoods are comprised of finer-grained elements, i.e., tree-lined streets that are open and welcoming in character; block and street patterns that are scaled to the pedestrian and encourage continuity in movement; diversity in lot sizes and housing types; and an orientation to landmarks, open space and surrounding neighborhoods.

GUIDING POLICIES: Neighborhood Conservation and Development

The following policies are aimed at reinvesting in these neighborhoods and protecting their livability and quality:

10. **Policy:** Reinforce the individual character of existing residential neighborhoods and districts. Blythe is comprised of a diversity of different neighborhoods and districts. Districts can be defined as larger portions of the city or non-residential areas distinguished by similar characteristics in use or intensity of use. They may encompass several blocks and be distinguished by housing of similar age, style, or type, or a focus on a specific community resource (park, school, retail center, etc), or edge conditions (highway, canal, change in housing, etc.). The distinctions between neighborhoods and districts should be reinforced and programs established for neighborhood conservation and enhancement.

11. **Policy:** Encourage neighborhood rehabilitation and improvement. Some of Blythe's neighborhoods are nearing a century in age-particularly those adjacent to downtown and associated with the first platting of the city. While the scale, grain and pattern of these neighborhoods can be emulated, the maturity and abundance of street trees, detailing, use of materials and variety of house types are unique to their era, and have a lived-in appeal that is not easily replicated in new development. In some cases, these established neighborhoods are in need of improvement and reinvestment to continue to maintain the same degree of attractiveness and livability over the next century as they have in the past. This includes public actions, such as street or park improvements, as well as private actions related to building rehabilitation and renovation. *(For specifics, see Housing Element policies and programs on conserving and upgrading the existing housing stock).*

12. **Policy:** Protect and enhance the urban forest that reinforces the image and identity of the community and its older neighborhoods. Blythe's older neighborhoods have a special identity, gained to a great extent from the existence of mature trees that contrast the open fields and desert and which ameliorate the influence of the climate in hot summer months. While additions to the urban forest are important, it is equally important to protect and enhance the existing resource as it ages over time.

13. **Policy:** Encourage positive transitions in scale and character where new development and extensive expansions of existing buildings are proposed. The character of neighborhood comes from the large-scale patterns of streets, house location and orientation, landscaping, front yard setbacks and garage locations, but it is also influenced by the relationships of adjoining residences to one another. When neighborhoods begin to be "infilled" or redeveloped with parcels of a much higher density or scale, it is important to ensure that the overall character is not destroyed. Specific attention needs to be placed on proposed parcel sizes, building footprint, heights, relationships to the street, and linkages to the surrounding neighborhood by foot.

IMPLEMENTATION: Neighborhood Conservation and Development

- **Implementation:** Develop design guidelines for neighborhoods and districts.

  Guidelines should be prepared to encourage high quality in design of residential neighborhoods. These guidelines should address the house and parcel, the street, the block, and the mix of densities and uses. Consideration should be given to:

  - Neighborhood patterns (e.g., maintaining planting strips or characteristic curb and gutter conditions, following the pattern of garage locations, reducing the prominence of garages, minimizing driveways and curb cuts, maintaining visible front entries);
  - Relationship to neighbors for privacy (e.g., second story additions; locations of windows, decks and balconies, landscaping, fences and exterior lighting);
  - Relationship to new uses (e.g., parcel size, building bulk and footprint, fencing, upper floors, pedestrian access, street orientation, landscaping); and,
  - Individual house design (e.g., simplicity of form, harmony of form and color, extent of blank walls, compatibility of roof slope, quality of finishes and materials).

- **Implementation:** Pursue additional funding strategies for improvements to streets and for the development of new neighborhood and pocket parks within existing residential areas.

  Smaller scaled neighborhood parks are appropriate for many types of recreational activities (e.g. play areas for small children, swimming pools, tennis courts, etc.) and may be funded by a home owner's association or other such mechanisms.

- **Implementation:** Continue to pursue low-interest loan programs targeted toward rehabilitation of older residential structures.

  The City's rehabilitation program, financed with Redevelopment Agency and Community Development Block Grant funds, should be used to maintain and improve housing stock which cannot be replaced by standard modern construction practices.

- **Implementation:** Support and guide the rehabilitation and reinvestment into existing residential buildings

  The City does make available low-interest loans for residential rehabilitations, and can provide a guide to rehabilitation with standards and guidelines consistent with the style and character of the house.

2.4 TRANSITIONING DISTRICTS

The downtown area of the city has been transitioning for many years, as competitive shopping centers were built elsewhere in the county, even though at considerable distance from Blythe. As such it has declined in activity as a result of changes in shopping patterns and ease of freeway commuting to distant commercial centers. However, the downtown area includes historic and cultural resources of potential value to the community. In addition to the downtown district, east Blythe, particularly along East Hobsonway, has declined substantially in commercial activity and new investment.

Downtown

Blythe's downtown provides a focus for the community and is the civic and cultural center of the city. The following policies are aimed at reinforcing the role of the downtown in community life and as a vital, people-oriented place.

GUIDING POLICIES: Downtown

14. **Policy:** Reinforce the physical framework which defines the downtown district.

15. **Policy:** Encourage new development that is urban in scale, treatment and character. New development should reflect in scale, character and pedestrian orientation the urban traditions of downtown.

16. **Policy:** Maintain and enhance a strong pedestrian scale and orientation within the downtown through the design of buildings and streets. Pedestrian-scale signage and ornamental lighting, continuous street trees, wide sidewalks, canopies, bicycle parking areas, public art and continuity of ground floor activity are among the elements to be emphasized in reinforcing the pedestrian character of downtown. In addition, such measures as build-to lines, restrictions on surface parking, curb cut limitations and minimum building heights are useful in defining the "wall" of the street and in framing the activities which happen in public spaces. **Figure 2-11**, illustrates how landscape improvements and a continuous row of urban-density buildings oriented to the street can contribute to a more attractive public environment. The Downtown Design Guidelines should continue to be used to guide approaches best suited to downtown.

17. **Policy:** Encourage the development of buildings of a minimum height. Buildings with a minimum height of two floors will provide a better scale relationship to the street with a greater potential for a vital urban environment.

18. **Policy:** Encourage a lively streetscape environment, with buildings and activities oriented to the street and sidewalk areas at ground level. Buildings should be encouraged to incorporate ground floor treatments of interest to the pedestrian including, for example, the use of large windows, tall ground floor pedestrian entrances, canopies, arcades and sidewalk cafes. The feasibility of establishing greater access and use of public rights-of-way in the downtown area should be explored.

19. **Policy:** Reduce the perceived scale of downtown streets while allowing for appropriate circulation and parking. Streets within the downtown are wide, and efforts to reduce their perceived scale would increase the attractiveness of the area and benefit the overall pedestrian and retail environment. Approaches such as widened sidewalks and landscaping at intersections and additional plantings between parking stalls and/or the establishment of managed streets should be explored.

20. **Policy:** Encourage special events, festivities and celebrations within streets and public spaces. Streets and other public spaces within the downtown should be designed and programmed so that they can be utilized for seasonal celebrations and special day and nighttime events. Cultural arts and special events programming and the ongoing management and maintenance of public spaces (including streets) can possibly be guided by a Fine Arts Commission, or other volunteer and City staff effort, and will help to provide an additional attraction within the downtown.

21. **Policy:** Establish an incentives program for adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

    Provisions for upper floor uses, live/work units, and adaptive re-use of older buildings should be considered. In addition, a program for preserving and enhancing building facades should be explored. A downtown architectural design manual should be prepared, in consideration of the existing streetscape plan.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Downtown

- **Implementation:** Prepare an Action Plan which establishes a clear vision and specific direction for the downtown.

  An Action Plan for the downtown should be prepared to identify the priorities, tasks and funding mechanisms necessary to achieve concepts for downtown revitalization and enhancement.

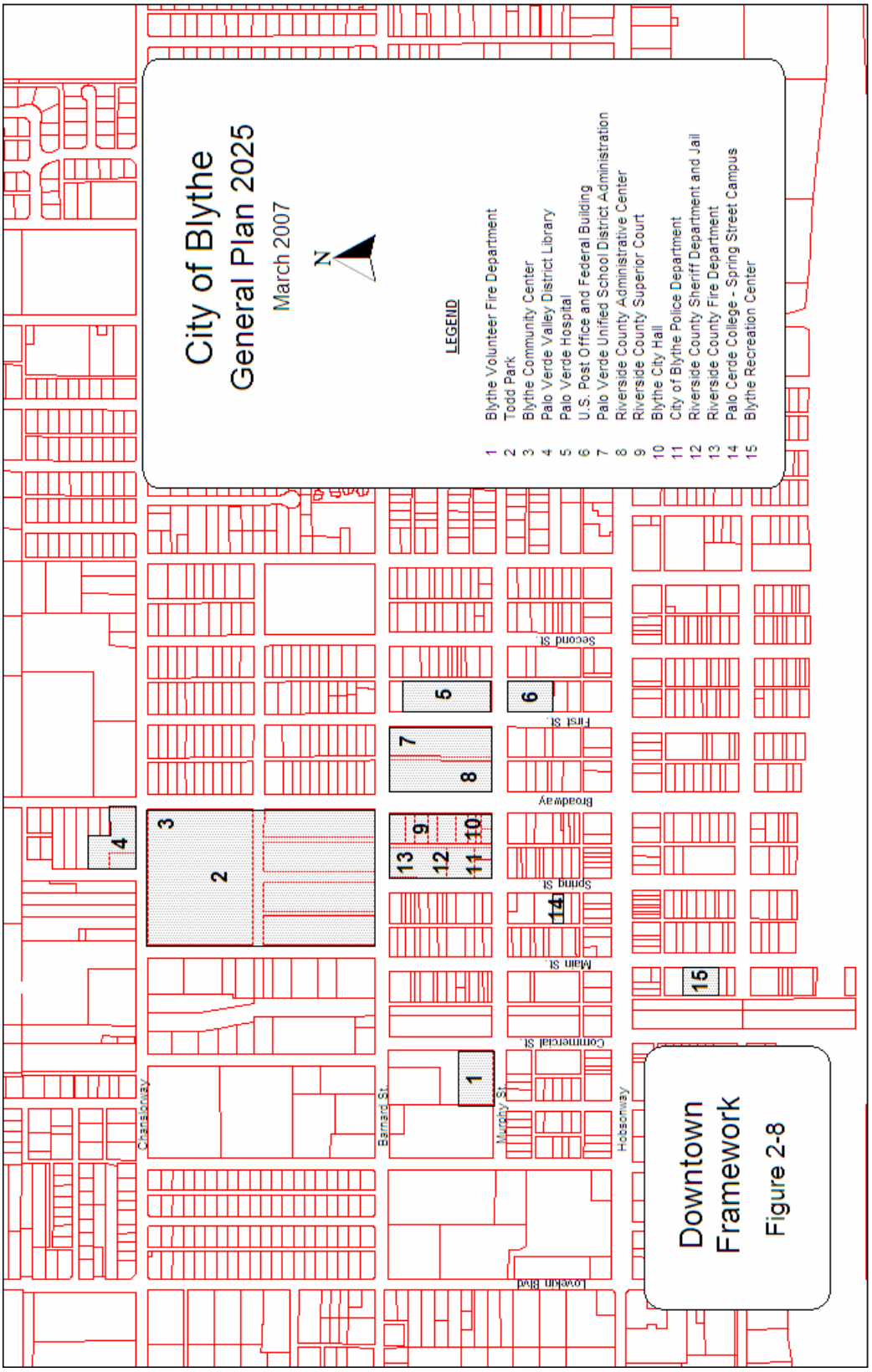

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
LEGEND
1 Blythe Volunteer Fire Department
2 Todd Park
3 Blythe Community Center
4 Palo Verde Valley District Library
5 Palo Verde Hospital
6 U.S. Post Office and Federal Building
7 Palo Verde Unified School District Administration
8 Riverside County Administrative Center
9 Riverside County Superior Court
10 Blythe City Hall
11 City of Blythe Police Department
12 Riverside County Sheriff Department and Jail
13 Riverside County Fire Department
14 Palo Cerde College - Spring Street Campus
15 Blythe Recreation Center
Second St.
First St.
Broadway
Spring St.
Main St.
Commercial St.
Hobsonway
Lovekin Blvd
Murphy St.
Barnard St.
Chanslorway
Downtown Framework
Figure 2-8

Figure 2-9
Downtown Buildings

Figure 2-10
Downtown Block

Figure 2-11
Downtown Streetscape

2.5 LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

Commercial and industrial projects have increased in size and scale over time, with buildings in some projects exceeding several hundred thousand square feet. Large-scale, single-use projects present some special challenges to design. The following policies are aimed at creating commercial and industrial projects that relate more positively to the surrounding context, are of a scale and character that is attractive and accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists, and which allow for intensification and diversification to occur over time.

GUIDING POLICIES: Large-Scale Commercial and Industrial Projects

22. Policy: Encourage site and building design to respond to the context and potential linkages to surrounding areas. A sensitive integration of large-scale projects should be encouraged by master planning larger districts; designing for pedestrian, bike and transit access directly from streets and surrounding areas; carefully addressing issues of scale and massing; respecting view corridors and vistas; integrating community and cultural uses; and achieving higher standards for environmental quality through innovative storm drainage and planting design.

23. Policy: Encourage consideration of pedestrian and bicycle access in new commercial and industrial projects. New commercial and industrial projects should not be designed exclusively for the convenience of motorists, but rather, approaches that consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as those arriving by transit should be a part of each project. While this may not be considered important today, by building in flexibility, future opportunities will not be foreclosed.

24. Policy: Encourage a human scale in the design of large-scale projects. The perceived overall size of large projects should be mitigated to the extent possible through, for example, sensitive massing, appropriate scaling of building facades, articulation and organization of buildings, the use of color and materials, and the use of landscape screening.

25. Policy: Encourage innovative site design and treatment of surface parking areas. Surface parking areas should be organized and treated in such a fashion as to avoid the appearance of a "sea of asphalt." Landscaping should meet or exceed, if possible, a 50 percent shading requirement with large trees planted throughout the parking area as well as along the street and sidewalks. The use of porous paving and the integration of drainage features should be encouraged for reasons of environmental quality and to improve the visual appearance of parking areas, which are often more intrusive than the buildings they are intended to serve.

26. Policy: Encourage infill and intensification over time. Infill and intensification of existing projects should be encouraged to achieve a greater mix and intensity of uses. The site planning for large commercial projects should anticipate the potential for future structured and shared parking as well as convenient and effective transit service that would facilitate intensification and help to create focal points of activity.

27. Policy: Encourage simple design in consideration of future adaptation to new uses. Commercial and industrial uses are rapidly undergoing change. It is important that investments into new facilities consider potential future adaptations to new uses, to the extent feasible.

28. **Policy:** Incorporate design features that foster a sense of security.

Such features may include:

- Landscaping, parking lot access and pedestrian circulation improvements that facilitate surveillance from the street and from neighboring structures;
- Limited access to roofs; and,
- Visible and well-lit building names and street numbers for easy identification

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Large-Scale Commercial and Industrial Projects

- **Implementation:** Revise, as appropriate, development standards and develop specific design standards for commercial and industrial areas.

  The zoning ordinance should be revised as necessary, and design guidelines refined to more clearly guide design and development review.

- **Implementation:** For large projects, require special visual studies as a part of design review.

  Visual simulations that accurately depict the appearance of the proposed project should be required of commercial or industrial buildings with a footprint in excess of 50,000 square feet. These simulations would be useful in demonstrating the implications of massing, scale, bulk, facade treatment and color in the context of the surrounding community or landscape.

2.6 NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

New residential neighborhoods will be formed as Blythe continues to grow and expand over the next twenty to thirty years. These neighborhoods should be designed so that they build on the positive qualities of Blythe neighborhoods and districts with strong physical and visual linkages to surrounding areas. To do so, special care needs to be taken in the design of:

- Streets and entries;
- Development pattern;
- Mix of activities and densities;
- Small-lot housing;
- Buildings; and,
- Utility services.

The following policies may apply to redevelopment within existing developed areas as well as to new development in undeveloped areas:

GUIDING POLICIES: New Residential Neighborhoods

29. **Policy:** Create new neighborhoods that have a human scale and are oriented to the pedestrian. Neighborhoods with a pedestrian scale are those where the length of blocks is not too long (e.g. not greater the 500 feet), streets are not excessively wide, houses front onto the streets with gracious transitions from indoor to outdoor spaces, and pedestrians can walk protected from traffic and the sun in summer months by a continuous canopy of trees.

30. **Policy:** Establish clear and distinctive neighborhood edges, organized around larger streets and natural features such as the Colorado River, canals, and the Mesa. As with the city as a whole, it is important to give definition to individual neighborhoods by establishing clear and distinct edges and clustering neighborhoods within larger districts organized around schools, parks, and other community facilities.

31. **Policy:** Mark major entries to neighborhoods, but discourage the use of high walls and gated entries which isolate areas from one another and create an unfriendly appearance. Major entries to neighborhoods should be recognized through the use of monuments, gateways, or other such elements incorporated within the broader streetscape. However, these should appear to be welcoming in nature and not convey the image of an exclusive district, set apart and isolated from other parts of town.

32. **Policy:** Establish a central focus within each neighborhood. The mixed-use neighborhood core is an important element improving an activity center to each neighborhood; they should be located in a geographically central position, combining activities that are both publicly oriented and commercial in nature.

33. **Policy:** Encourage the continuity of streets between neighborhoods. To increase the accessibility and connectedness of neighborhoods, and to support pedestrian as well as vehicular movement, block lengths should be limited (e.g. to 500 feet) and four-way intersections encouraged.

34. **Policy:** Encourage the visual enhancement of utility services. Utility services are often located and installed in a manner that negatively detracts from the neighborhood's appearance. Such facilities should be sited so as to minimize their detraction from the built environment.

35. **Policy:** Encourage tree plantings and consider adopting a heritage tree preservation and maintenance program. Landscaping is one of the most visible elements of residential neighborhoods, adding to their amenity and perceived value. While trees and understory vegetation would vary depending upon the site and soil conditions, planting programs should be encouraged.

36. **Policy:** Encourage the design of buildings that are oriented to the pedestrian and create positive transitions to the street. Porches, stoops, windows facing the street, landscaping, and slight grade transitions within the yard space help to create positive transitions between indoor and outdoor, public and private spaces. Garages should not dominate the street space, nor the front elevation of residential buildings.

37. **Policy:** Establish high standards for small-lot design. Residential lots of 5,000 square feet or less have become increasingly commonplace in California, in part as a result of higher land costs and the need to create more affordable housing. However, in general, smaller lots have a greater need to address design issues, especially related to garage location and treatment, and the provision of open space.

38. **Policy:** Discourage the repetitive feel of new development while providing for design continuity. Diversity in the color, massing and scale of residential buildings is desirable to avoid the feeling of monotonous tract development. At the same time, some level of continuity is needed to better define the public realm related to landscape treatment, building orientation, front yard spaces, and the use of fences and articulated entries.

39. **Policy:** Ensure that higher density residential development is designed with a street and pedestrian orientation. Multiple-family dwellings should be oriented to the street and linked to surrounding neighborhoods, with usable and meaningful open spaces for residents.

40. **Policy:** Design for greater resident surveillance and visibility of public and semi-public places. This can be achieved by placing windows so that they view onto yards, corridors, entrances, streets, and other public and semi-public places; providing for landscaping that does not obscure visibility to public areas; providing for well-lighted streets, entrances and house numbers and, in multi-family development, lighted and windowed stairwells where possible. Porches, stoops, and other elements that provide a place to comfortably linger will also help to provide "eyes on the street," helping to maintain a sense of security within neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: New Residential Neighborhoods

- **Implementation:** Orient neighborhoods and individual residential and commercial buildings positively to the street, not away from it.

  Innovative approaches to the need for privacy and noise protection are needed, without resorting to the conventional solution of high walls. For instance, along major arterials, broad setbacks and alleys or frontage roads should be considered instead of high walls to provide protected residential areas that are open and accessible to all.

- **Implementation:** Establish a hierarchy of streets, open spaces and community buildings that can be used to help provide structure and orientation to the neighborhoods and districts.

  A differentiated hierarchy of elements (parks, open spaces, canals, streets) should be carefully conceived as a part of neighborhood design.

- **Implementation:** Design streets with a priority on neighborhood structure and pedestrian scale.

- **Implementation:** Require that all new utility installations maximize their visual harmony with the neighborhood.

  To create more attractive and meaningful street environments, the following should be encouraged (See **Figures 2-12-1 and 2-12-2**):

- Pavement widths (curb to curb) to the minimum necessary;
- Continuous and consistent street tree planting adjacent to the curb;
- Continuous, unbroken curb lengths;
- The use of alleys, subject to appropriate standards;
- The undergrounding of utility services with all new residential construction;
- The siting of utility vaults and appurtenances away from high-visibility areas; and
- The screening of utility facilities whenever feasible.

- **Implementation:** Comprehensively revise development standards for streets, parcels and buildings.

  The City's development standards need to be revised and updated in keeping with the policies above, more specifically related to the hierarchy of streets, street widths, sidewalk placement, landscape continuity, front yard treatments, and curb cuts and driveways.

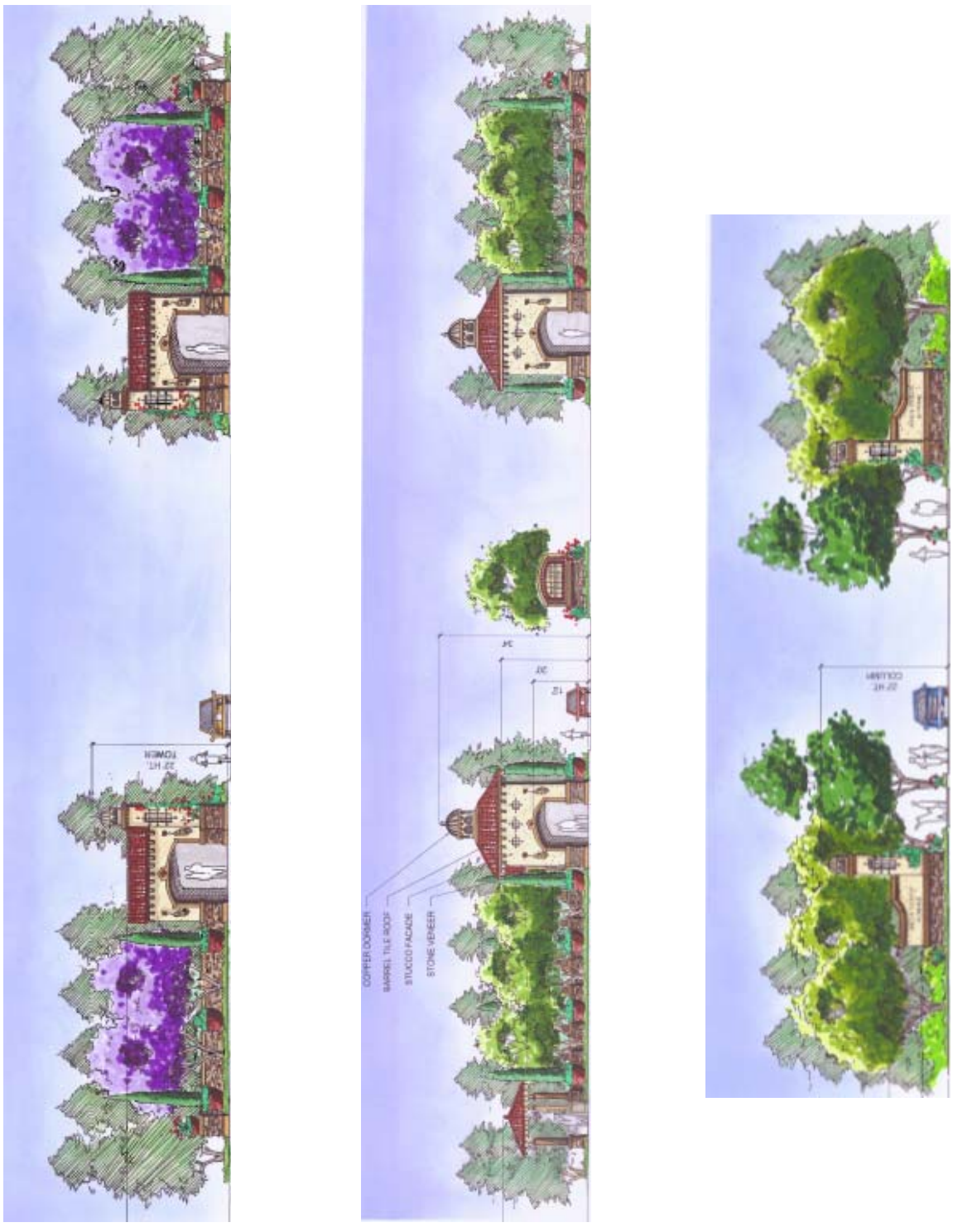


Figure 2-12-1
Illustrative Residential Streets

Figure 2-12-2
Illustrative Residential Streets

Chapter 3

Land Use Element

3 LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT

The text and policies of the Land Use Element and the General Plan Diagram constitute the physical framework for the General Plan. The Diagram designates the proposed general location, distribution, and extent of land uses. As required by State law, land use classifications, shown on the Diagram, specify a range for population density and building intensity for each type of designated land use. These standards of population density and building intensity allow circulation and public facility needs to be determined; they also reflect the environmental carrying-capacity limitations established by other elements of the General Plan.

3.1 GROWTH AND PHYSICAL EXPANSION

Figure 3-1 shows the Planning Area in "quadrants" used to aggregate land use information found in **Table 3.3-1** and full development population estimates shown in **Table 3.3-2**.

BUILDOUT POPULATION

Although the Planning Area, at full development, based on current land use designations, would accommodate a population of approximately 89,542, the expected population increase over the life of the General Plan is expected to be far less. Based on 3% annual increase, the estimated 2025 population of the Planning Area is expected to be 24,563, an increase of approximately 80% over the estimated 2006 population of 13,600. **Table 3.1-1** shows the current and projected population(s) for the Planning Area through the life of this document. The time at which full development ("buildout") will occur is not specified in or anticipated by the Plan, but is expected to take place over a 40 to 50 year period.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

The Land Use Element, consistent with the Government Code, contains land use classifications for residential, commercial, industrial, open space and other public and private uses of land within the Planning Area. The land use policies and explanatory text are grouped by these land use classifications. Following this description of land use classifications and policies, the Land Use Element summarizes the land use policies for specific areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Land Use Element serves as the primary means of integrating the policies in other elements of the General Plan with the proposed pattern of land uses designated in the General Plan Diagram and with the land use policies in the Land Use Element. These policies outline the City's direction and strategy for relating residential, commercial, industrial, open space and public uses with their locational and public service needs.

The Circulation Element discusses the correspondence between the street network and policies proposed in that element with the pattern of land use densities and intensities established in the Land Use Element. The Parks and Recreation Element establishes performance criteria for public facilities and services and prescribes how adequate public facilities are to be provided to serve future growth areas. The Community Design Element

includes policies to conserve and enhance Blythe's character and identity, building on its traditional character and landscape.

The Open Space and Conservation Elements contain policies on and an action plan for the maintenance and conservation of open space land and valuable natural resources within the Planning Area.

TABLE 3.1-1
PLANNING AREA POPULATION INCREASE

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population	13,600	15,766	18,277	21,288	24,563

PURPOSE OF THE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element and the Land Use Policy Map (General Plan Diagram - See **Figure 3-2**) represent the two most important components of the General Plan. Together, these two parts of the Plan establish the overall policy direction for land use planning decisions in the City. The Land Use Policy Map displays graphically the location and distribution of land use in Blythe, whereas the element text describes the form these uses will take, as well as the programs the City will pursue to implement the land use goals. As such, the Land Use Element serves as the primary means of integrating the policies in the other elements of the General Plan with the proposed pattern of land uses designated in the General Plan Diagram and with the land use policies of the Land Use Element.

The goals and policies set forth in the Land Use Element shape the City's direction and strategy for relating residential, commercial, industrial, open space and public uses with their locational and public service needs, and guide the policies and programs contained in the other General Plan elements. For example, the street system and circulation improvements described in the Circulation Element are designed to accommodate the intensity of use allowed by land use policy while Housing Element programs which focus on neighborhood stabilization and rehabilitation of single-family units are developed within the outlines and policies of the Land Use Element.

It is the City's intention to achieve a number of objectives through implementation of the goals and policies contained in this element.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Due to the comprehensive nature of the Land Use Element, land use issues are not addressed in the same detail as they might be in certain physical planning documents, plans, and ordinances the City can adopt. The land use categories described in the Land Use Plan section of this Element indicate general categories of permissible use, and the zoning ordinance and other land use ordinances regulate the actual use and development standards applicable to properties Citywide. Other plans and programs such as Specific Plans and Redevelopment Plans may establish more definitive use standards.

Regional planning agencies such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) recognize that several planning issues extend beyond the boundaries of individual cities. Efforts to address regional planning issues such as affordable housing, transportation, and air pollution have resulted in the adoption of regional plans that affect Blythe. Relevant regional plans are discussed briefly in the following paragraphs to indicate the relationship of these plans to this General Plan.

City of Blythe Zoning Ordinance

The City's Zoning Ordinance is the principal means through which the land use policy recommendations of the General Plan are realized. The General Plan states, "this is how land should be used, and this is why"; the Zoning Ordinance states, "here are the rules you must follow to use land as described in the General Plan". Under California Law, every city must adopt a General Plan for the jurisdiction's physical development. Generally, all other land use regulations, actions or approvals must be consistent with the General Plan, including the Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance is comprised of two important elements: (1) a map which delineates the boundaries of districts; and (2) text which explains the purpose of the zoning district, lists the permitted uses and those uses permitted under special conditions, and lists standards for development (e.g. minimum lot size, density, height, setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, etc). Each General Plan land use category is implemented by one zoning classification. The Zoning Ordinance use districts must be consistent with the General Plan land use categories.

The land use designations contained in this element and the land use boundaries correspond to one zoning districts. The Land Use Plan section of this element establishes the relationship between land use policy and zoning.

Specific Plans

Provisions in State law allow for the adoption of Specific Plans. Specific Plans are just a step below the General Plan in the land use approval hierarchy and are used for the systematic implementation of the General Plan for particular areas. Such plans provide very specific descriptions of permitted land uses and customized development and design criteria. Specific Plans are prepared for large areas and are intended to establish design standards, as well as development standards. As with the Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plans must be consistent with the General Plan. The adoption of a Specific Plan is a legislative act. A Specific Plan may be adopted by either ordinance or resolution.

Redevelopment Plans

The State legislature has enacted laws that permit cities and counties to adopt Redevelopment Plans. Redevelopment Plans are developed for the purpose of revitalizing and rehabilitating blighted areas of a city or county. Redevelopment Plans provide a means for government agencies to encourage private reinvestment in blighted areas through initial government assistance.

A City of Blythe Redevelopment Plan for areas adjacent to the Interstate 10 Freeway was adopted in November 1984 and was amended by adding territory in 1989, 1995, 1999 and 2002. One of the primary intents of the Redevelopment Plan is to help finance needed roadway improvements to improve access to parcels along the freeway. These circulation improvements are in turn expected to stimulate private investment and improvements that will enhance the appearance and function of the City's commercial and industrial areas. The programs spelled out in the Redevelopment Plan implement land use policy objectives as articulated in this Land Use Element. The Redevelopment Plan is required to conform to the General Plan, but there is no concomitant requirement to conform to applicable zoning use classifications. Therefore, a Redevelopment Plan's use designations can differ from zoning use classifications applicable to property in the project area.

Regional Plans

Blythe has included in this General Plan relevant policies and programs that reflect and respond to Coachella Valley Association of Government (CVAG) and Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) regional goals. In particular, policies in the Land Use and Housing Elements address regional jobs/housing balance objectives; the Circulation Element contains programs aimed at reducing traffic congestion; the Housing Element discusses Blythe's role in providing adequate affordable housing; and the Conservation/Open Space and Parks and Recreation Elements outline the City's efforts to participate in programs aimed at improving regional air quality.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

To best address land use issues affecting Blythe, this element is divided into three subsequent sections - Issues Identification, Land Use Element Goals and Policies, and the Land Use Plan. The Issues Identification section highlights land use issues facing the City and sets the framework for goal formulation and policy and program development. The Land Use Element Goals and Policies are stated in the second section. The Land Use Plan describes in detail the Land Use Policy Map and identifies how long-term land use policy will be implemented in Blythe. State law requires that the Land Use Element discuss agricultural lands and solid and liquid waste disposal activities.

THE LAND USE PLAN

This section of the Land Use Element identifies the pattern of land use in Blythe and describes the standards for future development. The Land Use Policy Map visually illustrates land use distribution, and the text indicates the types and intensities of uses permitted within each land use category depicted on the map.

LAND USE POLICY MAP

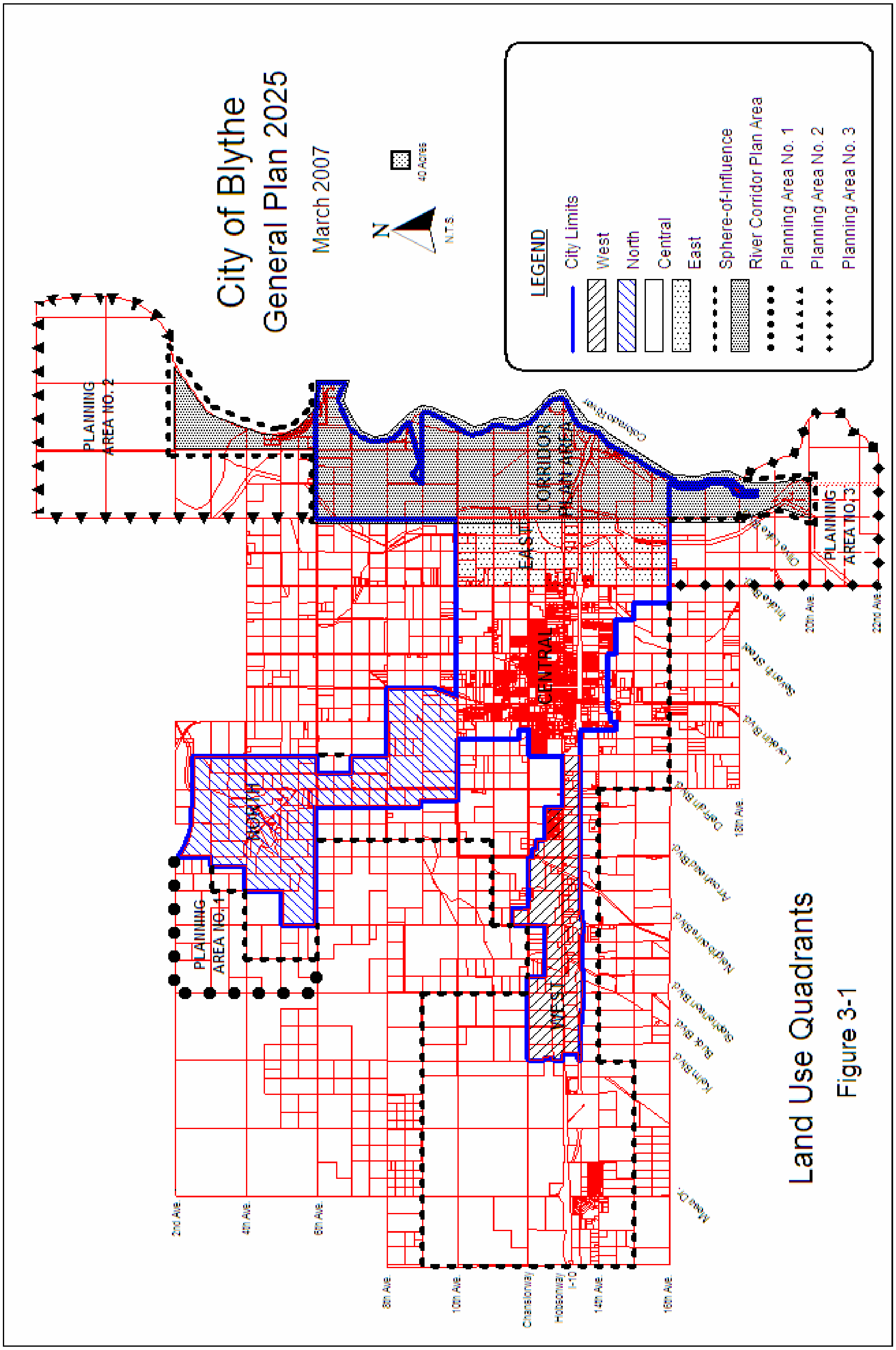
The General Plan Land Use Policy Map shows a community with diverse residential neighborhoods surrounded by large tracts of open space and agricultural land. It also shows a community that offers a wide range of commercial, industrial and recreational lands. **Figure 3-2** illustrates general land use policy for lands within the City Limits and **Figure 3-3** illustrates general land use policy for lands within the balance of the Planning Area.

The maps display land uses for the entire General Plan Planning Area, which encompasses the City limits, Sphere-of-Influence with potential annexation areas and three planning areas. The maps divide the City into various land use categories and assign each category a land use designation. Land use designations provide necessary information about the type and nature of development permitted at a given location. While the terms "residential," "commercial," and "industrial" generally are well-understood, more unique designations like "Public/Quasi-Public" requires explanation. Equally important, State law requires that the General Plan provide clear and concise definitions of the land use categories indicated on the Land Use Policy Map. These definitions are provided under the heading "Land Use Classifications".

The Blythe General Plan establishes 18 land use categories. The nine (9) residential categories allow for a range of housing types for all density ranges. Three (3) commercial designations and two (2) industrial designations are provided to accommodate and encourage a range of income-generating businesses. To allow for creative use of vacant and underutilized properties, a Planned Development designation is established. The Public/Quasi-Public, Open Space and Agricultural categories are intended, respectively, to protect public lands

for necessary public service, open space uses and agricultural production. The Specific Plan Resort designation is established to promote planned development of large tracts of land with residential development, recreational development, resort oriented development and open spaces uses.

It is important to note that the City of Blythe employs a "single-map" system of land uses. This means that the City's General Plan land use designations are the same as the City's Zoning designations. The density and intensity standards expressed in the General Plan are the same as those expressed in the City's Zoning Ordinance.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S
40 Acres
LEGEND
City Limits
West
North
Central
East
Sphere-of-Influence
River Corridor Plan Area
Planning Area No. 1
Planning Area No. 2
Planning Area No. 3
PLANNING AREA NO. 2
PLANNING AREA NO. 1
PLANNING AREA NO. 3
NORTH
CENTRAL
EAST
WEST
CORRIDOR PLAN AREA
Land Use Quadrants
Figure 3-1

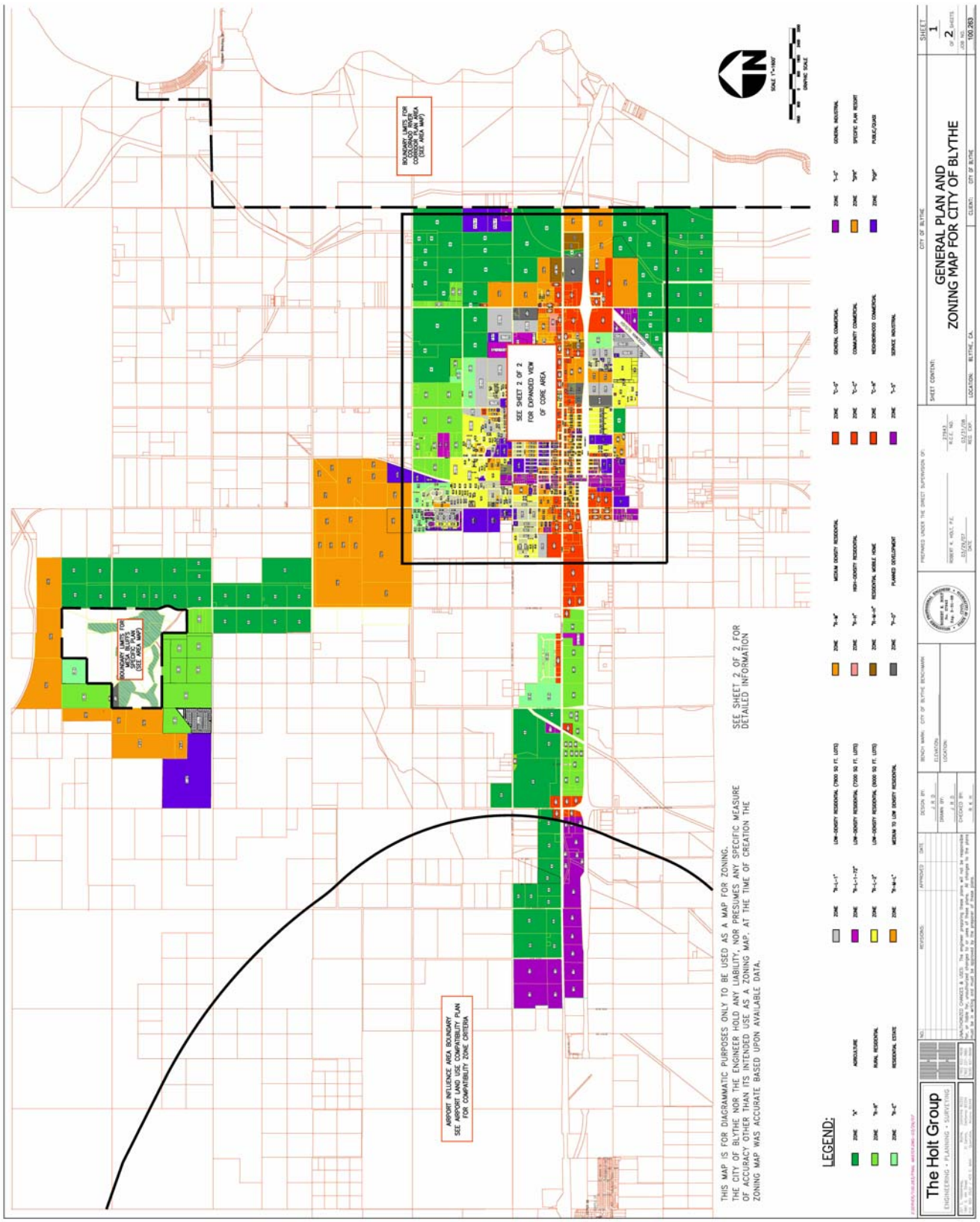


Figure 3-2-1
General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation Map

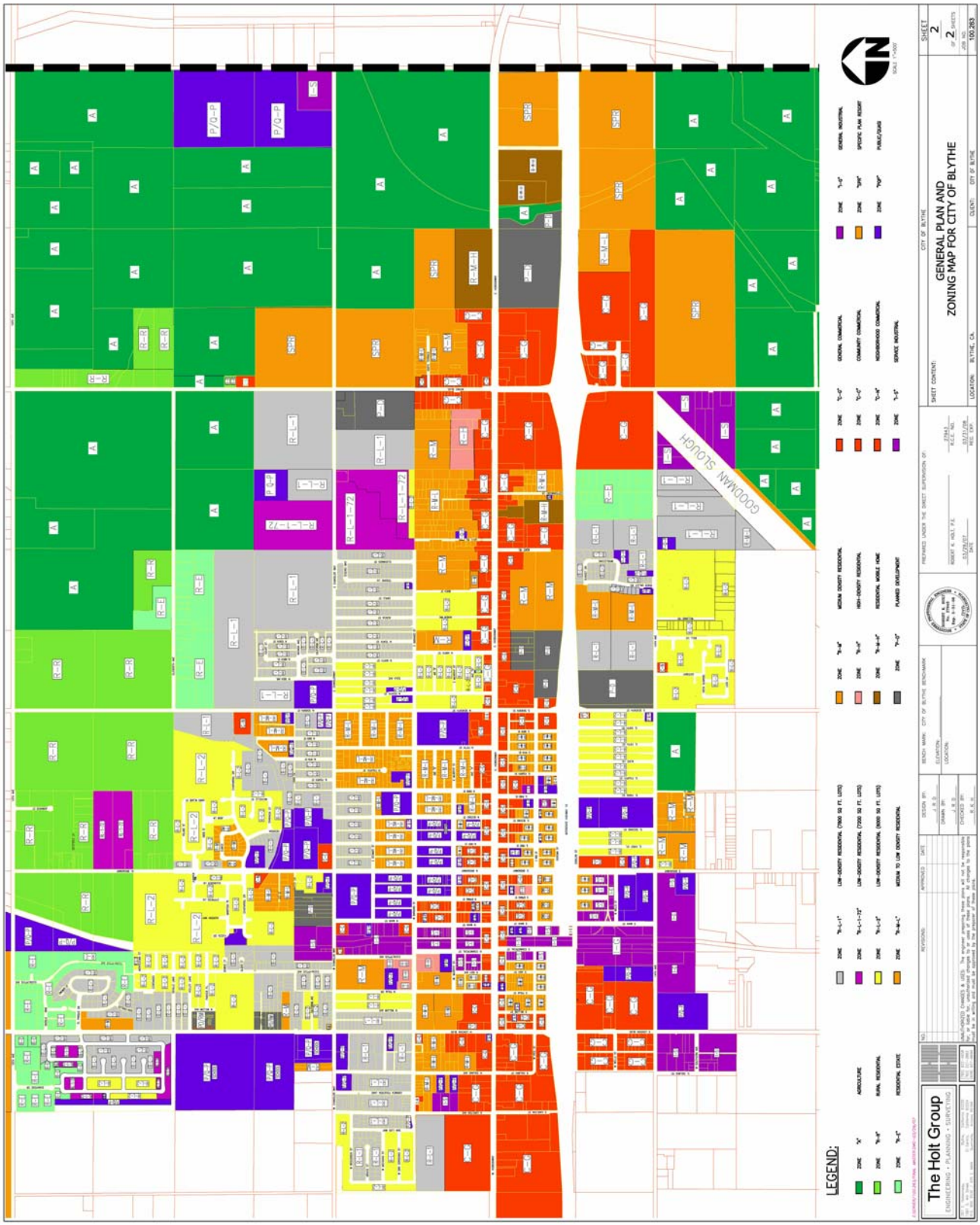
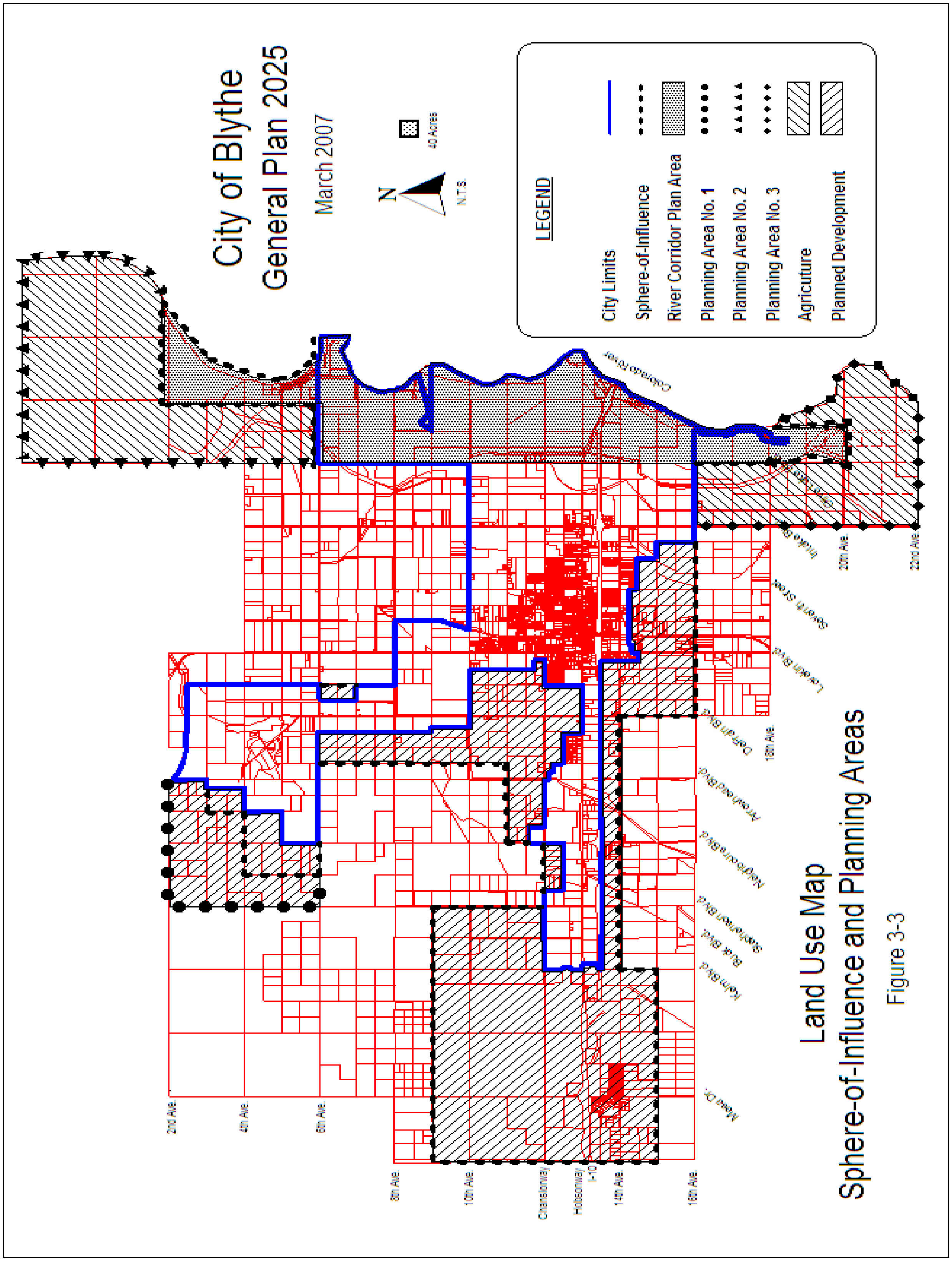


Figure 3-2-2
General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation Map



Land Use Map
Sphere-of-Influence and Planning Areas
Figure 3-3

3.2 LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

This section of the Land Use Element describes the land use classifications designated on the General Plan Diagram. The legend of the General Plan Diagram abbreviates the land use classifications described below. The General Plan Diagram is a diagrammatic representation of policies contained in the General Plan. It is to be used and interpreted in conjunction with the text and other figures contained in the General Plan.

Where existing uses on sites are compatible with the use depicted on the diagram (such as an existing single family home in an area designated for High Density Residential use), such uses will continue to be recognized as conforming through the Zoning Ordinance. Existing uses that are not compatible with the designated use (such as industrial uses in an area designated for residential use), will become non-conforming upon revision of the Zoning Ordinance.

The classifications in this section represent adopted City policy. They are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementing City policy, but clear enough to provide sufficient direction in carrying out the General Plan. The City's Zoning Ordinance contains more detailed provisions and standards for land use development than are described in the land use classifications.

POPULATION DENSITY AND BUILDING INTENSITY

Under State law, the Land Use Element of the General Plan must establish standards of population density and building intensity for each land use classification. The General Plan expresses residential density as housing units and persons per gross acre, described in the classifications and in **Table 3.2-1**.

For nonresidential uses, a maximum permitted ratio of gross floor area to site area (FAR) is specified. FAR is a broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generation. It can be clearly translated to a limit on building bulk in the Zoning Ordinance and is independent of the type of use occupying the building (see **Figure 3-4**).

The Zoning Ordinance shall provide specific exceptions to the FAR limitations for uses with low employee densities, such as wholesaling and distribution, or low peak-hour traffic generation, such as a hospital. Within the Central Business District (Downtown), the Zoning Ordinance can provide for transfer of unused FAR within a block, or between blocks when the "donor" of the unused FAR is the owner of a designated historic building or landmark.

The density/intensity standards do not imply that development projects will be approved at the maximum density or intensity specified for each use. Zoning regulations consistent with General Plan policies and/or site conditions may reduce development potential within the stated ranges. Gross density standards and assumed averages for residential categories are listed in **Table 3.2-1**.

TABLE 3.2-1
STANDARDS FOR DENSITY AND DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

Land Use Designation	Residential Density (units/gross acre)	Maximum Permitted Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Residential Population	
			Persons/ Housing Units[a]	Persons/Acre (Average)
Residential-				
Rural Residential	0-2	-	3	3
Residential Estate	2.1-4	-	3	9.15
Low Density – 7,800	4.1-5	-	3	13.65
Low Density – 7,200	5.1-6	-	3	16.65
Low Density – 6,000	6.1-7	-	3	19.65
Medium/Low Density	7.1-11	-	3	27.15
Medium Density	11.1-14	-	3	37.65
High Density	14.1-29	-	3	64.65
Mobile Home	11.1-14		3	37.65
Commercial				
General	0-22	1.0	3	[b]
Community	0-22	0.3	3	[b]
Neighborhood	0-22	0.5	3	[b]
Industrial[c]				
General	-	0.8	n.a.	n.a.
Service	-	0.8	n.a.	n.a.
Other				
Agricultural	0-1 unit per 5 acres	-	3	.03
Specific Plan Resort	0-2	-	3	3
Planned Development	0-2	-	3	3
Public/Quasi-Public	-	-	n.a.	n.a.

[a] Rounded up from 2000 Census Average Household size of 2.91
[b] Depends on density of housing provided.
[c] More restrictive criteria may apply within the Blythe Airport Influence Area.

3.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nine (9) residential land use classifications are established to provide for development of a full range of housing types. Densities are stated as a number of housing units per gross acre of developable land, excluding areas subject to physical, environmental, or geological constraints and areas dedicated for Riverside greenways or wetlands protection, provided that at least one housing unit may be built on each existing legal parcel designated for residential use. Second units permitted by local regulation and State-mandated density bonuses for provision of affordable housing, in addition to densities otherwise permitted. Assumed average densities listed below are used to calculate probable housing unit and population holding capacity. Neither the averages nor the totals constitute General Plan policy. Illustrative Residential prototypes are depicted in **Figure 3-5**.

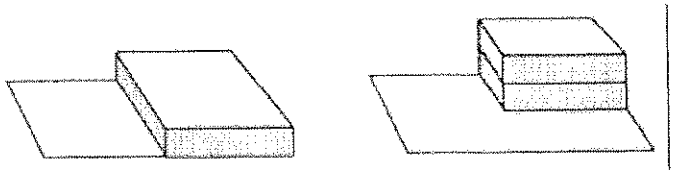
Rural Residential (RR): This density allows zero to two residential units per acre and is intended principally to allow large-lot development around the periphery of the community and as a transition between agricultural/open areas and more intensive urban uses. This land use category is not intended to support a uniform density of two units per acre. Where domestic water and sewer are available, typical lots would be a

minimum of 20,000 square feet in size. Where domestic services are not available and Riverside County standards for wells and septic systems are met, typical lot size will be two and one-half (2 ½) acres.

Residential Estate (RE): Allows up to four (4) units per gross acre. Typical lots would be a minimum of 9,600 square feet in size, but clustered development with smaller lots may be permitted. The average density assumed for buildout calculations is three (3) units per acre.

Low Density Residential (RL1-7,800, RL1-7,200, RL1-6,000): Three low-density residential classifications are provided to allow varied densities within residential developments. Low Density Residential-7,800 provides for a maximum density of five (5) units per acre; Low Density Residential–7,200 provides for a maximum density of six (6) units per acre; and, Low Density Residential-6,000 provides for a maximum density of seven (7) units per acre. The low density designations provide for detached single family development typically on self-sufficient individual lots. Low density designated lands may be developed with shared recreation and other amenities. Full community level services (i.e. domestic water, sewer, fire protection, etc.) will be available to low density residential use, or any more intensive residential classification. Low Density land uses shall remain the most common type of residential development in the City.

FIGURE 3-4
FLOOR AREA RATIO



5 FAR is equivalent to 1 story covering 50 percent of its site or 2 stories covering 25 percent of its site.

Medium/Low Density Residential (RML): This density allows seven to eleven units per acre. It is intended to provide multiple-family housing in a variety of forms, and to encourage the development of affordable housing in the community by providing for a higher net yield of units per acre. Typical lot sizes within the medium/low density residential zone will be 10,000 square feet with a maximum of three, attached or detached, dwelling units per lot.

Medium Density Residential (RM): This density allows a maximum of fourteen dwelling units per acre. Appropriate residential development under this designation may include single family and multi-family developments, traditional single-family homes, duplex and multiplex development. This designation provides for condominium, duplex and apartment development with shared open space and recreation amenities. Mobile home park and subdivision developments may be permitted on medium density lands with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

High Density Residential (RH): This density allows fifteen to twenty-nine units per acre. It is intended to enable residential development of parcels and sites that cannot reasonably or economically be developed to other more appropriate uses because of location, configuration, relationship to adjacent uses, or other unique conditions. The development of these sites to high-density residential use must not be disruptive of surrounding uses, and must be accommodated by available infrastructure and services. The High Density Residential designation is also intended to provide incentive for the redevelopment of certain existing dilapidated buildings

and parcels, and the infill of vacant parcels. Thus, it expands the overall housing opportunities in the community by allowing a higher net yield of units per acre of development with consequent higher economic returns.

Mobile Home Residential (RMH): This designation allows the location of manufactured housing parks, cooperatively owned manufactured housing parks and recreational vehicle parks of parcels five (5) acres or larger in size. Associated commercial operations and recreational facilities including golf courses may be allowed with a Conditional Use Permit. Maximum density within this designation is fourteen units per acre. **Table 3.2-1** summarizes the population density and intensity standards for each land use designation described in the Land Use Element and shown on the General Plan Diagram.

TABLE 3.3-1
PLANNING AREA DEVELOPABLE ACREAGE/DWELLING UNTS AT FULL DEVELOPMENT

Area	Acres	Dwelling Units
City Limits – West of Corridor Plan Area	9,539	7,353
Colorado River Corridor Plan Area	5,344	13,505
Sphere-of-Influence	12,057	1,809
Planning Area No. 1	1,560	2,340
Planning Area No. 2	5,069	760
Planning Area No. 3	2,196	330
Total	**35,765.72**	**26,097**

TABLE 3.3-2
PLANNING AREA POPULATION AT FULL DEVELOPMENT

Dwelling Units	Average Household Size	Current Population	Population at Full Development
26,097	2.91	13,600	89,542

RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

Based on information collected as part of a land use survey conducted by the City and background studies conducted as part of Plan preparation, the overall gross density (that is, including streets and other public rights-of-way) of residential uses in the Planning Area (including Rural and Very Low Density residences) is less than 2 units per gross acre; the overall gross density excluding these lower density residential uses would be higher. Many of the traditional neighborhoods, in the original incorporated core, contain a variety of housing types - single-family and multifamily - within the same block, with overall neighborhood densities that range from 3.3 to 6.5 units per gross acre.

Historically the trend in most American cities has been to lower densities, however, in recent years many cities have seen residential densities increasing. Higher densities are also reflective of environmental constraints on land currently available for development in the City as well as the increasing cost of development. (See Chapter 6: Open Space and Conservation for details).

This 2006 General Plan promotes increased residential densities to provide for more efficient use of available land resources. Guiding principles behind residential development and neighborhood organizing principles depicted on the General Plan Diagram include:

- **Mix of Housing Types in all Neighborhoods.** The General Plan continues the long-standing City policy of promoting a mix of housing types in all neighborhoods and ensuring that no one area is unduly burdened by higher-density residences.

- **High-Density Residential Development in Strategic Locations.** The Diagram locates High-Density residences in transit-served corridors, such as along portions of Lovekin and Hobsonway, as well as around Downtown. Higher density development is also promoted on vacant and underutilized sites as well as sites likely to undergo long-term redevelopment.

- **Clustering.** In order to protect valuable natural resources and open space, the Plan encourages clustering in resource-sensitive areas, and permits it in all residential areas.

- **Promotion of Small-lot Single-Family Dwellings.** Small-lot developments are encouraged in areas, where practical. These are likely to provide opportunities for many families to participate in the home-ownership market.

FIGURE 3-5
ILLUSTRATIVE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN PROTOTYPES

- **Encouragement of Shorter Blocks.** Because Plan densities are specified in gross acres, no loss of development potential would result by providing more frequent through streets and shorter blocks and thus a higher ratio of public street space per acre of urban land.

- **Minimization of Noise Impacts.** Residential uses are located so that only a small fraction of new residences would be in noise-sensitive areas, such as along the Arizona/California Railroad and Interstate Highway 10.

GUIDING POLICIES: Residential Land Use

1. **Policy:** Preserve the scale and character of established neighborhoods. With growth, there is a need to ensure that the character of established neighborhoods is not lost.

2. **Policy:** Encourage new residential growth in the form of neighborhoods.

3. **Policy:** Provide incentives for development of mixed-use (residential, retail, and office) neighborhood centers, in both the new neighborhoods and in established neighborhoods that lack them. Centers are concentrations of activity and uses that serve a neighborhood function. They are located within close proximity and easy walking distance from adjacent residences and are intended to provide focus and a sense of community for Blythe's neighborhoods.

4. **Policy:** Allow and encourage small-lot single-family housing development in new and existing neighborhoods to provide compact development and efficient infill. In addition to the benefit of affordability, small-lot housing increases opportunities to conserve land and protect environmentally sensitive areas and can provide a positive aesthetic quality as characterized by Blythe's older neighborhoods.

   Also see Goal #6 and Policy 6.4 in the Housing Element.

5. **Policy:** Improve the community orientation of new residential developments. Community orientation calls for greater attention to the relationship between residences, streets and shared spaces, and does not require sacrifice of privacy or amenities.

6. **Policy:** Provide for appropriate relationships between higher density and lower density residential areas, and require buffers of varying size between residential uses and non-residential uses without restricting foot and bicycle access.

7. **Policy:** Encourage and provide incentives for infill development within existing residential areas, at a density not less than surrounding development, subject to appropriate standards to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Residential Land Use

- **Implementation:** Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance provides for:

  - Minimum and maximum densities consistent with the Plan's land use classifications. (In order to promote compact development, and ensure the availability of adequate sites in transit-

accessible corridors for high-density housing and development of the proposed neighborhood centers, sites designated for Medium or High Density Residential uses should be reserved for the intended use.);

- A 5,000 square-foot minimum lot area for small-lot single-family development, either as-of-right in the Single-Family (R-L) zoning districts, or in a separate zoning district intended for new growth areas, with an appropriate open space requirement;
- Development standards that permit zero-lot line attached or detached single-family dwellings on sites designated for medium or higher densities in the General Plan; and
- Development standards that do not result in disincentives for providing more frequent local streets. Minimum lot-size standards in the Zoning Ordinance should be attainable in residential projects that provide through streets every 400 to 500 feet.

- **Implementation:** Development standards that:

  - Provide for and encourage a mix of uses, as listed in **Table 3.2-1** and illustrated on **Figure 3-2**, in neighborhood centers. On sites where a part of the site is appropriate for development of neighborhood commercial and office uses, said will be required as a condition of subdivision approval, unless such development is found infeasible and alternative locations are available and will be developed to carry out these mixed-use policies.

3.4 DOWNTOWN

The 5-block long stretch along Hobsonway between Main and Second Street to a depth of one block on either side of Hobsonway comprises most of the "Downtown" area. The business district was centered along the old Highway 60 (Hobsonway), which to this day remains the main spine of Downtown Blythe. The Downtown area includes retail stores, eating and drinking establishments, commercial recreation, entertainment establishments and theaters, financial, business and personal services, hotels and motels, educational, and social services, governmental offices, and housing.

The retail, office, and financial core of the present Downtown is a ten (10)-block area bounded by Murphy and Rice, and Main and Second Streets. Short (570 x 320 foot) blocks and the roughly square shape of the core keep most activities within walking distance.

Long-term success of Downtown will depend on its ability to nurture existing businesses, attract high employment service uses, and maintain a pleasant environment for pedestrians where one-of-a-kind shops, entertainment facilities, and dining establishments can attract patronage from the entire City and beyond. The maximum non-residential Floor Area Ratio is 1.0, and residential densities of up to 22 units per gross acre may be permitted with a Conditional Use Permit. Further detail on development intensities and use-mixes in Downtown is provided in **Table 3.2-1**. Because Downtown caters to a different market than that served by malls and discount stores, its future is not imminently threatened by the increasing presence of these establishments in Blythe.

To achieve its full potential, the City will need to be actively involved with the business community in shaping a viable strategy that will attract needed investment and limit nuisance uses which detract from the character of Downtown. Design concepts that will enhance the image and role of Downtown are provided in the Downtown Design Guidelines. A comprehensive parking program, addressing both the need for short-term spaces for shoppers and long-term spaces for employees, also will be needed to ensure Downtown's effective functioning; it should be consistent with efforts to encourage use of alternate modes of transportation.

GUIDING POLICIES: Downtown

8. **Policy:** Maintain and enhance Downtown's vitality and economic well-being, and its presence as the City's symbolic center.

9. **Policy:** Encourage development of Downtown as a mixed-use activity center with retail and visitor-oriented uses, business and personal services, government and professional offices, communications facilities, civic uses, and high-density residential uses.

10. **Policy:** Provide incentives for infill development, intensification and reuse of currently underutilized sites in Downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Downtown

- **Implementation:** Prepare and implement a Downtown Action Plan and Implementation Strategy. The Action Plan and Implementation Strategy should include:

    - A survey of existing conditions, including amount of space devoted to different uses;
    - Economic and market feasibility analysis, include an analysis of revenue generators in the Downtown area and the feasibility of additional office and high-density residential uses;
    - Development standards and incentives needed to attract new development;
    - Downtown Design Guidelines;
    - Streetscape improvements and provision of bicycle lanes and ideas to enhance Downtown's pedestrian-friendly environment; and,
    - A comprehensive parking program.

- **Implementation:** Target areas in Downtown (see **Figure 3-6**: Downtown Sub-area) for a specific mix of uses as shown in the General Plan Diagram and allow uses and development intensities in these areas as provided in **Table 3.4-1**.

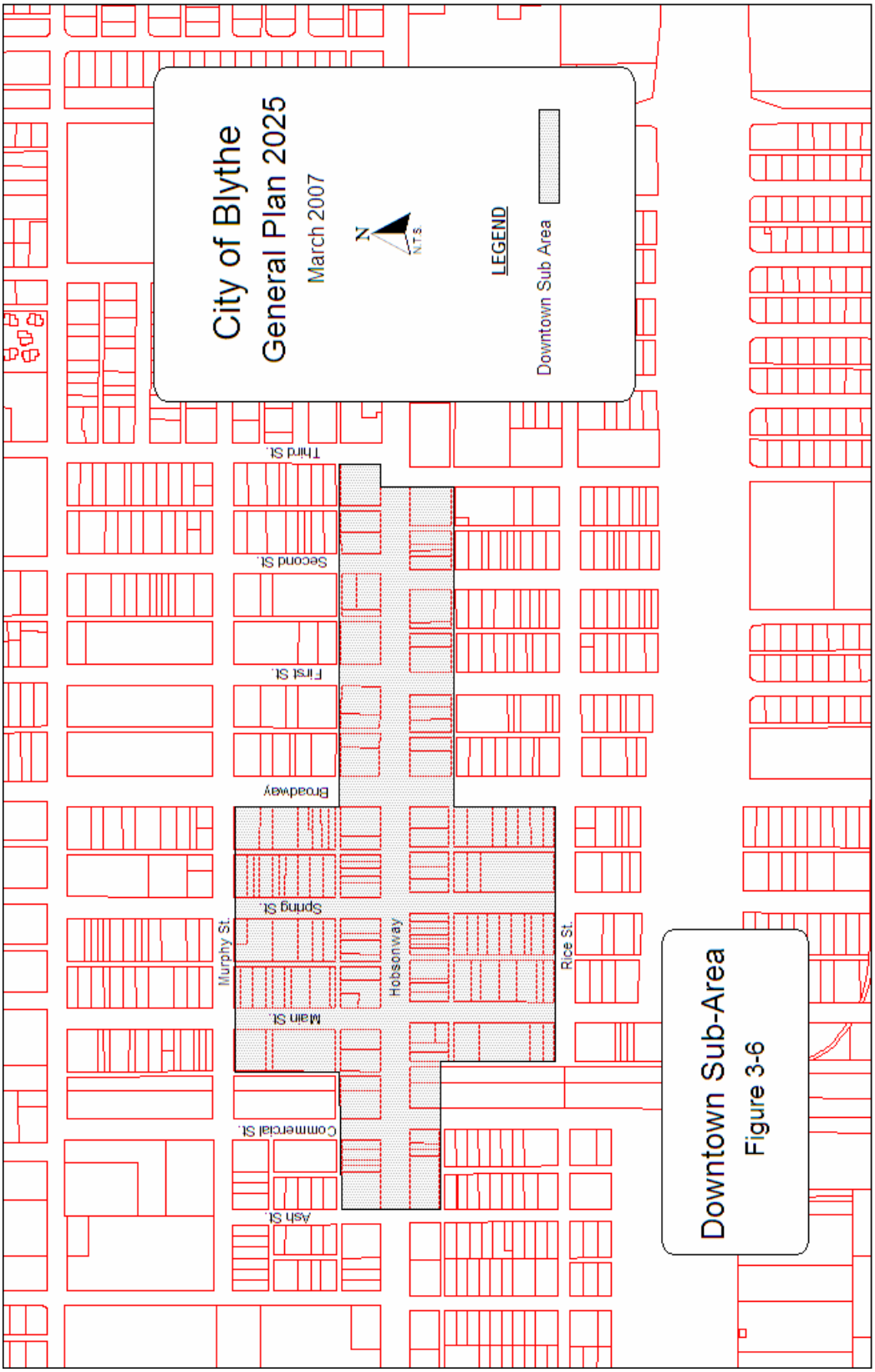
- **Implementation:** Amend City codes to conform to Plan policies and standards and to provide for reduced off-street parking requirements for residential uses in the downtown where possible.

- **Implementation:** Ensure the Downtown remains adequately served by all forms of transportation.

TABLE 3.4-1
INTENSITIES AND PERMITTED MIX OF USES IN DOWNTOWN SUB-AREA

Use	Downtown	Hobsonway
Retail	Yes	Yes - 1st floor only
Visitor Commercial	Yes – Retail on 1st floor required	No
Office	Only above 1st floor	No
Residential	Yes – None on 1st floor	Yes - all floors
Maximum FAR (Non-residential uses)	1.0	1.0
Maximum Residential Density (units/gross acre)	22	22

Note: Combined maximum FAR and residential density may not be achievable because of height, site coverage, parking or other requirements. The intent in providing these maximums is to permit a greater level of flexibility for mix of uses.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.s
LEGEND
Downtown Sub Area
Third St.
Second St.
First St.
Broadway
Spring St.
Murphy St.
Hobson Way
Rice St.
Main St.
Commercial St.
Ash St.
Downtown Sub-Area
Figure 3-6

3.5 RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Three (3) commercial land use designations are established; each of these serves a specific purpose, accommodating either a broad or narrow range of uses.

Commercial classifications that follow:

- Encourage upper-story residences in the Community Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial and General;

- Permit offices in Community Commercial areas, but to ensure an adequate market for designated Community Commercial areas, allow only support retail uses in the Neighborhood Commercial and Industrial areas;

- Do not permit offices as a primary use in Neighborhood or General Commercial areas because permitting offices would increase land values, making it harder for these uses to compete with offices for the same sites.

General Commercial (CG): This land use designation is intended to provide for development of community-scale commercial centers with market areas often extending beyond the City limits and immediate environs. The General Plan designation also recognizes the special and varied conditions in the vicinity of Hobsonway, where lot assemblage, planned commercial development and redevelopment are to be encouraged. Commercial lands along Hobsonway support neighborhood and tourist, as well as community-scale needs.

The General Commercial land use category will provide many of the commercial services provided by the neighborhood centers. General commercial services typically provide a broader range of clothing and apparel, furnishings and appliances. Community commercial centers, including planned commercial developments and in-fill commercial strip areas and above cited uses, typically consist of a variety of specialty retail stores including poster art and T-shirt shops, jewelry stores, and men's and women's apparel stores. Smaller, moderately priced department stores may also be appropriate under the General Commercial designation, as well as professional office space. Residential uses are allowed in the General Commercial land use category up to a maximum density of 22 units per gross acre with a Conditional Use Permit. The maximum non-residential Floor Area Ratio is 1.0 when the site is within 500' of a public parking lot.

Neighborhood Commercial (CN): This designation provides for the development of residential neighborhood convenience stores with limited gasoline service and limited general retail. The neighborhood commercial center typically ranges from 1 to 3 acres and is located at sites convenient for local residents. These facilities are not meant to replace community-scale grocery stores and similar retail centers, but rather to compliment them. The maximum non-residential Floor Area Ratio is 0.5. Upper-story residential uses are permitted, subject to a Conditional Use Permit and maximum limit of 22 units per gross acre. Limitations on the size and location of parking, coupled with building orientation and design standards, will ensure that a pedestrian-oriented environment is created.

Community Commercial (CC): The Community Commercial land use designation provides for the development of professional and medical office space, financial institutions, and associated support facilities, as well as limited retail commercial uses, which are ancillary to office uses, such as restaurants and snack bars, pharmacies and similar support services. Typically substantially less intense commercial uses such as office development may be appropriate near or adjacent to residential areas. The maximum non-residential Floor

Area Ratio is 0.3. Upper-story residential uses are permitted, subject to a Conditional Use Permit, up to a maximum of 22 units per gross acre with higher densities permitted in transit-served corridors. Zoning districts will limit certain commercial areas to neighborhood stores or non-automotive establishments.

Blythe attracts shoppers from a large region; retail districts are also critical in shaping the identity and image of the City and the neighborhoods.

To ensure that a diverse range of shopping opportunities are available and easily accessible, the Plan provides for new neighborhood centers, located closer to where people live and designed with the pedestrian in mind, and for increased convenience-good opportunities in existing neighborhoods where suitable sites are available.

Land supply in proportion to anticipated needs. To ensure the viability of the proposed neighborhood centers, as well as Downtown, land designated for commercial uses corresponds closely to the need.

GUIDING POLICIES: Retail and Commercial Land Use

11. **Policy:** Maintain Blythe's prominence as the center of retail activity in the Palo Verde Valley.

12. **Policy:** Promote neighborhood identity and encourage use of alternative modes of transportation by providing local shopping centers that many residents can reach on foot or bicycle.

13. **Policy:** Require pedestrian-oriented design in new shopping areas and provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access from nearby residential, commercial, and retail areas. Encourage retrofit with such design and access in existing commercial centers where feasible.

    The Community Design Element provides details on how such design concepts can be achieved.

14. **Policy:** Provide specific sites for new community-sized shopping facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Retail and Commercial Land Use

- **Implementation:** Establish use regulations, development standards and minimum performance requirements in the Zoning Ordinance consistent with the General Plan, and amend the Zoning Map to be consistent with the Land Use Diagram.

  Use an overlay zoning designation for transit-served corridors, such as Hobsonway and Lovekin Boulevard to establish pedestrian-oriented design standards, control auto-oriented uses, control the size and location of surface parking, minimum parking requirements and encourage mixed-use development with bonus floor area for housing, or other incentive provisions.

- **Implementation:** "Retrofit" existing neighborhoods that lack convenience retail facilities with small (1-3 acre-sized) neighborhood mixed-use centers, provided suitable sites are available.

- **Implementation:** Permit neighborhood stores less than 2,500 square feet in size in residential areas outside the service areas depicted in **Figure 3-3** wherever they can be supported and will not unduly impact existing neighborhoods.

Because the General Plan Diagram establishes sites for smaller, more-dispersed neighborhood centers, there should be less of a need for isolated stores in the future. The Zoning Ordinance should prescribe locational criteria and conditions for approval of stores outside the service areas, including spacing standards, lighting and buffering requirements, minimum and maximum lot size, building size, and the size, location, and landscape treatment for surface parking.

- **Implementation:** For development along Hobsonway between Main and Seventh Streets, adopt appropriate standards to improve the character of this corridor, including but not limited to site access, building and off-street parking orientation to street, building height, on-site lighting, transitional requirements adjacent to residential uses, and incentives to encourage office/residential mixed use.

- **Implementation:** Urge the County to adopt appropriate zoning for sites in unincorporated areas designated for commercial use, such as along Highway 95. Development and/or redevelopment along these street corridors should trigger installation of landscaping, medians, trees, sidewalks, and bike and pedestrian facilities designed to City standards.

3.6 INDUSTRY

Service Industrial: This designation is intended to provide areas appropriate for moderate- to low-intensity industrial uses capable of being located next to commercial and residential areas with minimum buffering. Allowable uses include light manufacturing, wholesaling, distribution, and storage, retailing as an accessory use only, and offices in a landscaped setting. Small restaurants and convenience stores will be permitted as ancillary uses, subject to appropriate standards. No raw materials processing would be allowed. The maximum Floor Area Ratio is 0.4, but increases may be permitted, up to 0.8, for uses such as wholesale, distribution, and storage with low employment intensity.

General Industrial: This designation is intended to provide and protect industrial lands for the full range of manufacturing, agricultural and industrial processing, general service, and distribution uses. Unrelated retail and service commercial uses that could be more appropriately located elsewhere in the City would not be permitted, except for offices, RV parks and camp grounds, subject to appropriate standards. The maximum Floor Area Ratio is 0.5. Performance standards in the Zoning Ordinance will minimize potential environmental impacts. Increases in the maximum Floor Area Ratio may be permitted, up to 0.8, for uses with low employment intensities, such as wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution.

Industrial uses in 2006 occupied about 200 acres, with light industrial uses accounting for about 56 percent of this total.

Because employment intensity (building space per employee) and site configuration, access and other requirements for different industrial uses vary dramatically, the General Plan provides about 350 acres of land for new industrial development in a variety of settings and locations. This figure does not include the area east and west of the Airport, and the area south of the City. An industrial corridor between Seeley Avenue and the railroad tracks, west of Main Street, is proposed as most compatible with the noise environment in this area.

Plan policies also seek to increase the supply of pre-zoned, "ready-to-go" industrial land to enhance Blythe's competitiveness and decrease start-up time for new industrial development. Policies for industrial land use are presented below; specific policies for Airport-related industrial development are in Section 3.7.

GUIDING POLICIES: Industry

15. **Policy:** Provide appropriately located areas for a broad range of manufacturing, warehousing, and service uses to strengthen the City's economic base and provide employment opportunities for residents.

16. **Policy:** Protect the supply of land suitable for industrial use by not allowing incompatible uses to locate in industrial areas.

17. **Policy:** Provide sites for non-industrial land uses that complement industrial development or that require an industrial environment.

18. **Policy:** Achieve compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods through buffering requirements and standards intended to minimize harmful effects of excessive noise, light, and glare and other adverse environmental impacts.

19. **Policy:** Ensure that industrial development is compatible with and does not adversely affect the natural environment.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Industry

- **Implementation:** Establish use regulations, development standards, and minimum performance requirements for industrial development in the Zoning Ordinance, consistent with the General Plan.

- **Implementation:** Adopt setback, landscaping, and screening requirements for industrial development to protect adjacent non-industrial uses, and require a minimum physical separation and adequate buffering between manufacturing and warehousing and residential neighborhoods and commercial and recreation areas.

- **Implementation:** In new industrial areas, require master plans and infrastructure financing programs as a condition of subdivision approval, so haphazard development, without a coordinated plan for land use, circulation, infrastructure, and public services, does not occur.

- **Implementation:** Use the Blythe Redevelopment Agency to facilitate funding infrastructure improvements needed for industrial areas to accommodate expansion of existing industry or provide sites for new industry.

3.7 AIRPORT

The Blythe Municipal Airport, located immediately west of the City limits in unincorporated Riverside County, is a public use airport owned by Riverside County and operated through long term lease agreement by the City of Blythe. The Blythe Airport is the largest public airport serving Eastern Riverside County, California and western Maricopa County, Arizona, located immediately east of the City of Blythe. The airport site is served by the Mesa Drive diamond interchange off Interstate Highway 10.

The City of Blythe recognized the value and importance of the Blythe Municipal Airport to both the community and Eastern Riverside County as an important component of the goods movement corridor and an economic asset for long-term development of the community.

Blythe Airport Master Plan: In an effort to meet the community's aviation needs and serve existing and future businesses that value proximity to the airport and capitalize on the growing use of aircraft for shipping and other uses, the Blythe City Council adopted the *Final Blythe Airport Master Plan* in September, 2000. The Master Plan provides short-, mid- and long-range airport use and improvement policies for both aeronautical and non-aeronautical use of airport lands.

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan: The Blythe component of the *Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) was adopted by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) in October, 2004. The ALUCP serves as a guide for future development within the airport environs and is intended to facilitate orderly development and avoid land use conflicts. The primary function of the ALUC is to "...protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports..." Similarly, it is the goal of the City of Blythe to promote development on and around the Blythe Municipal Airport while maintaining safety both on the ground and in the air.

The Airport Influence Area (AIA) as defined by the ALUCP is delineated on the General Plan Land Use Map, **Figure 3-2-1.** Basic Compatibility Guidelines are shown in **Table 3.7-1**, with the Compatibility Factors Map, identifying the Compatibility Zones, provided as **Figure 3-7.**

GUIDING POLICIES: Airport

20. Policy: The City of Blythe hereby adopts by reference into General Plan 2025, the *Blythe Airport Master Plan* dated September 2000 as may be amended by the Blythe City Council from time to time. Further, all applicable goals, policies and development plans and standards contained in the *Blythe Airport Master Plan* are also City policy.

21. Policy: The City of Blythe hereby adopts by reference the Blythe Airport component of the 2004 *Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* as may be amended by the Airport Land Use Commission from time to time. Further, all applicable policies and criteria contained in the ALUCP are also City policy.

22. Policy: Prior to City action pertaining to currently unincorporated lands within the AIA, such proposed actions will be submitted to the ALUC for consistency review until such time as a more detailed general plan and/or specific plan for the area has been found consistent by the ALUC.

23. Policy: As required by Public Utilities Code Section 21676(b), prior to City approval, appropriate pre-zoning, specific plan, planned unit development, individual development projects, or other actions involving land within the City Sphere-of-Influence and AIA designated "planned development" will be submitted to the ALUC for review.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Airport

- **Implementation:** The City shall review all proposed development projects intended to be located on airport land for conformance with the *Blythe Airport Master Plan*.

- **Implementation:** The City shall review all proposed development projects within the AIA for conformance with the compatibility criteria set forth in the ALUCP.

TABLE 3.7-1
BASIC COMPATIBILITY CRITERIA

Zone	Locations	Maximum Densities / Intensities				Additional Criteria	
		Residential (d.u./ac)[1]	Other Uses (people/acre)[2]			Required Open Land[3]	Prohibited Uses[4]	Other Development Conditions[5]
			Average[6]	Single Acre[7]	With Bonus[8]			
A	Runway Protection Zone and within Building Restriction Line	0	0	0	0	All Remaining	➢ All structures except ones with location set by aeronautical function ➢ Assemblages of people ➢ Objects exceeding FAR Part 77 height limits ➢ Storage of hazardous materials ➢ Hazards to flight[9]	➢ Avigation easement dedication
B1	Inner Approach/ Departure Zone	0.05 (average parcel size ≥20.0 ac.)	25	50	65	30%	➢ Children's schools, day care centers, libraries ➢ Hospitals, nursing homes ➢ Places of worship ➢ Bldgs. with >2 aboveground habitable floors ➢ Highly noise-sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses[10] ➢ Aboveground bulk storage of hazardous materials[11] ➢ Critical community infrastructure facilities[12]	➢ Locate structures maximum distance from extended runway centerline ➢ Minimum NLR of 25 dB in residences (including mobile homes) and office buildings[13] ➢ Airspace review required for objects >35 feet tall[14] ➢ Avigation easement dedication
B2	Adjacent to Runway	0.1 (average parcel size ≥10.0 ac.)	100	200	260	No Req't	Same as Zone B1	➢ Locate structures maximum distance from runway ➢ Minimum NLR of 25 dB in residences (including mobile homes) and office buildings13 ➢ Airspace review required for objects >35 feet tall[4] ➢ Avigation easement dedication
C	Extended Approach/ Departure Zone	0.2 (average parcel size ≥5.0 ac.)	75	150	195	20%	➢ Children's schools, day care centers, libraries ➢ Hospitals, nursing homes ➢ Bldgs. with >3 aboveground habitable floors ➢ Highly noise-sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses[10] ➢ Hazards to flight[9]	➢ Minimum NLR of 20 dB in residences (including mobile homes) and office buildings[13] ➢ Airspace review required for objects >70 feet tall[15] ➢ Deed notice required
D	Primary Traffic Patterns and Runway Buffer Area	(1) ≤0.2 (average parcel size ≥5.0 ac.) Or16 (2) ≥5.0 (average parcel size ≤0.2 ac.)	100	300	390	10%	➢ Highly noise-sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses[10] ➢ Hazards to flight[9]	➢ Airspace review required for objects >70 feet tall[15] ➢ Children's schools, hospitals, nursing homes discouraged[17] ➢ Deed notice required
E	Other Airport Environs	No Limit	No Limit[18]			No Req't	➢ Hazards to flight[9]	➢ Airspace review required for objects >100 feet tall[15] ➢ Major spectator-oriented sports stadiums, amphitheaters, concert halls discouraged beneath principal flight tracks[18]
*	Height Review Overlay	Same as Underlying Compatibility Zone				Not Applicable	Same as Underlying Compatibility Zone	➢ Airspace review required for objects >35 feet tall[14] ➢ Avigation easement dedication
See Chapter 3 of Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for airport-specific additions or exceptions to these policies								

Source: Table 2A – Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Adopted October 2004)

TABLE 3.7-1
BASIC COMPATIBILITY CRITERIA CONTINUED

NOTES:

1. Residential development must not contain more than the indicated number of dwelling units (excluding secondary units) per gross acre. Clustering of units is encouraged. See Policy 4.2.5 for limitations. Gross acreage includes the property at issue plus a share of adjacent roads and any adjacent, permanently dedicated, open lands. Mixed-use development in which residential uses are proposed to be located in conjunction with nonresidential uses in the same or adjoining buildings on the same site shall be treated as nonresidential development. See Policy 3.1.3(d).
2. Usage intensity calculations shall include all people (e.g., employees, customers/visitors, etc.) who may be on the property at a single point in time, whether indoors or outside.
3. Open land requirements are intended to be applied with respect to an entire zone. This is typically accomplished as part of a community general plan or a specific plan, but may also apply to large (10 acres or more) development projects. See Policy 4.2.4 for definition of open land.
4. The uses listed here are ones that are explicitly prohibited regardless of whether they meet the intensity criteria. In addition to these explicitly prohibited uses, other uses will normally not be permitted in the respective compatibility zones because they do not meet the usage intensity criteria.
5. As part of certain real estate transactions involving residential property within any compatibility zone (that is, anywhere within an airport influence area), information regarding airport proximity and the existence of aircraft overflights must be disclosed. This requirement is set by state law. See Policy 4.4.2 for details. Easement dedication and deed notice requirements indicated for specific compatibility zones apply only to new development and to reuse if discretionary approval is required.
6. The total number of people permitted on a project site at any time, except rare special events, must not exceed the indicated usage intensity times the gross acreage of the site. Rare special events are ones (such as an air show at the airport) for which a facility is not designed and normally not used and for which extra safety precautions can be taken as appropriate.
7. Clustering of nonresidential development is permitted. However, no single acre of project site shall exceed the indicated number of people per acre. See Policy 4.2.5 for details.
8. An intensity bonus may be allowed if the building design includes features intended to reduce risks to occupants in the event of an aircraft collision with the building. See Policy 4.2.6 for details.
9. Hazards to flight include physical (e.g., tall objects), visual, and electronic forms of interference with the safety of aircraft operations. Land use development that may cause the attraction of birds to increase is also prohibited. See Policy 4.3.7.
10. Examples of highly noise-sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses that should be prohibited include amphitheaters and drive-in theaters. Caution should be exercised with respect to uses such as poultry farms and nature preserves.
11. Storage of aviation fuel and other aviation-related flammable materials on the airport is exempted from this criterion. Storage of up to 6,000 gallons of nonaviation flammable materials is also exempted. See Policy 4.2.3© for details.
12. Critical community facilities include power plants, electrical substations, and public communications facilities. See Policy 4.2.3(d) for details.
13. NLR – Noise Level Reduction, the outside-to-inside sound level attenuation that the structure provides. See Policy 4.1.6.
14. Objects up to 35 feet in height are permitted. However, the Federal Aviation Administration may require marking and lighting of certain objects. See Policy 4.3.6 for details.
15. This height criterion is for general guidance. Shorter objects normally will not be airspace obstructions unless situated at a ground elevation well above that of the airport. Taller objects may be acceptable if determined not to be obstructions. See Policies 4.3.3 and 4.3.4.
16. Two options are provided for residential densities in *Compatibility Zone D*. Option (1) has a density limit of 0.2 dwelling units per acre (i.e., an average parcel size of at least 5.0 gross acres). Option (2) requires that the density be *greater* than 5.0 dwelling units per acre (i.e., an average parcel size less than 0.2 gross acres). The choice between these two options is at the discretion of the local land use jurisdiction. See Table 2B for explanation of rationale. All other criteria for *Zone D* apply to both options.
17. Discouraged uses should generally not be permitted unless no feasible alternative is available.
18. Although no explicit upper limit on usage intensity is defined for *Zone E*, land uses of the types listed-uses that attract very high concentrations of people in confined areas-are discourage in locations below or near the principal arrival and departure flight tracks. This limitation notwithstanding, no use shall be prohibited in *Zone E* if its usage intensity is such that it would be permitted in *Zone D*.

Policy references made in Table 3.7-1 direct the reader to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Adopted October 2004)
Source: Table 2A – Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Adopted October 2004)

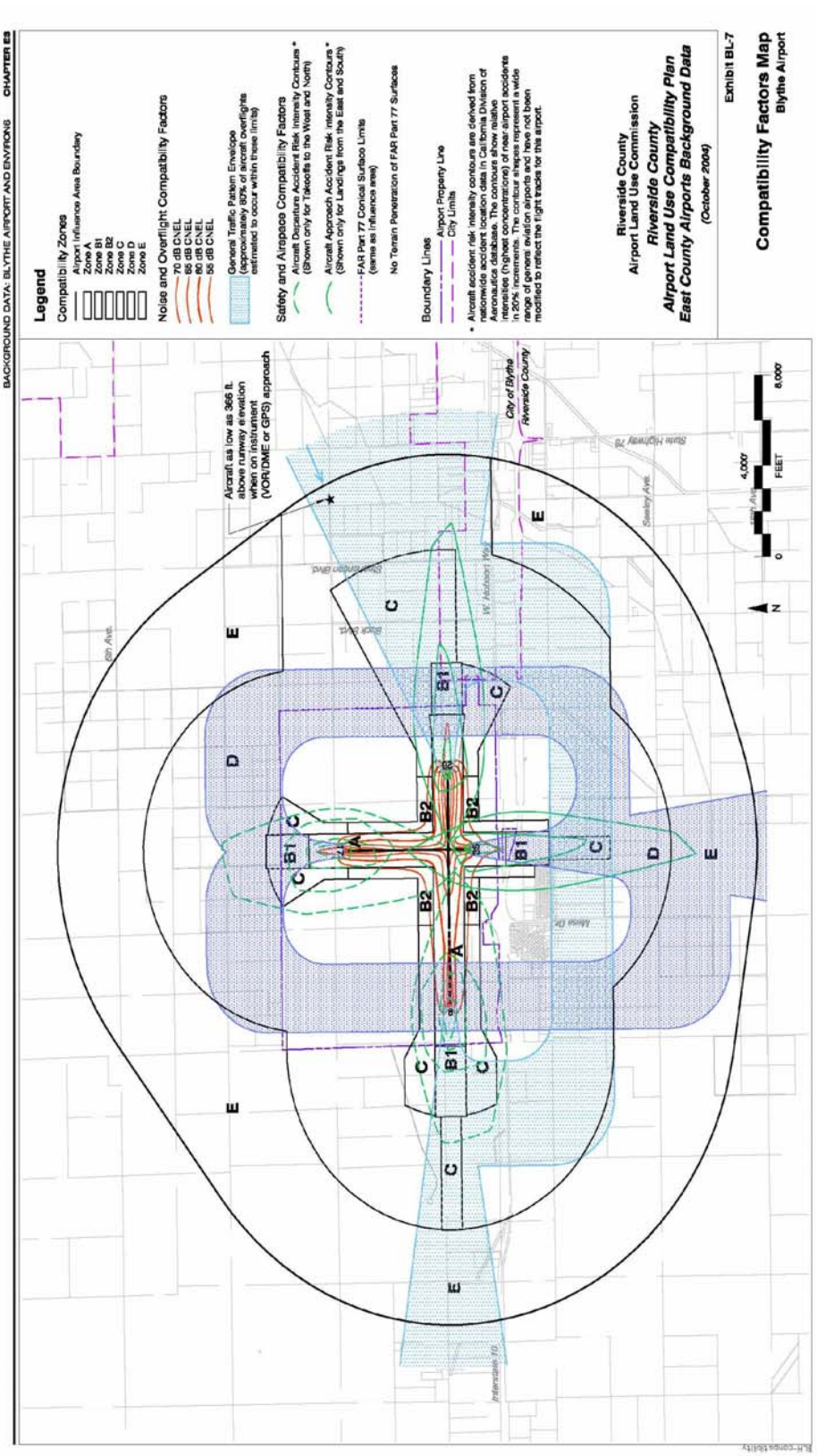


Figure 3-7
Compatibility Factors Map

3.8 PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

This designation includes sites for schools, governmental offices, airport, parks, churches and other facilities that have a unique public character and typically require at least two acres of land. The General Plan Diagram does not have to be amended for new public facilities on sites that are less than two acres located in residential, commercial, or industrial areas.

3.9 OPEN SPACE

Two categories of open space are delineated on the General Plan Diagram and/or the Biological Resources Diagram. Further details on open space policies are provided in the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety: This designation includes sensitive habitats including riparian woodlands, wetlands, riparian corridors, groundwater recharge areas, power transmission line corridors, viewshed management areas, and areas subject to flooding which are not areas for agriculture. Areas with sensitive biotic habitats included in this classification are further classified as Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) or Resource Management Areas (RMAs); see Section 6.4: Biological Resources and Habitat Conservation. Development in these areas would be subject to habitat protection standards. For RMAs, Resource Management Plans would be required as a condition of development approval. Residential development is generally permitted at a density not to exceed one housing unit per 40 acres in areas designated as Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety; however, no development is allowed on sites designated as RCAs.

Sites will be designated as RCAs in the General Plan only after they have been brought into public ownership or the owner has agreed to a permanent restriction for resource conservation as a condition of development approval. Transfer of density from such RCAs to adjacent development land may be permitted.

Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management: This designation includes orchards and cropland, grasslands, and very low density rural residential areas, not to exceed one housing unit per 5-acres, provided that one housing unit may be built on each existing parcel. Agriculture is permitted with fewer restrictions on keeping animals than in the residential classifications. Agricultural processing facilities also are allowed, subject to performance and access standards intended to minimize potential adverse environmental effects and ensure compatibility with adjacent uses. This classification will also accommodate any greenbelts and/or urban buffer areas that may be designated in the future.

Chapter 4

Circulation Element

4 CIRCULATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Blythe strives to create a balanced transportation system that serves bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motor vehicles. The original grid layout provided street connections linking neighborhoods with work places. As the community has grown, connections between neighborhoods, shopping areas, and business locations have not always served residents' transportation needs, so the General Plan provides for new routes in partially developed portions of the Planning Area, and expansion of capacity and efficiency of the existing system; the Plan also provides ways to reduce auto-dependence in the core of the City by facilitating use of alternate modes of travel.

Blythe's transportation network is characterized by Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) running east-west, two State Highways, SR-78 and US-95, running north-south, and a number of arterial streets providing regional and local access. Up until 1990 a combination of compact urban form and arrangement of land uses minimized the need for long trips to work or other destinations for most of Blythe residents. The major exceptions to this have been:

- Commutes by Blythe residents who work at Morgan Corporation, an employer of approximately 200 located approximately 12 miles east of Blythe on I-10.

- Commutes by farm workers from Blythe to fields either inside or outside Blythe's Sphere-of-Influence. (The number of farm workers living within Blythe is estimated to be between 1,000-3,000).

- Commutes by Blythe residents, particularly senior citizens, on an intermittent basis to urban centers 100 miles or more distance for specialized medical care not available in the local area.

Since 1990 several factors have impacted the average number of miles traveled to and from work by Blythe residents:

- The opening of two State prisons 20 miles southwest of the City's center. Of the approximately 1,850 total employees at the two prisons, 1,110 or 60% are permanent residents of Blythe and therefore, make this 40 plus mile round trip every working day. Of the 740 that live elsewhere, an estimated 25-50% also commute from Blythe, staying in Blythe during their workweek before returning to their homes outside of Blythe.

- The annexation and development of several areas 5-7 miles from the City center. One area is on the Mesa near the golf course; the other is along the Colorado River.

- In 2002, a new college campus near the golf course opened, replacing the campus that existed closer to the City center. Present enrollment includes approximately 1,200 full and part time students. 100 full and part time employees service the campus.

Table 4.0-1 shows the estimated number of worker trips by round trip miles traveled. Almost half the trips are estimated to be a distance of 10 miles or more with 21% of the trips over 30 miles in length. These figures do not account for college student trips, most of which will be in the 10-20 mile range.

TABLE 4.0-1
ESTIMATED WORKER ROUND TRIP COMMUTING – MILES PER DAY

	Percent of Workers	
Trip Length	**Work Trips**	**% of Total Trips**
Less than 10 miles	3,569	52%
10-20 miles	1,600	23%
20-30 miles	300	4%
30 plus miles	1,459	21%
Total	6,928	100%

Preliminary findings indicate that at the present time no strain exists on any of the City's major arterials. Interstate Highway 10 was not evaluated. The study identifies the level of service on all of these roads as "A" meaning essentially free flowing conditions and minimal delays. The portion of Interstate Highway 10 that dissects the City can also be safely assumed to be free of traffic congestion at the present time.

However, the transportation study does project the need for road improvements based on its assessment of traffic growth over a 20-year time span. Short-term improvement recommendations include:

- Extending Neighbours Boulevard northward from Hobsonway to 6th Avenue, to replace DeFrain Boulevard as the primary roadway to the Mesa. It identifies this as a particularly pressing concern with the recent increase in development on the Mesa, including the new college campus.

- Extending either 16th Avenue or 18th Avenue eastward to Riviera Drive to provide a secondary access to the area.

The plan also recommends a bike path along much of Lovekin Boulevard to provide:

- Access for middle- and high-school students to their campuses along North Lovekin Boulevard.

- Bicycle access to the new college campus from the central City area.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

The Circulation Element responds directly to the Government Code, which requires "a circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan."

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Land Use Element includes policies related to the physical framework for development that the circulation system is designed to serve, and includes policies for the airport environs. The Community Design Element addresses landscaping along major streets and planning for new neighborhoods to ensure street connectivity. It also addresses how to create pedestrian-friendly environments and design for alternate modes of transportation. The Noise Element includes policies to alleviate noise generated by traffic.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Detailed information related to existing transportation conditions will be included in the *Program Environmental Assessment.*

The Circulation Element establishes policies to provide a multi-modal transportation system meeting the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as automobiles and trucks. A comprehensive system of streets and bicycle routes for the Planning Area is proposed, as well as level of service standards for automobiles and bicycles.

The Circulation Element is closely correlated with the Land Use Element to ensure that:

- **Alternatives to automobile trips are encouraged** by promoting a compact urban form and providing neighborhood amenities closer to where residents live.

- **Trip-lengths are kept to a minimum** by promoting mixed-use development, downtown and neighborhood cores, transit-served corridors and office areas, and clustering higher density residential development closer to job centers.

- **The intensity and location of development that makes transit feasible is maintained.** A minimum residential density in new neighborhoods is established.

- **A street network that promotes flexibility of routes and more direct connections between and within neighborhoods is provided.**

This Element addresses transportation issues from a citywide to a neighborhood scale and the relationship between the local and the regional system and agencies. It also contains policies to ensure that existing uses and neighborhoods are not unduly impacted as the City grows. Appendix B includes an analysis of the traffic impacts of the General Plan and a list of major improvements to the street and bicycle system that would be necessary to accommodate planned growth.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL PROGRAMS

The Circulation Element and Appendix B identify future circulation needs for a long-range planning horizon. These projects will be studied later in greater detail, and funding and implementation sources will be identified. Many of the projects, in order to be funded, must be part of local and regional programs, including the City's Capital Outlay Program, the Riverside County Congestion Management Program (CMP), and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Once a project is in the RTIP, it is available for consideration in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The CMP ensures that an integrated approach to transportation programming decision-making is followed. The CMP is intended to maintain transportation mobility in Riverside County by establishing standards that encourage a balance of transportation modes, and by incorporating the transportation implications of land-use decision in planning efforts.

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments, which is responsible for overseeing local agency compliance with State law, implements the State-mandated CMP. Cities within the County are responsible for conformance with the adopted service level standards on the principal arterial system defined by the CMP, and for transit standards. They are also responsible for the adoption and implementation of trip-reduction and

travel-demand ordinances and for developing a program to analyze the impacts of land use decision. Where deficiencies in the system exist, deficiency plans must be adopted and methods of correcting the deficiencies identified. If deficiencies go unmitigated, the City could lose a portion of its gas tax revenues. Projects on the CMP are eligible for the RTIP and STIP funding.

A new, major funding source is now available through the Federal Transportation Act for the 21ST Century (TEA-21) program. TEA replaces the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and provides significant funding increases for virtually every form of transportation-from highways to bikeways, to transit programs and projects. TEA-21 will help to provide a more balanced transportation system and could impact the current local funding structure regarding transportation issues and projects.

4.1 CIRCULATION ISSUES

This Element focuses on issues that are currently affecting the circulation system in Blythe, the Palo Verde Valley, and Statewide. In addition, it identifies issues that can be expected to affect the system in the future. Understanding how the circulation system works today will help in determining how the system will work in the future and will in tum, allow the community to anticipate future problems.

Issues are covered by various areas of concern; streets and highways, transit, aviation, rail, bicycle/pedestrian, trucks, transportation system management and goods movement. In addition, these relevant issues are discussed in a State context, a regional context, and from a local perspective.

STATEWIDE ISSUES

Growth will continue to be the single biggest issue facing California in the next ten to twenty years. The ability of communities in the State to accommodate the ever-increasing population is one of the key challenges facing the State. Every significant issue facing the State of California is the result or by-product of growth. The impacts to the Palo Verde Valley will parallel those that are anticipated to accrue to the State as a whole, even though growth projections for the Valley are somewhat lower than for the State. Coupled with diminished financial resources available to address this anticipated growth, the Palo Verde Valley will be challenged to meet the increased demand for transportation services.

The State of California is also faced with a significant air quality problem. The air quality deterioration is due to the vast numbers of people living in the State, weather that does not circulate air masses in and around urban areas, and topography that "traps" air in valley areas. The Palo Verde Valley is experiencing growth at the same time as many of the problems of air pollution and its effects on public health are just being understood. Recent national and State legislation regarding air quality and development will place a greater emphasis on the efficient operation of State, regional and local transportation systems.

The Circulation Element can positively affect air quality by improving the operating efficiency of the community's street system. By decreasing the amount of time cars are on the road, through the reduction in vehicle delay, street systems can positively affect air quality in the Valley. The more efficient a circulation system becomes, the fewer the delays that occur and resultingly, less fuel is burned. The Circulation Element can also lay the framework for the development of a balanced transportation system. By encouraging the use of many different modes for the most efficient transportation of people, goods and services, the Circulation Element can help insure that resources are balanced for different modes and in turn, can design systems to match Blythe's needs.

REGIONAL ISSUES

Regional issues that affect the circulation system are becoming more influential in their impact on the local system. Blythe is strategically located in the middle of an intensive agricultural area requiring the movement of agricultural products. Thus, the Blythe circulation system is impacted by this regional commerce.

Blythe is also central to a number of small communities that depend on the community for retail trade. Ripley, Ehrenberg, Mesa Verde and other small desert communities depend on Blythe for a variety of services. Planning for future regional circulation depends on recognition of trips to and from these areas.

One of the most critical regional issues effecting transportation circulation is the continuing problem of air quality. This issue may have a major impact on the development of the Circulation Element, requiring a careful evaluation on how to accommodate the projected regional population growth with an adequate, efficient circulation system. At present the Palo Verde Valley is a non-attainment area for ozone and particulates. Mobile source emissions (cars and trucks) contribute to both of these pollutants. The development of a system to effectively handle the increased number and length of trips is an issue for all communities in the region.

LOCAL ISSUES

On the local level, Blythe is facing several issues. Of primary importance is the creation of jobs and where these jobs are located in the community. If commercial and/or industrial jobs are primarily created in the central, southern, and western portions of the community and homes are primarily developed in the north and east, additional commute trips will need to be accommodated by the future roadway system. And, as would be expected, the creation and location of new housing in the community will also have an effect on future circulation in the community.

STREET AND HIGHWAY ISSUES

The Colorado River has the potential to, and should affect the development pattern for east/west streets in the community. The only existing crossing of the River in the corporate limits is via Interstate Highway 10. With anticipated future development on the east side of the community along the Colorado River and with limited opportunities to cross the River, as mentioned above, the roadways which terminate at the River will be relied upon to efficiently convey east/west traffic. Thus, certain streets such as Tenth and Eighth Avenues should be planned accordingly.

The existing and future access pattern for Interstate Highway 10 effects not only the travel patterns of regional traffic, but also has a direct effect on the operational efficiency of the local street network. The existing interchanges along Interstate Highway 10 at Lovekin Boulevard and Seventh Street, in particular, will place added pressure on these local (arterial) streets. These arterials will be required to carry not only north/south local trips, but also trips accessing the freeway. Overcrossings and undercrossings also play an important role in moving north/south traffic across the freeway. The DeFrain, Arrowhead, and Neighbours overcrossings augment the Lovekin, Broadway, Seventh and Intake undercrossings in providing north/south crossings of the Interstate 10 Freeway.

State of California and Federal Highway Administration policy restricts interchange spacing along urban freeways to one every mile. Such interchange spacing has a direct bearing on north/south roadways as well as an indirect effect on the City's east/west streets. For example, west of the current Interstate Highway 10/Lovekin Boulevard interchange, a future interchange would be possible although not likely at DeFrain and/or Arrowhead, an action that would effect future surface street design and construction particularly regarding Hobsonway. The City is currently engaged in the design and re-development of the Hobsonway

corridor between Lovekin Boulevard and Seventh Street that will not increase capacity but will however establish a higher level of design for the community's primary arterial street.

Finally, in several areas of the community, residential development has been completed fronting directly onto arterial streets. These homes will be fronting on heavily traveled streets in the future. Also, the carrying capacity of the arterial streets will be greatly reduced due to the access function being provided to these properties.

TRANSIT ISSUES

Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency (PVVTA) serves the City of Blythe and unincorporated areas of Riverside County with various types of public transportation. The City of Blythe, which oversees the administration, marketing, planning and financial aspects on behalf of the Agency, administers the Agency.

PVVTA was established on January 24, 2978, when the City of Blythe and County of Riverside formed a Joint Powers Authority for the provision of transportation service within the Palo Verde Valley.

In 1978, PVVTA started with four, 12-19 passenger, diesel fueled vehicles that were strictly used for dial-a-ride services. In 2003 a fixed route bus was established, with dedicated routes serving the core of the City, Palo Verde Community College, Mesa Verde and Ripley. Additionally, Desert Roadrunner provides Park-N-Ride service for employees and visitors of the Chuckawalla Valley and Ironwood State Prisons located approximately 20 miles west of downtown and dial-a-ride services for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

PVVTA currently operates two classic American trolleys; one-gasoline powered van; and, six diesels powered 16-24 passenger cutaways.

4.2 PALO VERDE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN SUMMARY[1]

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Blythe's current overall roadway traffic conditions are at acceptable levels. Although traffic congestion during peak weekends may seem severe, traffic during average weekdays is well within design capacities. Traffic volumes along study roadway segments ranged from 261 vehicles per day on 4th Avenue east of Lovekin Boulevard to 13,601 vehicles per day on Hobsonway between Lovekin Boulevard and Broadway. All roadway segments are operating at level of service (LOS) A (a roadway LOS of C or worse is considered congested for this study). Existing roadway traffic conditions are listed in **Table 4.2-1**.

The City of Blythe's intersections are all currently operating within design capacities as well. Even during peak traffic weekends, levels of service at study intersections were LOS D or better (an intersection LOS of E or F is considered congested). All signalized intersections were operating at LOS A during peak times. **Tables 4.2-2** and **4.2-3** list existing intersection conditions.

Currently, peak hour traffic volumes for the seven interchanges are at LOS A or B. (Rural interchanges were evaluated using adjacent roadway conditions; interchanges in the urbanized area were evaluated using the on- and off-ramp intersection conditions.)

1 Palo Verde Valley Transportation Master Plan, November 2000

FORECAST CONDITIONS

Future roadway traffic conditions in the City of Blythe were forecast for General Plan build-out; future intersection and interchange traffic conditions were forecast for short-term (10 year) and long-term (20 year) conditions.

Estimated General Plan build-out traffic volumes range from 1,000 ADT in most rural areas to 65,000 ADT on Mesa Drive near the Blythe Municipal Airport. Levels of service range from A to F. Twenty-seven locations had LOS A or B; 22 locations had LOS C or worse. Forecast roadway traffic conditions are shown in **Table 4.2-1**.

Over the next 10 years, assuming no changes to lane configurations, traffic conditions at signalized intersections are expected to be at LOS A or B. Traffic conditions at the unsignalized intersections are expected to worsen to LOS B or C. In 20 years, still assuming no changes to lane configurations, traffic conditions at all intersections would worsen dramatically. Four of the eight unsignalized intersections and two of the four signalized intersections would be at LOS E or F. Forecast intersection conditions are shown in **Table 4.2-2** and **4.2-3**.

In the short term, traffic conditions at rural interchanges and signalized urban interchanges are expected to remain at LOS A. Mesa Drive is the exception. Traffic volumes at this interchange could increase due to airport expansion and industrial development. In the long term, traffic conditions at the rural interchanges are still expected to remain at LOS A. Mesa Drive and most unsignalized intersections would be at LOS F; signalized intersections would be at LOS C or E.

TABLE 4.2-1
ROADWAY TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Mid-Block Count Location		Existing (2000)			Forecast			Mitigated*		
		ADT	V/C	LOS	ADT	V/C	LOS	ADT	V/C	LOS
4th	east of Lovekin	261	0.02	A	1,000	0.03	A	1,000	0.03	A
6th	east of Lovekin	434	0.04	A	2,000	0.14	A	2,000	0.14	A
8th	west of C&D	367	0.03	A	1,000	0.04	A	1,000	0.04	A
10th	east of Lovekin	779	0.05	A	2,000	0.12	A	2,000	0.12	A
14th	between Broadway & 7th	3,144	0.14	A	10,000	**0.90**	**D**	10,000	0.45	A
	between 7th and Intake	2,479	0.11	A	9,000	**0.77**	**C**	9,000	0.38	A
Broadway	north of Chanslorway	4,094	0.17	A	10,000	**0.85**	**D**	10,000	0.42	A
	north of Hobsonway	3,525	0.29	A	8,000	0.67	B	8,000	0.67	B
	south of Hobsonway	3,551	0.11	A	8,000	0.26	A	8,000	0.26	A
	south of 14th	564	0.05	A	1,000	0.08	A	1,000	0.08	A
C&D/7th	north of Chanslorway	1,046	0.05	A	11,000	**1.01**	**F**	11,000	0.49	A
	south of Barnard	2,844	0.12	A	15,000	**1.25**	**F**	15,000	0.61	B
	between Hobsonway & I-10	1,053	0.13	A	27,000	0.48	A	27,000	0.48	A
	at I-10	5,763	0.08	A	27,000	0.39	A	27,000	0.39	A
	between I-10 and 14th	5,527	0.19	A	17,000	**1.21**	**F**	17,000	0.60	B
	south of 14th	691	0.06	A	1,000	0.13	A	1,000	0.13	A
Chanslorway	east of Lovekin	2,948	0.11	A	18,000	**1.36**	**F**	16,000	0.59	A
	east of 7th	2,386	0.10	A	19,000	**1.75**	**F**	19,000	**0.78**	**C**
DeFrain	north of 6th (Wells)	868	0.06	A	2,000	0.14	A	2,000	0.14	A
	south of 10th	1,077	0.07	A	9,000	0.62	B	8,000	0.57	A
	north of Hobsonway	1,452	0.10	A	8,000	0.52	A	8,000	0.52	A
	south of I-10	746	0.07	A	2,000	0.18	A	2,000	0.18	A
	north of 20th	328	0.03	A	1,000	0.04	A	1,000	0.04	A
Hobsonway	west of Neighbours	1,400	0.10	A	8,000	0.56	A	8,000	0.56	A
	east of DeFrain	3,543	0.23	A	11,000	0.69	B	11,000	0.69	B
	between Lovekin & Broadway	13,601	0.34	A	37,000	**0.93**	**E**	36,000	**0.89**	**D**
	between Broadway and 7th	12,206	0.31	A	37,000	**0.93**	**E**	36,000	**0.90**	**D**
	between 7th and Intake	5,828	0.15	A	36,000	**1.16**	**F**	35,000	**0.88**	**D**
Intake	north of Riverside (Chanslorway)	4,124	0.19	A	11,000	**0.96**	**E**	10,000	0.47	A
	between Chanslorway and	3,314	0.14	A	14,000	**1.22**	**F**	13,000	0.55	A
Hobsonway		5,294	0.17	A	20,000	**1.35**	**F**	20,000	0.63	B
	between Hobsonway and I-10	5,730	0.16	A	23,000	**1.28**	**F**	23,000	0.64	B
	at I-10	2,346	0.13	A	8,000	0.47	A	8,000	0.47	A
	between I-10 and 14th	1,071	0.07	A	3,000	0.20	A	3,000	0.20	A
	south of 14th	613	0.06	A	1,000	0.07	A	1,000	0.07	A
	south of Seeley (16th)									
Lovekin	north of Chanslorway	3,289	0.06	A	21,000	**0.75**	**C**	17,000	0.30	A
	between Hobsonway and I-10	9,812	0.25	A	31,000	**0.76**	**C**	31,000	**0.76**	**C**
	at I-10	8,864	0.22	A	37,000	**0.93**	**E**	37,000	**0.93**	**E**
	between I-10 and 14th	6,832	0.22	A	16,000	**1.05**	**F**	16,000	0.52	A
	north of Seeley	2,296	0.10	A	9,000	**0.84**	**D**	9,000	0.42	A
	south of 18th	891	0.08	A	1,000	0.10	A	1,000	0.10	A
Mesa	between Hobsonway and I-10	5,296	0.11	A	65,000	**4.53**	**F**	65,000	**1.40**	**F**
	at I-10	2,515	0.04	A	39,000	**2.17**	**F**	39,000	0.54	A
	south of I-10	1,900	0.11	A	6,000	0.32	A	6,000	0.32	A
Midland	north of Lovekin	385	0.03	A	1,000	0.03	A	1,000	0.03	A
Neighbours	at I-10	2,485	0.22	A	8,000	0.69	B	8,000	0.69	B
	south of 14th	3,117	0.28	A	5,000	0.49	A	5,000	0.49	A
Seeley	east of Lovekin	625	0.06	A	1,000	0.11	A	1,000	0.11	A
Wiley's Well	at I-10	2,015	0.18	A	3,000	0.23	A	3,000	0.23	A

ADT = Average Daily Traffic Volumes V/C = Volume to Capacity Ratios LOS = Level of Service

*Mitigation included adding lanes, signalizing intersections and adding new roadways

Source: Palo Verde Valley Transportation Master Plan, November 2000

TABLE 4.2-2
UNSIGNALIZED INTERSECTION CONDITIONS - PM PEAK HOUR

Intersection	5/26/00		Short-Term		Long-Term		Mitigated*	
	A D	LOS	A D	LOS	A D	LOS	V/C	LOS
Hobsonway/Intake	4.1	A	11.9	B	71.3	F	0.52	A
I-10 WB Ramps/7th	11.7	B	15.3	C	130.2	F	0.38	A
I-10 EB Ramps/7th	14.4	B	29.7	D	920.0	F	0.45	A
I-10 WB ramps/Intake	9.5	A	10.4	B	14.1	B	0.27	A
I-10 EB Ramps/Intake	11.5	B	15.2	C	166.1	F	0.36	A
14th/Lovekin	8.5	A	9.5	A	15.6	C	0.37	A
14th/7th	8.2	A	9.5	A	23.6	C	0.40	A
14th/Intake	9.5	A	10.2	B	12.8	B	0.18	A

A D = Average delay (in seconds) (unsignalized intersections)
V/C = Volume to capacity ratio (signalized intersections)
LOS = Level of service
*Mitigation included installing signals
Source: Palo Verde Valley Transportation Master Plan, November 2000

TABLE 4.2-3
SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION CONDITIONS - PM PEAK HOUR

Intersection	5/26/00		Short-Term		Long-Term		Mitigated*	
	V/C	LOS	V/C	LOS	V/C	LOS	V/C	LOS
Hobsonway/Lovekin	0.29	A	0.62	B	1.11	F	0.90	D
Hobsonway/7th	0.36	A	0.50	A	0.88	D	0.88	D
I-10 WB Ramps/Lovekin	0.43	A	0.42	A	0.73	C	0.64	B
I-10 EB Ramps/Lovekin	0.35	A	0.51	A	0.91	E	0.81	D

V/C = Volume to capacity ratio (signalized intersections)
LOS = Level of service
* Mitigation included adding turn lanes
Source: Palo Verde Valley Transportation Master Plan, November 2000

FUTURE RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS

Given forecast traffic conditions, most rural roadways are sufficient to handle future traffic volumes, whereas many urban roadways and intersections will become congested if no changes are made.

In order to determine future right-of-way needs, roadways were mitigated to LOS B by adding lanes (up to a maximum of four) or by adding new roadways where parallel roads are planned but not yet constructed. Most

roadway levels of service improved to LOS B or A with mitigation. Those that did not are in localized areas and would operate at tolerable levels. Mesa Drive, which remains at LOS F, would improve if the I-10

interchange were reconstructed. Mitigated traffic volumes and LOS at that location would depend on the new configuration. Roadway traffic conditions following mitigation would depend on the new configuration. Roadway traffic conditions following mitigation are shown in **Table 4.2-1**.

Study intersections and freeway interchange were examined to determine if current geometric configurations are sufficient to handle forecast growth. Installing traffic signals at unsignalized intersections would improve those locations to LOS A. Adding turn lanes where appropriate at the signalized intersections would improve those locations to LOS A or B. Intersection traffic conditions with mitigation are shown in **Tables 4.2-2** and **4.2-3**.

RIGHT-OF-WAY CLASSIFICATIONS

After forecast traffic volumes were mitigated and recommended long-term improvements were identified, the roadways were classified per the General Plan specifications. In most cases, the recommended classifications are the same as the 1989 General Plan designations.

Classifications of roadways were downgraded if forecast traffic volumes were not high enough to warrant the General Plan's designation of four lanes. Also, classifications were adjusted to reflect more appropriate median and parking types in residential and commercial areas.

The General Plan classifications were expanded to include rural roadways outside of the 1989 General Plan's study area, but within the Palo Verde Valley Transportation Master Plan study area. Recommended right-of-way classifications are listed in **Table 4.2-4**.

The long-term improvements identified to mitigate forecast traffic volumes are listed in the Recommendations section below.

ADDITIONAL RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS

Some roadways in the Palo Verde Valley have safety and access problems even though the roadways are forecast to be at LOS A or B in the long-term future. The problems were identified and recommendations were made to improve safety and access. The right-of-way recommendations are listed in the Recommendations section below.

TABLE 4.2-4
RECOMMENDED RIGHT-OF-WAY CLASSIFICATIONS

Roadway		Classification
East – West Roads		
4th Avenue	Lovekin Blvd. to Intake Blvd.	Local
6th Avenue	Neighbours Blvd. to Lovekin Blvd. Lovekin Blvd. to Colorado River	Collector Local
8th Avenue	DeFrain Blvd. to Intake Blvd.	Local
10th Avenue	Arrowhead Blvd. to Lovekin Blvd. DeFrain Blvd. to Intake Blvd. Intake Blvd. to Olive Lake Blvd.	Local Collector Local
Riverside Drive/Chanslorway	Neighbours Blvd. to DeFrain Blvd. DeFrain Blvd. to Intake Blvd. Intake Blvd. to Olive Lake Blvd.	Local Major Collector Local
Barnard Street	Ehlers Blvd. to Intake Blvd.	Local
Hobsonway	Mesa Dr. to Buck Blvd. Buck Blvd. to DeFrain Blvd. DeFrain Blvd. to Intake Blvd. Intake Blvd. to Olive Lake Blvd.	Arterial Arterial Major Arterial Arterial
14th Avenue	Neighbours Blvd. to Lovekin Blvd. Lovekin Blvd. to Cottonwood Lane Cottonwood Lane to Intake Blvd.	Local Major Collector Arterial
16th Avenue/Seeley Avenue	Neighbours Blvd. to Riviera Dr.	Local
18th Avenue	Neighbours Blvd. to Intake Blvd.	Local
North – South Roads		
Mesa Drive	Hobsonway to south of I-10 South of I-10	Arterial Major Collector
Buck Blvd.	north of Blythe Energy Plant	Local
Neighbours Blvd.	6th Ave. to I-10 I-10 to 18th Ave.	Collector Local
Arrowhead Blvd.	10th Ave. to 18th Ave.	Local
Wells Road		Local
DeFrain Blvd.	Wells Rd. to 18th Ave.	Local
Lovekin Blvd.	Midland Rd. to 6th Ave. (Future Truck Bypass Route) 6th Ave. to 10th Ave. 10th Ave. to Seeley Ave. Seeley Ave. to 18th Ave	Collector Collector Arterial Collector
Seventh Street/C&D Blvd.	6th Ave. to 10th Ave. 10th Ave. to Hobsonway Hobsonway to south of 14th Ave. south of 14th Ave. to Seeley Ave. Seeley Ave. to 18th Ave.	Local Major Collector Arterial Collector Local
Intake Blvd.	2nd Ave. to 10th Ave. 10th Ave. to south of 14th Ave. south of 14th Ave. to Seeley Ave. Seeley Ave. to 18th Ave.	Major Collector Arterial Collector Local
Olive Lake Blvd.	6th Ave. to Hobsonway	Local

Hobsonway

Hobsonway is the "Main Street" and center of commerce in Blythe. Many of the commercial businesses in Blythe are located on Hobsonway, or within a block or two. Because of its importance, Hobsonway's current and future circulation issues and geometric requirements were evaluated in more detail than the other roadways. Traffic forecasts, specific intersection analyses and field observations along Hobsonway were used to develop recommendations for future geometric requirements, parking treatments, median types, and access to adjacent land use. Hobsonway's recommendations are listed in the Recommendations section below.

Interchanges

The Master Plan also evaluated the possible need for additional I-10 interchanges within the Planning Area to accommodate future growth. It was determined that the existing interchanges were sufficient to handle forecast traffic volumes at General Plan build-out. However, if significant development other than that specified in the General Plan was proposed, the need for additional interchanges should be re-evaluated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Palo Verde Valley Transporation Master Plan recommendations are summarized below. The recommendations are grouped into the Near Term Improvement Strategy (5 to 10 years), Long-Term Transporation Plan (20-30 years or more) and policies.

Near-Term Improvement Strategy

Near-term improvements are those that should be conducted within five to ten years. The recommendations include improvements to roadways, intersections and interchanges that are forecast to be needed before build-out of the General Plan.

Near-Term Roadway Recommendations

- Extend Seeley Avenue or 18th Avenue eastward to Riviera Drive to provide additional access to homes along the Colorado River;
- Extend Neighbours Boulevard northward to 6th Avenue to provide additional access to the college;
- Widen the shoulders of Lovekin Boulevard to allow agricultural vehicles to maneuver without using the through lanes; and,
- Provide directional signs between central Blythe and the college to encourage use of Lovekin Boulevard, rather than DeFrain Boulevard, to access the Mesa.

Near-Term Intersection Recommendations

- Perform signal warrants at the following intersections in five to ten years:
    - Hobsonway and Intake Boulevard;
    - 7th Street and the I-10 westbound and eastbound ramps;
    - Intake Boulevard and the I-10 westbound and eastbound ramps; and,
    - Mesa Drive and the I-10 westbound and eastbound ramps if development occurs at Blythe Airport.
- Install signals at intersections meeting warrants. Signal warrants for intersections on Intake Boulevard (US-95), Neighbours Boulevard (SR-78) or interchange ramp termini will need to be reviewed by CalTrans.

Near-Term Interchange Recommendations

- Conduct a Project Study Report (PSR) at the Intake Boulevard interchange; and,
- Conduct PSR at the Mesa Drive interchange.

Other Near-Term Recommendations

- Prepare a Circulation Plan for Blythe Airport in advance of development; and,
- Establish a bicycle route on Lovekin Boulevard.

Long-Term Transportation Plan

The Long-Term Transportation Plan includes roadway improvements and policy recommendations required to accommodate build-out of the General Plan.

Long-Term Roadway Recommendations

- Add one lane each direction on the following roadway segments:
  - 14th Avenue from Lovekin Boulevard to Intake Boulevard;
  - Broadway from 10th Avenue to Chanslorway;
  - 7th Street from 10th Avenue to Chanslorway;
  - 7th Street from I-10 to below 14th Avenue;
  - Chanslorway from DeFrain Blvd. to Intake Boulevard;
  - Intake Boulevard from 10th Avenue to below 14th Avenue;
  - Lovekin Boulevard from 10th Avenue to Chanslorway;
  - Lovekin Boulevard from I-10 to Seeley Avenue;
  - Mesa Drive from Hobsonway to south of I-10; and,
  - Hobsonway from Mesa Drive to Buck Boulevard.
- Construct the following new roadway segments:
  - Ehlers Boulevard from Chanslorway to Hobsonway;
  - Date Street (or appropriate through street) from Hobsonway to north of Chanslorway;
  - Barnard Street from San Jacinto Way to Ehlers Boulevard and from Tesoro Lane to Intake Boulevard;
  - Olive Lake Boulevard from Chanslorway (Riverside Drive) to 6th Avenue;
  - Realign SR-78 to a Mesa Drive alignment;
  - Relocate Hobsonway as it approaches Mesa Drive to provide room for a reconstructed interchange; and,
  - Construct four-lane road along Buck Boulevard alignment as part of the Mexico-Central California truck route.

Long-Term Intersection Recommendations

- Improve intersection of Hobsonway and Lovekin Boulevard:
  - Add a second westbound left turn lane; and,
  - Add northbound and eastbound right turn lanes.
- Improve intersection of Hobsonway and Intake Boulevard:
  - Add a second northbound left turn lane.
- Improve intersections of Lovekin Boulevard and I-10 westbound and eastbound ramps:
  - Add exclusive northbound and southbound right turn lanes on Lovekin Boulevard at the I-10 eastbound ramps;
  - Add exclusive northbound and southbound right turn lanes on Lovekin Boulevard at the I-10 westbound ramps;
  - Add left turn arrows on Lovekin Boulevard at each of the ramp intersections; and,

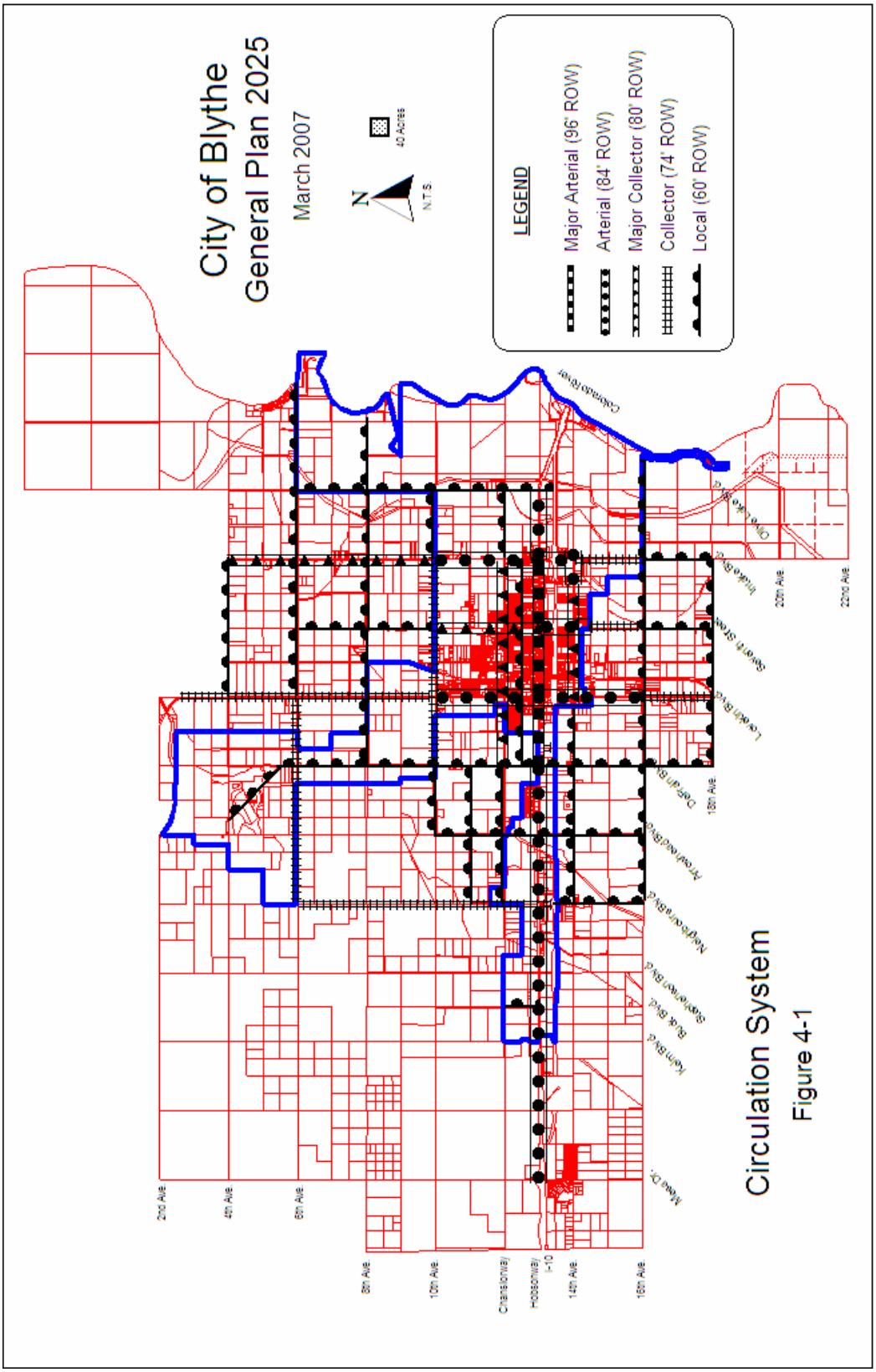
    - Widen the underpass to allow for parallel, rather than nested, left turn lanes.
- Signalize intersection of Hobsonway and DeFrain Boulevard.
- Signalize intersections of Neighbours Boulevard and I-10 westbound and eastbound ramps.

Long-Term Interchange Recommendations

- Reconstruct Intake Boulevard interchange to accommodate tourist and commercial development.
- Reconstruct Mesa Drive interchange to accommodate Blythe Airport area development.

Long-Term Policy Recommendations

- Establish a truck route policy for urban roadways:
    - Restrict trucks on residential arterials such as 14th Avenue; and,
    - Accommodate truck traffic on Lovekin Boulevard south of I-10 and on Intake Boulevard, including restricting residential development adjacent to the roadways.
- Establish a Hobsonway development policy:
    - Conduct an urban design study of Hobsonway;
    - Install raised medians that allow left turn storage but limit mid-block turns;
    - Convert mid-block alleys adjacent to Hobsonway to one-way; alleys perpendicular to Hobsonway should be one-way away from Hobsonway;
    - Limit driveway access along Hobsonway; eliminate driveway access in the downtown core;
    - Provide on-street parallel parking on Hobsonway;
    - Promote off-street parking lots downtown, lots should be behind buildings and accessed by the alley systems;
    - Identify curb space for transit stops and develop parking, landscaping and structures to accommodate passenger waiting space on the sidewalk; and,
    - Restrict crosswalks to intersections.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S
40 Acres
LEGEND
Major Arterial (96' ROW)
Arterial (84' ROW)
Major Collector (80' ROW)
Collector (74' ROW)
Local (60' ROW)
Colorado River
Circulation System
Figure 4-1

4.3 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Bicycling and walking are important alternative modes of transportation. Both modes are inexpensive, energy conserving, and non-polluting. Blythe's flat topography, climate, and compact urban form make choosing to walk or bicycle a more attractive transportation option. Within the City limits, the number of people commuting to work by bicycle or walking is estimated to be six percent and four percent, respectively.

An urban area bicycle plan, which identifies issues, needs, and deficiencies, recommends policies, and provides an action plan for the recommended bikeway system, would prove beneficial to the citizenry of Blythe. Statistically, accidents tend to occur where major vehicular conflicts exist in the central business district and along major arterials. Bikeway programs and projects can be funded through a combination of assured and discretionary funding. The City could collect a transportation facility fee prior to the issuance of a building permit. A portion of this fee could be designated for bicycles. Other sources could include the state Bicycle Lane Account, Bicycle License fees, proceeds from the sale of unclaimed bikes, local transportation funds, TEA-21, the National Recreation and Trails Program, and the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Grant programs. Pedestrian facilities can be programmed through the construction of roads and streets.

BIKEWAYS CLASSIFICATIONS

Figure(s) 4-2: Bicycle System, designates three types of bikeways, which are defined in **Table 4.3-1**. Bicycles would also be permitted on all local streets. The City follows CalTrans standards for the design of bicycle facilities.[2]

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

According to the *Fundamentals of Traffic Engineering, 13th Edition*[3], bicycle flow patterns for Class I and Class II facilities are governed by the relationship between the bicyclists' flow rate, density, and speed. In areas of dense bicycle use, the more bicyclists there are, the slower they will go. Based on research in Davis, California, a statistical relationship between the volume of bicyclists, the density, and speed and service level was formulated (see **Table 4.3-2**). These service levels can be used as guides for planning improvements for Blythe's bikeway system.

On streets without dedicated provisions for bicycle traffic, the bicycle flow rate depends largely on traffic stream characteristics. Methods for analyzing the impact of bicycles on these facilities or at intersections are still being perfected. For the General Plan, all streets not designated as Class II facilities should be designed to permit safe bicycle travel as they will serve in effect as Class III facilities (i.e., facilities shared with automobiles or pedestrians).

Areas where standards may prove helpful in monitoring bicycle use are delineated on **Figures 4-2**.

---

[2] California Department of Transportation, *Bikeway Planning and Design*, reproduced from the California Department of Transportation *Highway Design Manual, Fourth Edition, Chapter 1000*, July 1990.

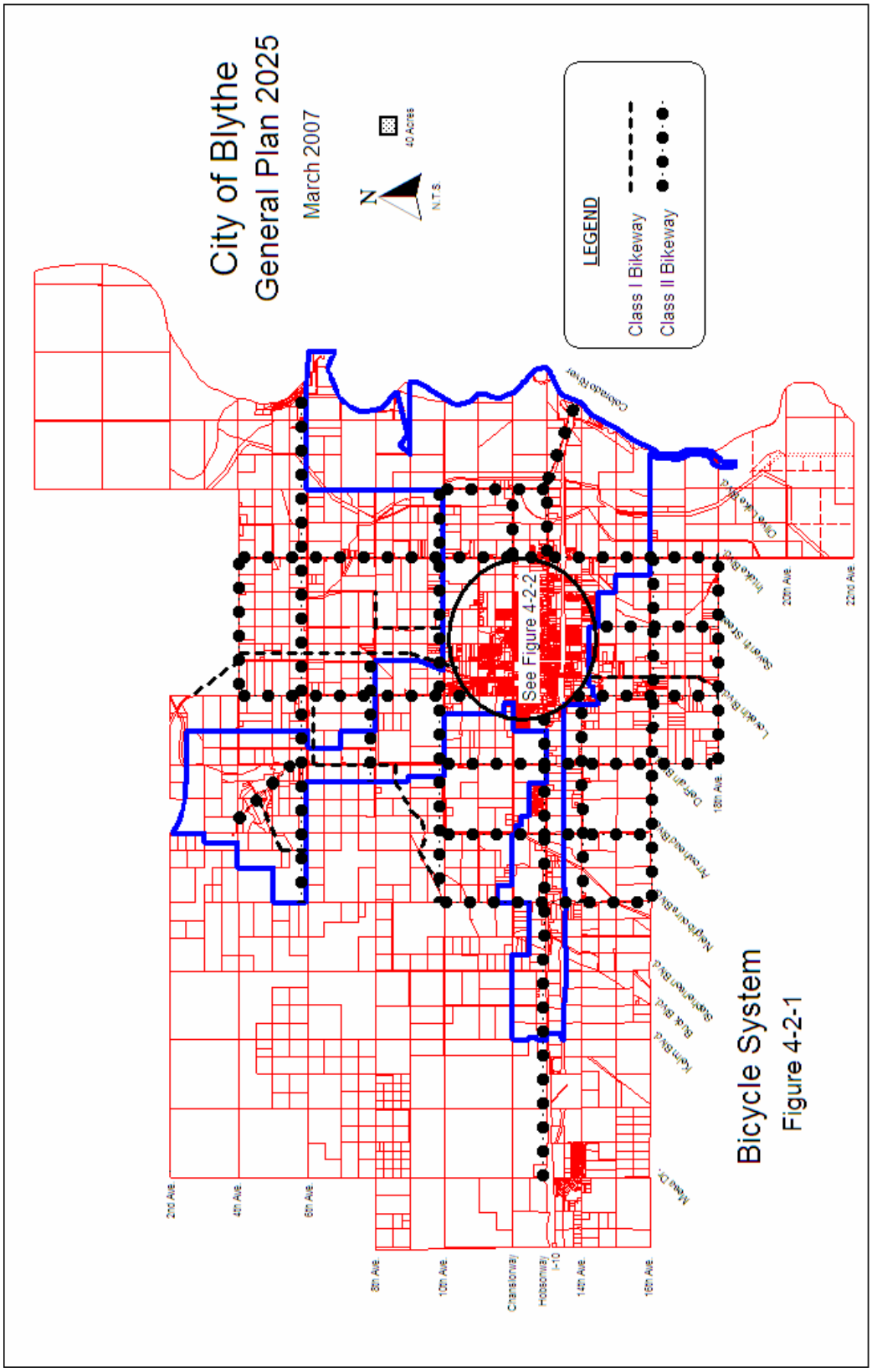
[3] Institute of Transportation Studies, *Fundamentals of Traffic Engineering*, 13th Edition, University of California, Berkeley. UCB-ITS-CN-92-1.

Future increases in bicycle flow in major corridors where bicycling is promoted also could warrant monitoring to ensure safety and adequate capacity. Because establishment of service level standards for bicycles would depend on the results of the monitoring and further studies, the General Plan outlines a process for adoption of standards when demand in certain corridors is high, or safety issues due to system demand arise.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Pedestrian flow patterns show similarities to vehicular traffic stream characteristics. Speed, flow rate, and density are interrelated. Capacity and density for pedestrians are dependent on width of the walking facility and the type of walking facility (e.g., walkways, crosswalks, and street corners). For crosswalks, pedestrian capacity and waiting time is affected by turning vehicles, signal timing, and pedestrian/vehicle right-of-way laws. Street corners at signalized intersections serve as holding areas as well, and can be a critical location in the sidewalk network.

While in Blythe sidewalk capacity is not an issue in most parts of the City, in general, all areas should be designed to a scale that accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists. Areas within the City that currently have undersized or no pedestrian facilities, particularly any that exist Downtown and near any school site, should be made priority for the installation of such facilities so that the pedestrian system will be better connected. New neighborhood centers should also be designed to be "pedestrian friendly." In these areas, wider sidewalks should be considered to accommodate increased flows and to give preferential treatment to pedestrians. Pedestrian-friendly facilities should also be provided near transit stops and adjacent to medium and higher density residential areas.



Bicycle System
Figure 4-2-1

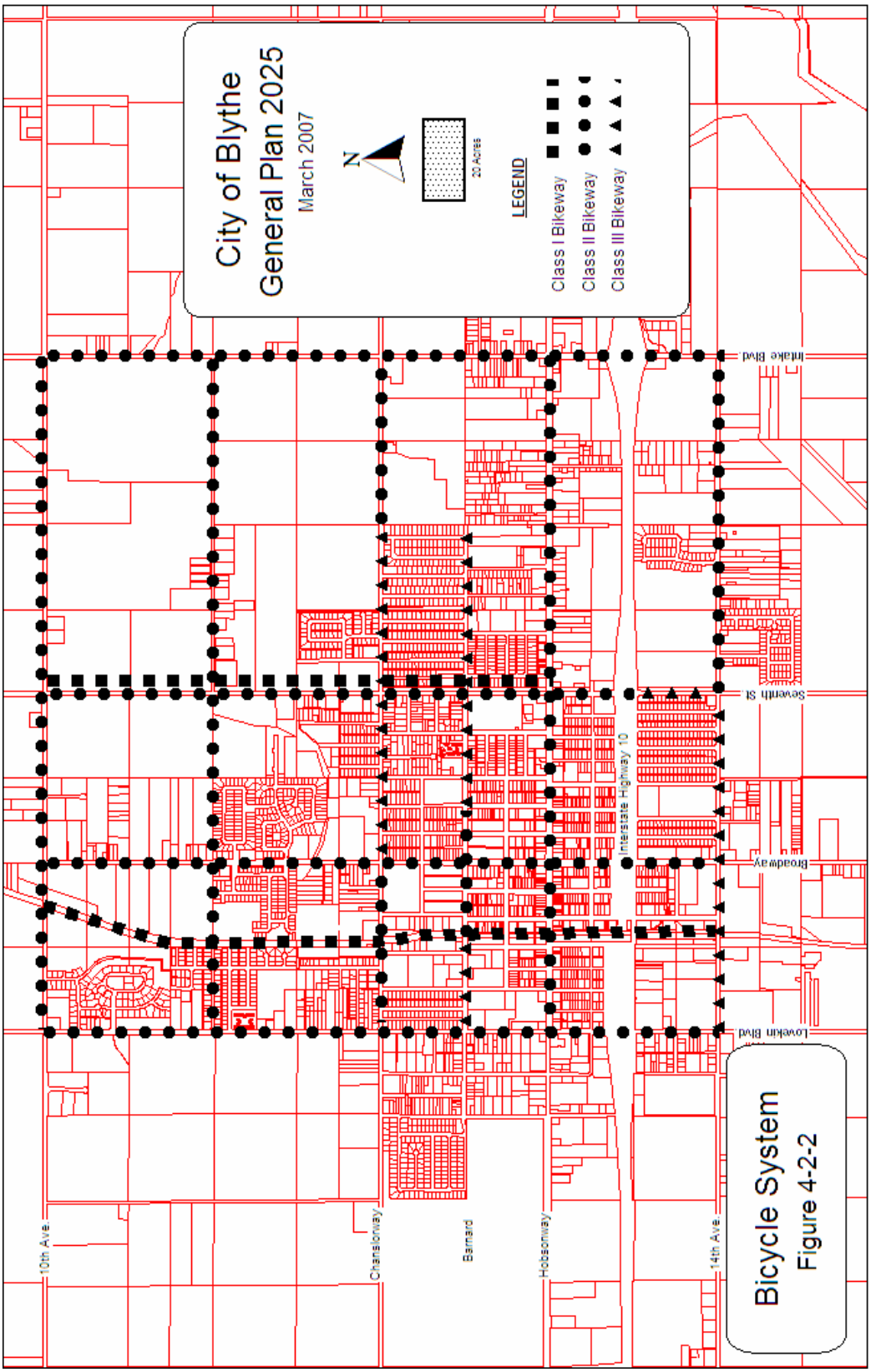

City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
20 Acres
LEGEND
Class I Bikeway
Class II Bikeway
Class III Bikeway
Intake Blvd
Seventh St
Broadway
Lovekin Blvd
Interstate Highway 10
10th Ave
Chanslorway
Barnard
Hobsonway
14th Ave
Bicycle System
Figure 4-2-2

TABLE 4.3-1
BIKEWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

Function	Access	Control	Right-of-Way
Class I - Bike Path	Provide exclusive right-of-way for bicyclists with cross flows by motorists minimized.	Where crossing or access from the bicycle path is required, the crossing should be grade-separated or occur at pedestrian crossings. Mid-block crossings should assign right-of-way through signing or signalization	Minimum of 8 feet for a two-way facility. The minimum paved width for a one-way bike path is 5 feet. A minimum 2-foot wide graded area shall be provided adjacent to the pavement, but a 3-foot graded area is recommended. Where pedestrian activity is expected, a minimum of 12 feet for a two-way facility should be provided.
Class II - Bike Lane	To provide preferential use of the paved area of roadway for bicyclists by establishing specific lines of demarcation between areas reserved for bicycles and motorists	Access is similar to that recommended for roadways. At intersections where there is a bike lane and an actuated signal, it is desirable to install bicycle-sensitive detectors. Push button detectors force the bicyclists to stop and actuate the push button. Because most accidents for bicyclists occur at intersections, clear bikeway design at intersections should be implemented through the use of signing and striping.	Class II bike lanes are one-way facilities. On roadways with parking, the bike lane is located between the parking area and the traffic lane with 5-foot minimums for the bike lane. Where parking is permitted and not marked, minimum width is 12 feet. On roadways where parking is prohibited, a minimum of 5 feet is required, including a 2-foot gutter.
Class III - Bike Route	Intended to provide continuity to the bikeway system. Bike routes are established are established along through routes not served by Class I or II bikeways, or to connect discontinuous segments of bikeway (normally bike lanes).	Established by placing Bike Route signs along roadways	Class III facilities are shared facilities, either with motor vehicles on the street, or with pedestrians on sidewalks, and in either case bicycle usage is secondary.

Note: All residential streets are intended to be "bicycle friendly"; see Implementing Policies: Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Implementing Policies: Circulation and Street System.

TABLE 4.3-2
BICYCLE FLOW CHARACTERISTICS ON BIKE PATHS AND BIKE LANES

	Level-of-Service (LOS)					
Characteristics	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
Flow Rate[a] (bikes/min/ft)	<4.4	4.4-6.6	6.6-10.0	10.0-11.9	11.9-13.2	Variable
Density (bikes/sq.ft.)	<.005	.005-.007	.007-.012	.012-.017	.017-.025	>.025
Cycling Speed (mph)	≥11.0	10.5-11.0	9.5-10.5	8.0-9.5	6.0-8.0	<6.0

[a] Minimum bike path or bike lane width for which these figures apply are: LOS A- 8.0 ft; LOS B- 7.5 ft; LOS C- 3.5 ft; and LOS D- 3.2 ft. The greater widths shown for LOS A and B are necessary to allow free overtaking.
Source: Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California, Berkeley. *Fundamentals of Traffic Engineering, 13th Edition. UCB-ITS-CN-92-1.*

GUIDING POLICIES: Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

1. **Policy:** Develop a system of sidewalks and bikeways that promote safe walking and bicycle riding for transportation and recreation.

2. **Policy:** Provide safe and direct pedestrian routes and bikeways between and through residential neighborhoods and other places within the Planning Area, particularly where no or undersized facilities are provided.

3. **Policy:** Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities.

4. **Policy:** Improve safety conditions, efficiency, and comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians through traffic engineering and law enforcement efforts and provide for shaded through-routes, where possible.

5. **Policy:** Provide and plan for bicycle and pedestrian access to new development including on-site access for new residential development.

6. **Policy:** Plan and design pedestrian facilities to meet the needs of disabled persons.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Bicycle Circulation

- **Implementation:** Develop and adopt a bikeway Master Plan that includes goals and objectives, a list or map of improvements, a signage program, detailed standards, and an implementation program.

- **Implementation:** Institute a mechanism for monitoring bicycle service levels in high commute corridors in the areas depicted on **Figures 4-2**.

- **Implementation:** Examine the need for bicycle service level standards for commute trips based on the results of monitoring bicycle use in the areas shown in **Figures 4-2**; use standards for bicycle commuting and information on accidents to determine necessary improvements to maintain Level of Service C or better.

- **Implementation:** Make bikeway improvements a funding priority by:
  - Considering financing bikeway design and construction as part of the City's annual Capital Outlay Fund;
  - Incorporating bikeway improvements as part of a Capital Improvement Program; and,
  - Pursuing outside sources of funding for new bikeways to the extent possible under Federal and State law.

- **Implementation:** Implement the bikeway plan shown in **Figures 4-2** by:

  - Adding bike lanes whenever possible in conjunction with road reconstruction or re-striping projects and subdivision development and related off-site improvements;
  - Improving existing crossings and providing for future crossings of canals, railroads, and roadways;
  - Seeking funding sources to implement the bikeway plan in locations where more than re-striping is required;
  - Working with Riverside County and other agencies to implement a regional bikeway system; and,
  - Establish a target to double commuter bicycle ridership in the City of Blythe from 6 percent to 12 percent over a 30-year period.

- **Implementation:** Provide incentives for new or expanding multi-tenant commercial and industrial projects and large employers to provide secure bicycle parking, lockers, and showers for employees, where feasible. Incentives may include reduced fees or reduced parking requirements.

- **Implementation:** Require pedestrian access and bikeway connections to the citywide system every 500 feet, where feasible, as part of subdivision review.

- **Implementation:** Retrofit existing cul-de-sacs, where feasible, to provide enhanced bike and pedestrian linkages between neighborhoods.

- **Implementation:** Increase bicycle safety by:

  - Providing bicycle paths and lanes that promote bicycle commuting;
  - Sweeping and repairing bicycle lanes and paths on a regular basis;
  - Ensuring that bikeways are delineated and signed in accordance with CalTrans' standards, and lighting is provided, where needed;
  - Providing bicycle paths and lanes on bridges and overpasses;
  - Ensuring that all new and improved streets have bicycle-safe drainage grates and are free of hazards such as uneven pavement and gravel; and,
  - Provide adequate signage and markings warning vehicular traffic of the existence of merging or crossing bicycle traffic where bike routes and paths make transitions into or across roadways.

- **Implementation:** Work with the Palo Verde Unified School District to promote classes on bicycle safety in the schools.

See also Community Design Element policies on continuity and connections.

Pedestrian Circulation

- **Implementation:** Implement a program to complete the installation of handicapped ramps at all intersections as identified by the Public Works Department.

- **Implementation:** Provide for pedestrian-friendly zones in conjunction with the development, redevelopment, and design of mixed-use neighborhood core areas, the Downtown area, schools, parks, and other high use areas by:

    - Constructing wide sidewalks where feasible to accommodate increased pedestrian use;
    - Providing intersection "bulbing" to reduce walking distances across streets in the Downtown and other high use areas;
    - Continuing with the City's current policy of providing pedestrian facilities at all signalized intersections;
    - Providing landscaping that encourages pedestrian use; and,
    - Constructing adequately lighted and safe access through subdivision sites.

- **Implementation:** Set City standards for pedestrian facility design to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

- **Implementation:** Require new local streets to connect with existing local streets and arterials, and permit cul-de-sac streets in urban residential areas only where bicycle and pedestrian access between cul-de-sacs, adjacent streets, and/or open space areas is integrated with an area wide pedestrian/bicycle system.

4.4 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

The term "Transportation Systems Management" (TSM) refers to measures designed to reduce peak-period auto traffic by making more efficient use of existing transportation resources, and emphasizing ride sharing and non-auto alternatives. These include public transit, flexible working hours, car and vanpooling, and incentives to increase the use of these alternatives. TSM has become increasingly important in the effort to enhance mobility through efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, and in meeting Federal, State, and regional air quality standards.

A successful TSM program is an essential and important element in the continuing effort to achieve acceptable levels of traffic service. (See Section 4.3 for LOS standards.) The specific objectives of TSM are to:

- Reduce peak-hour traffic congestion by reducing the number of single occupant vehicle trips associated with commute trips;

- Reduce or delay the need for street improvements by making more efficient use of existing facilities;

- Reduce future air pollution concentrations and strive to meet State, regional, and Federal ambient air pollution standards by reducing the number of single-occupant vehicle trips associated with commute trips; and,

- Reduce consumption of energy for transportation uses, thereby contributing to the national policy of increasing energy self-sufficiency. Reducing the number of single-occupant vehicle commute trips will result in an increase in the percentage of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips. Average trip length and overall vehicle-miles traveled will also be reduced.

TRANSIT

Blythe currently does not have a fixed route transit service in the urban area. When higher employment and residential densities are reached at full development, public transit should plan a larger role in transportation, particularly for commute trips.
When the City develops a comprehensive five-year plan for the Blythe Area Transit Service (BATS), it should include the following:

- Structuring services to maximize both ridership and efficiency;
- Developing a Downtown transit center; and,
- Providing enhanced signage, information, and marketing programs.

These improvements should enable BATS to accommodate future growth as efficiently as possible while maximizing the system's benefits to the community and responding to the regulatory requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the California Clean Air Act.

GUIDING POLICIES: Transportation System Management

7. **Policy:** Establish a minimum 10 percent trip reduction goal during peak time periods for new and existing uses in new and existing employment areas.

8. **Policy:** Develop a TSM program in cooperation with the local business community that will allow the community to meet the 10 percent trip reduction goal and continue a positive and supportive business environment.

9. **Policy:** Ensure that major employers, including the City, implement TSM programs to reduce peak-period trip generation.

10. **Policy:** Cooperate with public agencies and other entities to promote local and regional public transit serving Blythe.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Transportation System Management

- **Implementation:** Adopt a TSM plan or ordinance that creates specific requirements to reduce single-occupant-vehicle peak-hour trips by a minimum of 10 percent from the current ratio, and commit funding for adequate administration to promote and encourage compliance with the TSM ordinance.

- **Implementation:** Encourage major employers including the City, to adopt TSM programs to reduce peak-period trip generation by 10 percent or more from the vehicle trip generation currently observed at similar sites without a TSM program.

- **Implementation:** Favor TSM programs that limit vehicle use over those that extend the commute hour. This policy will require adopting incentives to promote use of other modes of transportation.

- **Implementation:** Adopt a comprehensive five-year plan for a Blythe Area Transit Service (BATS).

- **Implementation:** Monitor system performance, percent single-occupant-vehicles, and trip reduction performance annually and adjust targets as appropriate.

4.5 STANDARDS FOR TRAFFIC LEVEL OF SERVICE

Traffic service levels for intersections and roadway segments are characterized by examining peak period operations. The standard used for measuring traffic flow is called a level of service (LOS) and volume-to-capacity (or demand-to-capacity). Levels of service are classified by a letter grade that describes the quality of flow, ranging from the best condition (LOS A) through extreme congestion associated with over-capacity conditions (LOS F). (See **Table 4.5-1**)

Traffic demand modeling assumes that travel demand is a *response* to the patterns of land use activity in a city and surrounding region. The modeling process for the Circulation Element uses existing and forecast land use and demographics as model inputs. These uses, and the people who live, shop, and work in and around Blythe, generate the traffic that the model assigns to the circulation system. The land-use intensity also contributes to the magnitude of generated traffic; however, mixed-use environments with convenient pedestrian access generate proportionally fewer additional automobile trips than areas devoted exclusively to a single use. Demographic descriptors such as income, household size, and vehicles per household affect traffic generation at the residential or household end.

These land use and demographic inputs are used in the traffic model to test the impacts of proposed land use and to forecast future levels of service (see Appendix B for details). This ensures that the Circulation and the Land Use Elements are consistent and support the transportation goals, policies, and improvements outlined in this Element.

GUIDING POLICIES: Standards for Traffic Level of Service

11. **Policy:** Strive to maintain traffic LOS B on residential streets and LOS C or better on arterial and collector streets, at all intersections, and on principal arterials in the CMP during peak hours.

12. **Policy:** Accept LOS D for built-out areas served by transit after finding that:

    - There is no practical and feasible way to mitigate the lower level of service; and,
    - The uses resulting in the lower level of service are of clear, overall public benefit.

13. **Policy:** Establish and implement engineering standards and cross-section specifications for Planning Area roadway networks, consistent with **Table 4.5-1** and CalTrans adopted standards for highways and bicycle facilities. Continued coordination between the City and County on transportation standards will be needed.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Standards for Traffic Level of Service

- **Implementation:** Design roadway improvements and evaluate development proposals based on LOS standards. Implement, to the extent feasible, circulation system improvements illustrated in **Figure 4-1** prior to deterioration in levels of service below the stated standard. These circulation

system improvements will accommodate traffic generated by new development with Plan buildout. Recommendations in the traffic report in Appendix B include a list of major roadway improvements.

- **Implementation:** Improve intersections as needed to maintain LOS standards and safety on major arterials.

- **Implementation:** In order to ensure that adequate traffic capacity is provided for the buildout of the General Plan and that new developments do not preclude the construction of adequate circulation facilities, require all new developments to provide right-of-way and improvements consistent with street designations on **Figure 4-1** and adopted City street section standards.

- **Implementation:** Establish and implement additional programs to maintain adequate levels of service at intersections and along roadway segments as circumstances warrant, including the following actions:

    - As part of the monitoring effort set up for TSM and CMP program compliance, collect and analyze traffic volume data on a regular basis and monitor current intersection and roadway segment levels of service on a regular basis. Use this information to update and refine the City's travel forecasting model so that estimates of future conditions are more strongly based upon local travel behavior and trends.

    - Consider, on a case by case basis, how to shift travel demand away from the peak period, especially in those situations where peak traffic problems result from a few major generators (e.g. outlying employment locations), and how major roadway capital investments can be deferred and/or reallocated to more pressing needs.

    - Perform routine, ongoing evaluation of the efficiency of the urban street traffic control system; with emphasis on traffic signal timing, phasing and coordination to optimize traffic flow along arterial corridors. Use traffic control systems to balance arterial street utilization (e.g., timing and phasing for turn movements, peak period and off-peak signal timing plans).

TABLE 4.5-1
TRAFFIC LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS

Level of Service (LOS)	Traffic Flow Conditions	Maximum Volume to Capacity Ratio
A	Conditions of free flow; speed is controlled by drivers' desires, stipulated speed limits, or physical roadway conditions.	0.6
B	Conditions of stable flow; operating speeds beginning to be restricted; little or no restrictions on maneuverability from other vehicles.	0.7
C	Conditions of stable flow; speeds and maneuverability more closely restricted; occasional backups behind left-turning vehicles at intersections.	0.8
D	Conditions approach unstable flow; tolerable speeds can be maintained but temporary restrictions may cause extensive delays; little freedom to maneuver; comfort and convenience low; at intersection, some motorists, especially those making left turns, may wait through one or more signal changes.	0.9
E	Conditions approach capacity; unstable flow with stoppages of momentary duration; maneuverability severely limited.	1.0
F	Forced flow conditions; stoppages for long periods; low operating speeds. Delays at intersections average 60 seconds or more.	1.00

4.6 STREET NETWORK AND CLASSIFICATION AND AUTOMOBILE CIRCULATION

The relationship between residential density, land use mix, location and extent of local employment opportunities, street layout, and urban infrastructure defines the nature of traffic and the modal choices available. Expansion of the City grid system and provision of shorter blocks allows for more travel choices. A greater number of street connections available to bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists means that narrower streets would be able to accommodate peak demand and require fewer wide arterial streets. Transit should be provided on streets that are direct and accessible to pedestrians, and neighborhood centers should be accessible to all modes of transportation via neighborhood collector streets that reflect the scale and community character of the neighborhood.

STREET CLASSIFICATION

The system of state routes, arterials, and collector streets is shown on the Circulation System (**Figure 4-1**). These streets should be designed to provide for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. In some residential neighborhoods, alternate street widths may be appropriate to promote "livability" and reduce the dominance of the automobile. *This option is addressed further in the Community Design Element.*

Freeways. Freeways serve regional and inter-city travel and should not become the optimum route for intra-city trips. Access is controlled, grade crossings are separated, and medians separate lanes moving in opposite directions. Typical free flow speeds exceed 70 miles per hour.

State Highways. State Highways are designed to carry heavy traffic volumes at speeds of 55-60 miles per hour. State Highways should serve longer distance intra-city travel as well as linking the City with other urban areas.

Major and Minor Arterials. The primary function of major arterials is to move large volumes of traffic between freeways and other arterials within Blythe and to adjacent areas. Major arterials should provide four travel lanes, a raised or painted median, and bike lanes. On-street parking should not be provided. Minor arterials should provide two travel lanes and bike lanes. On-street parking could be provided. Driveway access should be minimized, consistent with the primary function of arterials to move through traffic. Bike lanes, landscaped parkstrips, sidewalks, and transit facilities are also accommodated within the right-of-way.

Collectors. Collector streets provide a link between local streets and arterials. Collectors provide two travel lanes, in addition to any bike lanes where called for in the bikeway plan. In fact, all collectors should be designed to include bicycle lanes. On-street parking may be provided if sufficient width is available. Collectors also provide access to adjacent properties, so driveway access should be discouraged but need not be restricted (subject to accepted engineering practice). Collector streets are shown on the General Plan Diagram. Bike lanes, landscaped parkstrips, sidewalks, and transit facilities are also accommodated within the right-of-way.

Local Streets. The primary function of local streets is to provide direct access to adjacent properties. Local streets should provide two travel lanes, landscaped park strips, sidewalks, and on-street parking. On-street parking may be restricted. Bike lanes may not be needed because local streets carry low traffic volumes and all local streets are considered to be bicycle friendly. Local streets are not shown on the General Plan Diagram or **Figure 4-1**: Circulation System.

Rural Streets. Within the Planning Area are streets that are rural in character. These should provide two travel lanes, no parking, and bike lanes where indicated in the bikeway plan. The main distinguishing features between rural streets and local streets is that the rural streets tend to be narrower, and without curbs and gutters. Rural streets are not shown in the General Plan Diagram or **Figure 4-1**: Circulation System.

GUIDING POLICIES: Circulation and Street System

14. **Policy:** Promote safe and efficient vehicle circulation.

15. **Policy:** Use **Figure 4-1**: Circulation System, to identify, schedule, and implement roadway improvements as development occurs.

16. **Policy:** Make efficient use of existing transportation facilities, and, through the arrangement of land uses, improved alternate modes, and provision of more direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, strive to reduce the total vehicle-miles traveled.

17. **Policy:** Provide fair and equitable means for paying for future street improvements.

18. **Policy:** Coordinate local actions with state and County agencies to ensure consistency.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Circulation and Street System

- **Implementation:** Adopt street standards that provide flexibility in design, especially in residential neighborhoods. Revise right-of-way and pavement standards to reflect adjacent land use and/or anticipated traffic, and permit reduced right-of-way dimensions where appropriate to maintain neighborhood character.

- **Implementation:** Implement needed improvements to the street system where Transportation System Management cannot ensure mobility and maintenance of service level standards.

- **Implementation:** Require that new development pays a fair share of the costs of street and other traffic and transportation improvements based on traffic generated and impacts on service levels.

- **Implementation:** Work with CalTrans to achieve timely construction of programmed freeway and interchange improvements and State highway improvements.

- **Implementation:** Locate arterials and collectors according to the general alignments shown in **Figure 4-1**. Minor variation from the depicted alignments will not require an amendment to the General Plan.

- **Implementation:** Require the appropriate action to establish precise alignments based on the General Plan Diagram and **Figure 4-1**: Circulation System, in order to identify future right-of-way needs.

- **Implementation:** Review proposed designs for arterial streets and large traffic generating uses with transit service in mind, and require arterial streets to be designed to provide for bus loading and unloading without disruption of through traffic.

- **Implementation:** Work with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments to ensure the General Plan amendments are incorporated in the countywide traffic model and incorporated into the updates to the County *Congestion Management Plan.*

- **Implementation:** Maintain the street network through a regular maintenance program, re-pave streets on a regular basis, and require that any pavement that has been damaged or dug up be returned to its original condition, with no bumps or ruts. Street maintenance and re-paving programs should be based on current technology and accepted practices to maximize available revenues and improvements.

- **Implementation:** Facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Actions that could enhance safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles include:

    - Provide for bike and pedestrian crossings of arterials.
    - Provide traffic enforcement to deter traffic violations and ensure mobility, particularly in congested areas during commute and peak recreational hours.
    - Analyze pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle accident reports to determine common locations and causes so as to plan for selective enforcement and engineering solutions (i.e., signing, speed bumps, traffic circles, medians) in problem areas and to improve bicycle routing and traffic circulation.
    - Continue and enhance parking control enforcement efforts and abandoned vehicle enforcement and removal.

- **Implementation:** To maintain adequate Levels of Service at freeway ramp/cross arterial intersections, the following actions should be implemented in cooperation with CalTrans. These are intended to reflect a combined approach of maximizing operational and low-construction cost alternatives, modifying travel patterns, and evaluating the appropriate level of service requirement for freeway operations:

- Review intersection control systems (signals, signing, marking) and check for adherence to standards, together with review of access control options on arterial street approaches. Closuring and/or restricting movements at driveways, providing alternate site access routes, and purchasing access rights should be considered.
- Evaluate operational control options including peak period turn prohibitions to increase intersection capacity, and approach signal timing along arterial streets.
- Evaluate interchange locations for opportunities for reconfiguration of lane layouts, possibly requiring design exceptions, to add maneuver lanes to accommodate especially heavy movements. Reassess right-of-way availability.
- Conduct regular traffic monitoring studies of peak period freeway operations and determine the extent to which local traffic uses Interstate Highway 10 as an "arterial" roadway for travel between adjacent or second interchanges, instead of using surface arterial streets. Evaluate options for changes in traffic control systems to favor arterial street travel for short, local trips.
- Evaluate each freeway interchange location for operational effectiveness at different levels of service, and, if required, consider changing LOS standard for ramp/arterial street intersections.

4.7 NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

Blythe's traditional grid system allows for through movement and good connections between and within neighborhoods. Short blocks offer a choice of routes and enable more direct connections. While Blythe's traditional neighborhoods are based on a typical grid system, variations can also allow for diagonal and curvilinear streets as well as larger or smaller blocks for maximum flexibility and improved connectivity.

Many of the new neighborhood development plans (with loops and cul-de-sacs) provide greater environments for residents, but at the same time are somewhat isolated from other neighborhoods and can also cause areas within neighborhoods to be poorly connected. These types of designs promote circuitous travel and result in traffic being distributed along fewer streets where heavy traffic walls-in neighborhoods and requires sound walls. More desirable is development that balances sense of proximity and ease of access provided by the grid systems with the quieter, traffic-free interior environments of the newer neighborhoods.

In order to ensure that street layout in new development incorporates the need for neighborhood connectivity and the comfort and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists consistent with the Community Design Element, it is essential that:

- New development be more "connected" to the surroundings with an increased number of access points and pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhood network;

- Blocks be short to allow for more direct connections;

- Pedestrian and bicycle routes be fronted by porches, living areas, and landscaping, instead of garages, parking, storage areas, and sound walls, in order to provide visual interest as well as increased surveillance; and,

- Neighborhood streets remain unimpacted by greater traffic and parking from adjacent commercial development as a result of "opening-up" to the surroundings.

GUIDING POLICIES: Neighborhood Streets

19. **Policy:** Provide for increased connections between and within neighborhoods for bicycles, pedestrians and, where appropriate, automobiles.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Neighborhood Streets

- **Implementation:** Provide for greater street connectivity by:

    - Limiting the maximum block size in new development to 500 feet on all sides, where feasible;
    - Incorporating in subdivision regulations, requirements for a minimum number of access points to existing local or collector streets for each development (e.g. at least two access points for every 10 acres of development);
    - Encouraging, through incentives, parking to be located behind buildings, not between buildings and streets, and ensuring that street designs incorporate adequate on-street parking;
    - Reducing the overall amount of land devoted to parking by encouraging shared parking and examining reduction of parking requirements that apply to individual uses for mixed-use developments;
    - Encourage project proponents to limit the proportion of loop streets and cul-de-sacs and ensure that bicycle and pedestrian connections are provided for such streets; and,
    - Providing for future connections to the undeveloped edge and where connection to existing urban development is poor.

- **Implementation:** Discourage speeding and "cut-through" traffic on local neighborhood streets by installing appropriate traffic control devices, such as bulbing and narrower street widths.

- **Implementation:** Discourage parking intrusion in residential neighborhoods from commercial areas by adopting parking control strategies such as restrictions, signs, or permit systems, where appropriate.

4.8 PARKING

It is important to balance the need for enough parking to sustain existing activity and attract new development with transit needs and the City's financial ability to meet other public needs. Parking decisions affect land use and development patterns, as well as travel behavior. The placement and type of parking must accommodate the needs of businesses (which view parking as a marketing tool), pedestrians (who can view parking as a barrier when parking blocks walking paths), motorists (who want to park as close to their destination as possible), and residents (who desire both on-street and off-street parking).

GUIDING POLICIES: Parking

20. **Policy:** Expand public parking programs for the Downtown area to alleviate existing and future shortages.

21. **Policy:** Require all new development outside of the Downtown area to provide off-street parking, but limit parking consistent with other policies of the General Plan related to transportation, air quality, resource conservation and historical preservation. Off-street parking requirements and needs can offset gains in pedestrian and bicycle amenities and landscaping in constrained locations. These limitations would apply to neighborhood centers, and mixed-use development where parking could be provided on street and behind buildings off-street.

See also Chapter 2: Community Design policies on mixed-use neighborhood cores and commercial areas.

22. **Policy:** Coordinate parking with the roadway and transit systems and pedestrian circulation facilities.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Parking

- **Implementation:** Establish parking standards to support trip reduction goals by:
  - Allowing parking reductions for projects that have agreed to implement trip reduction methods, and for mixed-use developments; and,
  - Requiring projects larger than 25 employees to provide preferential parking for carpools and vanpools.

- **Implementation:** Work with local merchants to improve parking conditions in under-served commercial areas.

- **Implementation:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include minimum parking requirements based on proximity to transit facilities and development intensity. These standards should be examined as transit service changes. Parking below a minimum amount should be allowed only if additional amenities for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit and/or landscaping are provided.

- **Implementation:** Investigate opportunities for shared parking facilities whenever possible to reduce the number of new parking stalls required.

- **Implementation:** Locate parking facilities within acceptable walking distances of the facilities they are expected to serve. Walking distances should not exceed 500 feet for short-term parking and 1,000 feet for long-term parking.

- **Implementation:** Encourage the integration of parking with other land uses on the same site.

4.9 GOODS MOVEMENT

Providing adequate circulation for trucks will help achieve the economic development policies of the Plan by facilitating transportation of manufactured goods and agricultural and consumer products. Designated truck routes are depicted on **Figure 4-3**. The routes shown in **Figure 4-3** serve as primary commercial truck movements entering and leaving the City. Trucks, however, can use other surface streets to get to and from specific delivery locations.

GUIDING POLICIES: Goods Movement

23. **Policy:** Provide adequate circulation and off-street parking and loading facilities for trucks and facilitate intermodal goods delivery.

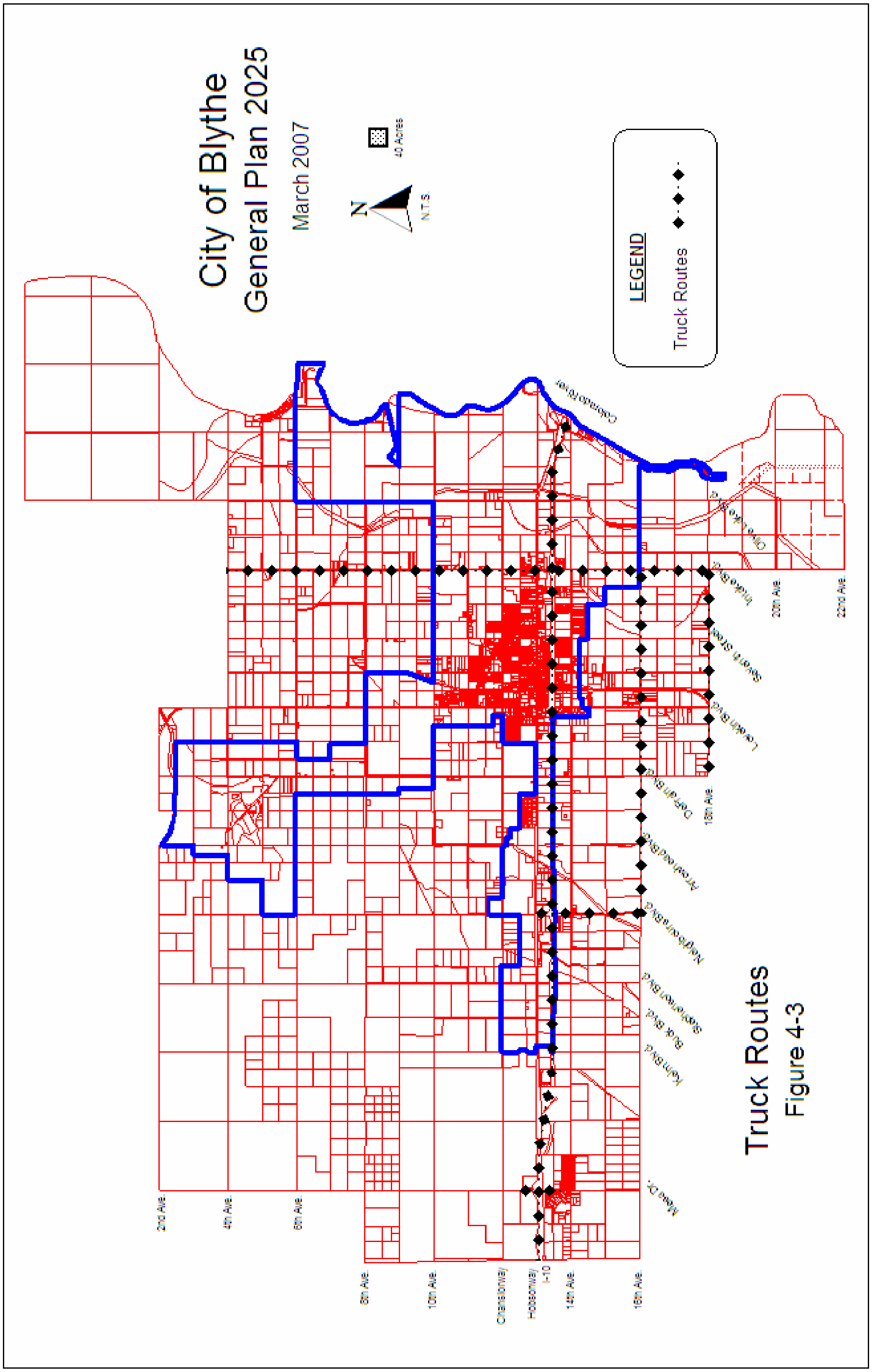
IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Goods Movement

- **Implementation:** In consultation with Riverside County and CalTrans, designate and provide signed truck routes, ensure that adequate pavement depth, lane widths, bridge capacities, loading areas, and turn radii are maintained on the designated truck routes, and prohibit commercial trucks from non-truck routes except for deliveries.

- **Implementation:** Maintain design standards for industrial streets that incorporate heavier loads associated with truck operations and larger turning radii to facilitate truck movements.

- **Implementation:** Continue to ensure adequate truck access to off-street loading areas in commercial areas.

- **Implementation:** Consult with freight forwarders and trucking services on specific needs to facilitate intermodal goods movement.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
Truck Routes
Colorado River
2nd Ave.
4th Ave.
6th Ave.
8th Ave.
10th Ave.
Chanslorway
Hobsonway
I-10
14th Ave.
16th Ave.
18th Ave.
20th Ave.
22nd Ave.
Truck Routes
Figure 4-3

4.10 AIRPORT

In 2004, the Riverside County airport Land Use Commission completed the process of updating the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for 8 of the 14 public-use airports affecting land within the county boundaries, Blythe being one of the 8. As such, the 2004 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan is adopted by reference in this Element of the City of Blythe General Plan and all development proposed within the Airport Influence Area identified in the 2004 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan shall be consistent with said plan; and, the Blythe Municipal Airport Master Plan shall be reviewed and revised as necessary to assure compatibility with the 2004 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The Blythe Municipal Airport Master Plan, adopted in early 2001, was prepared to guide the airports direction for its future development. The Plan serves as the long-range (15+ years) plan and is also adopted by reference in this Element of the City of Blythe General Plan.

The Airport Master Plan consists of the text and the Airport Layout Plan (ALP). Its primary objective is to develop and maintain a long-term development program that will yield a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally acceptable air transportation facility. The specific objectives of the Blythe Airport Master Plan are provided below:

Blythe Airport Master Plan
Specific Objectives

- To obtain socioeconomic factors likely to affect the aviation demand in the region.
- To determine projected needs of airport users through the year 2020.
- To identify existing and future facility needs.
- To provide for the capability of Global Positioning System (GPS) approaches to existing and future runways at the airport.
- To evaluate future airport facility development alternatives which will optimize airport capacity.
- To produce current and accurate airport base maps and Airport Layout Plans.
- To produce a new airport property map.
- To establish a schedule of development priorities and a program for improvements.
- To analyze the airport's financial requirements for capital improvement needs and grant options.
- To ensure that future development is environmentally compatible.
- To coordinate the Airport Master Plan with other local, regional, State and Federal agencies.
- To develop active and productive public involvement through the planning process.

To accomplish the Plan's objectives, the Master Plan:

- Inventoried and analyzed data pertinent to the airport, its environs, and the area it serves.
- Collected and analyzed general economic factors and evaluated the area's aviation activity.
- Forecasted aviation activity through the year 2020.
- Determined facility requirements for the airport.
- Examined alternative ways the required facilities can be provided.
- Proposed an airport layout plan that is compatible with both aviation demands and the local environment.
- Scheduled priorities, phased proposed development, and estimated development costs.
- Identified and evaluated capital improvement funding sources.

The Airport Master Plan for Blythe Airport was funded by the FAA and the City of Blythe.

A Planning Advisory Committee was established to review draft materials on the project and provide comment and input throughout the study to help ensure that a realistic, viable plan was developed. A series of public information workshops were held to allow public input relevant to the Plan.

4.11 RAILROAD

GUIDING POLICIES: Railroads

24. **Policy:** Explore opportunities to increase rail freight and inter-city bus transit services whenever possible.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Railroad

- **Implementation:** Implement a program to improve the condition and safety of existing railroad crossings by upgrading surface conditions and providing adequate signs and signals.

- **Implementation:** Explore the potential of having grade-separated crossings based on State criteria and funding availability at:

    - Tenth Avenue between Broadway and Eucalyptus;
    - Hobsonway at Commercial Street; and,
    - Chanslorway between Main Street and Eucalyptus.

    Note: The California Grade Separation Fund, administered by the Public Utilities Commission, will pay up to 80 percent of projects costs, up to $5 million, unless the project will eliminate the need for another grade separation in the future, in which case the jurisdiction may receive up to $20 million over a four-year period.

- **Implementation:** Explore the feasibility of extending rail service to new industrial areas.

The Community Design Element addresses the need to improve visual and physical connections to the Rail Depot.

4.12 INTER-CITY BUS TRANSPORTATION

Greyhound provides inter-city bus transportation. Greyhound offers bus transportation daily to destinations outside of Blythe. Future demand for inter-city services can be expected to increase. Blythe should monitor the demand for inter-city service and work to increase it where appropriate and feasible.

GUIDING POLICIES: Inter-City Bus Transportation

25. **Policy:** Work with providers to maintain and improve inter-city bus connections for passenger service.

26. **Policy:** Continue to coordinate inter-city transit connections with existing and future Blythe Area Transit System services.

Chapter 5

Parks and Recreation Element

5 PARKS AND RECREATION

A key premise of this General Plan is that growth should be guided by the ability of resources and services to sustain it. For public parks and recreations services, this means ensuring that new development does not create demands that cannot be met without diminishing the quality of services to current residents and businesses. Specifically, this section of the General Plan establishes:

- Policies and standards for parks and recreation, open space, and public facilities and services that will maintain the quality of life in Blythe;
- Thresholds and performance criteria for use in development review to gauge ability of public services to sustain the growth; and,
- An equitable method for paying for facilities and services needed to accommodate new development.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

The Parks and Recreation Element is an optional element of the General Plan under provisions of the Government Code which State: "the General Plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city."

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Element establishes policies and standards for serving the land uses depicted in the framework for development established in the General Plan Diagram and Land Use Element. It also includes policies relating to the extension of services to unserved areas planned for development. The Transportation Element provides for circulation system improvements that will serve new development and establishes performance standards for transportation facilities, which are also used in Section 5.4: Resource-Based Thresholds.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

Recreation is an important facet of everyday life, providing opportunities for physical fitness and exercise. Organized and formal sports activities promote good health and cooperation among young people. Recreation pursuits are equally important for adults as a means to reduce stress associated with modern living. Parks often provide the only open space for active recreation for children and adults within an urban environment. Similarly, parklands serve as a visual relief from urban congestion. This Element explores Blythe's ability to maintain and expand recreation facilities in future years.

The existing facilities and parkland in Blythe are adequate for today's population; however they are insufficient to meet the community's future demand for these resources. As the community continues to grow, the resulting population will require a full range of services, including those related to parks and recreation. Resulting in the need for additional parks and recreation facilities will continue to expand.

An inventory of park and recreation facilities provides information on the availability of parkland and programs in Blythe. This existing inventory was utilized to create the Issues Identification section, which examines the

availability, distribution, financing, and long-term maintenance and operation of recreation resources in the community. Goals and policies are subsequently developed to guide decision makers about where improvements to the recreation system would be most beneficial. The Plan section establishes specific measures that Blythe will implement to achieve the goals and policies enumerated in the General Plan. The City of Blythe lies within close proximity to a variety of recreation resources, including the parks and facilities along the Colorado River and the surrounding desert. The community is influenced by the availability of these natural areas, which provide recreation opportunities to the region.

5.1 PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE

Abundant parkland and recreation facilities in the City and its vicinity are key elements of the quality of life enjoyed by the residents. In Blythe, parks not only provide recreational opportunities for residents, but are also central to the City's character and image. Todd Park, the largest municipal park in the City is situated in the downtown core of the City and is a pivotal element of its urban form.

The Blythe Parks Department currently operates eight (8) park sites encompassing 74.01± acres (see **Table 5.1-1**). The City also operates the Blythe Recreation Center, which provides programs for all residents.

TABLE 5.1-1
EXISTING PUBLIC PARKS

Park Type / Park Name		Acreage
Neighborhood Parks:		
	Appleby Park	3.85±
	Avenue A Park	0.12±
	Bommer Park	0.59±
	Engevik Park	0.40±
	Palm Drive	0.46±
Community Parks:		
	Miller Park	16.20±
	Todd Park	25.00±
Regional Parks:		
	Quechan Marina	27.39±
	TOTAL	**74.01**

Source: City of Blythe Planning Department, May 2006

The City has eight (8) developed public parks covering approximately 74.01 acres with a current population of approximately 13,600 (not including correctional facilities). The current standard for parkland per 1,000 city residents is 4.5 acres. Since the City now provides almost 5.4 acres per 1,000 residents, the current level of park service is adequate.

Other recreational facilities in the area include: the Blythe Municipal Golf Course, the Colorado River, Desert Resource Areas and campground facilities including Mayflower Park, McIntyre Parks, and Blythe Marina.

STANDARDS

As a guide for implementation of the Plan's park proposals, specific standards are established for distribution, size, and service radii for neighborhood, community parks and regional parks (See **Table 5.1-2**).

These service area standards would ensure that most residents would be within a convenient walking or biking distance of a neighborhood or community park.

TABLE 5.1-2
STANDARDS FOR RECREATION ARES

Type of Park	Acres/1000 Population	Site Size Ideal/Minimum
Playgrounds	1.5	4 AC/2 AC
Neighborhood Parks	2.0	10 AC/5 AC
Play Fields	1.5	15 AC/10 AC
Community Parks	3.5	100 AC/40 AC
District Parks	3.5	200 AC/100 AC
Regional Parks	15.0	500+ AC/Varies

Source: City of Blythe General Plan (1989)

FUTURE NEED AND PARKLAND PROVISION

Need for future neighborhood and community parks in the Planning Area is determined by applying distribution standards to the expected population increase at plan build out. **Table 5.1-3** summarizes demand for additional parkland that would result.

TABLE 5.1-3
PARK FACILITIES AND PARK ACREAGE
NEEDED BASED ON PLANNING AREA POPULATION INCREASE

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population	13,600	15,766	18,277	21,288	24,563
Acreage	61.2	70.94	82.24	95.34	110.53

Source: City of Blythe Planning Department, May 2006

TABLE 5.1-4
EXISTING PARKLAND VERSUS PARKLAND NEEDED

Existing Parkland	Acreage Needed At Plan Build-Out	Additional Acreage Needed
74.01	110.53	36.52

Source: City of Blythe Planning Department, May 2006

DISTRIBUTION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The location of park facilities in proximity to residential areas is vital in providing adequate recreation opportunities to City residents. The service area varies depending on the type of park because the size of the park, amount of open space, and kinds of facilities influence the number of people that will go to a particular park.

Figures 5-1-1 and 5-1-2 illustrate park service areas based on established standards. Most of Blythe's residential neighborhoods are well served by parkland.

In addition to the distribution of parkland, segments of the community including families and the elderly need specialized facilities. Many families need partial to full day care facilities due to the cost of living increases. Often, both parents work. As financial constraints prevent families from providing adequate supervision for their children, park facilities are becoming today's day care facilities. According to the Parks and Recreation Department, programs oriented to youths in the community are needed to satisfy the growing demands for this age group.

PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION

Mini Parks, Plazas and Pocket Parks. This is a category of parks, recreation areas, and plazas less than one acre in size. Facilities are not designed for structured or organized play but may contain play equipment.

Neighborhood Parks. This classification consists of parks, playgrounds, or a combination of the two, devoted primarily to serving a small portion of the City and designed for unorganized and unsupervised recreation activities. These parks are generally located within walking and bicycle distance of residences. Park facilities are usually oriented toward the recreational needs of children, but may also include volleyball courts, half-size basketball courts, and picnic and play areas that serve all age groups. Restrooms or off-street parking are usually not provided.

School Parks. This classification consists of parks or playgrounds built adjacent to but separate from educational facilities that may serve either a neighborhood or a larger area. The City's current policies call for development of neighborhood and community parks in conjunction with schools, where feasible.

Community Parks. Community parks serve all ages and may include facilities for low-intensity/passive recreation use, lighted fields, courts, swimming pools, and areas and building for community festivals and civic events, as well as for organized sports and athletic competitions. Generally, restrooms and some off-street parking are provided, while community parks serve larger areas of the City than do neighborhood parks, they often also fulfill a neighborhood function. Community parks are usually 20 acres or larger.

Regional Parks. Regional parks are usually at least 50 acres in size and serve the entire City or region. While regional parks can provide for varying intensities of recreation activity, a portion of the park is generally maintained in a rustic setting for passive recreation use.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Park and recreation facilities within Blythe provide limited parkland for City residents (see **Figure 5.1**). As the population continues to grow the maintenance of existing resources and the utilization of schools, surrounding jurisdictions' parks, and regional recreational facilities are essential.

School District. Coordination between the Palo Verde Unified School District and the Palo Verde Community College District expands the recreational opportunities. Palo Verde Unified School District and the Palo Verde Community College District include six school sites that are available for recreational use after school hours and on weekends. Each of the six offers the use of open play fields; the High School contains specialized facilities including a swimming pool, basketball courts and a football stadium. The former Community College site, now owned by the School District, contains tennis courts and a soccer field. Joint use agreements between the School District and City for these facilities augments the supply of recreational resources.

The School District has been highly cooperative in making school facilities available for City and community oriented programs. The only restrictions are associated with heavy demands of educational functions and restricted funding for maintenance.

The open space and recreation facilities of the Palo Verde Unified School District, and also the Palo Verde Valley Community College, provide important and valuable recreation opportunities for children and adults during non-school use hours. Community facilities of this type include swimming pool, track and field facilities, basketball courts, tennis courts, playground equipment, playing fields and substantial amounts of landscaped open space areas.

Regional Opportunities and County Recreation Resources. The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley are blessed with two major regional open space/recreation resource areas, the Colorado River and the Colorado Desert. The County of Riverside also plays an active role in making RV camping and river-oriented facilities available for rental year-round. The County owns and, in some instances, operates park and recreation facilities along the Colorado River. The County General Plan also identifies primary and secondary riding and hiking trails, primary trails occurring along the Colorado River and secondary trails occurring just east of the Blythe Airport. A brief description of regional and County facilities and resources is provided below.

- Colorado River Resource Area. The Colorado River provides important open space and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of the Palo Verde Valley. In addition to encouraging the development of Recreational Vehicle (RV) and camping facilities, the River attracts a large number of day-users who either live locally, stay in area motels, or camp in other areas of the Valley. Enjoyment of the River includes hunting, fishing, water sports, nature watching and other passive enjoyment.

- Colorado Desert Resource Area. The Palo Verde Valley occurs in the Colorado sub-area of the Sonoran Desert. The Sonoran Desert is the richest and most varied of all desert plant and animal habitats. The Palo Verde Valley region would appear to typify and excel in these qualities, further enhancing the resource area with dramatic volcanic mountains encircling the expansive sense of space on the valley floor.

  The unique and powerful effect of the desert environment attracts a wide range of users including RV and open-air campers, hikers and equestrians, gem and mineral enthusiasts, photographers and artists, and all types of nature lovers. Amateur archaeologists, biologists and geologists also frequent these desert lands where geological structures and resources, and wildlife are quite varied, conspicuous and accessible.

Neighborhood Opportunities. Opportunities to provide neighborhood parks in many existing neighborhoods are limited because they are built-out. The General Plan Diagram depicts neighborhood parks in areas where sites are available. In other existing neighborhoods that are deficient in parks, pocket- or mini-parks may be appropriate; these are not shown on the diagram. Where mixed-use neighborhood cores include parks, the relationship between these and neighborhood park benefit areas must receive further analysis.

GUIDING POLICIES: Parks and Recreational Open Space

1. **Policy:** Develop a diversified, high quality public park system that provides recreation opportunities at a variety of scales for all residents.

2. **Policy:** Use the canals as a framework for a network of open space.

3. **Policy:** Locate future neighborhood parks close to where people live, where possible.

4. **Policy:** Cooperatively work with Palo Verde Unified School District to develop park facilities or improve existing facilities on the school grounds to increase the public recreational use of school grounds.

5. **Policy:** Whenever feasible, neighborhood parks shall be located adjacent to elementary school playgrounds to increase the potential for multiple use of facilities.

6. **Policy:** The City shall adopt a Park Acquisition and Development fee, pursuant to Quimby Act Policies, to provide for park expansion since the City's growing population creates a greater burden upon existing parks.

7. **Policy:** Before any City-owned land is offered for sale, it shall be evaluated by the Planning Division for use as parkland.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Parks and Recreational Open Space

Standards, Acreage, and Acquisition

- **Implementation:** Examine, and increase if necessary, riverfront greenway width standards during the environmental review process to ensure that existing riparian habitats are preserved.

- **Implementation:** In the overall development plan there shall be a balance between revitalization of existing facilities, parkland acquisition and development of new parks.

- **Implementation:** The City will pursue the development of Quechan Park in order to provide a public attachment to the Colorado River, thereby expanding its parks, recreation and open space network that will attract people to enjoy the single most important natural feature in the City.

- **Implementation:** Parks shall be designed to be accessible to handicapped persons under the specifications of the American Disabilities Act.

- **Implementation:** Prepare an annual park acquisition and improvement program to be incorporated into the City's Capital Outlay Program.

- **Implementation:** Strive to acquire park sites and establish a policy of opportunity purchase; coordinate with the County and assist with funding where necessary to opportunity purchase parkland within the sphere-of-influence.

- **Implementation:** Strive to acquire park site and establish a policy of opportunity purchase; coordinate with Riverside County and assist with funding where necessary to opportunity purchase parkland within the Planning Area.

- **Implementation:** Establish a policy for developer park fee payment or parkland dedication to ensure that parks will be accessible to all residents and will be permanently available to the entire community.

- **Implementation:** As part of the development approval process, establish a network of recreational trails extending from the urban area into the foothills, and preserve public access through new and

existing development to enable future use of such trails.

- **Implementation:** Explore the feasibility of developing smaller neighborhood parks, of about two acres, in selected areas where a maintenance district or other funding mechanisms exist and where the development pattern lends itself to such facilities.

- **Implementation:** Use the current opportunity purchase procedures to acquire a neighborhood park site within the downtown core.

Maintenance

- **Implementation:** Require property owners to waive their right to protest formation of landscape and lighting assessment or other City maintenance districts as a condition of approval of new residential development.

- **Implementation:** Explore alternative means of providing a stable funding source for park maintenance.

- **Implementation:** Utilize prison inmate work crews where feasible, for park maintenance to save City funds.

Joint Detention Basin/Park Development

- **Implementation:** Encourage development of future retention/detention basins for joint storm water management/park use, where feasible, and require the Public Works Department to consult with the Planning Division regarding sites for any detention basins and the use of storm water runoff controls built into the landscape, where appropriate. Safety concerns must be addressed and adequate space at or above street level must be provided to avoid a "hole in the ground" feeling.

5.2 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

SCHOOLS

The Palo Verde Unified School District (PVUSD) serves the City of Blythe and surrounding area. Existing facilities include three elementary (K-6) schools, one junior high (7-8) school, one senior high (9-12) school, and one continuation high school.

Current and Projected Enrollment. Table 5.2-1 summarizes current and projected enrollment by school type in the Planning Area. Estimates of current enrollment indicate that approximately 3704 students were enrolled at public schools in the Planning Area in the 2005-2006 school year. Based on current student generation rates, this would increase by about 556 over the Plan period.

TABLE 5.2-1
PLANNING AREA SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
2005-2006 AND BUILDOUT

Grades	Estimated 2005-2006 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment At Build Out	Increased Enrollment
Elementary (K-5)	2,173	2,499	326
Junior High (6-8)	538	619	81
Senior High (9-12)	993	1,142	149

Source: Palo Verde Unified School District, June 2006

Need for New School Facilities. Based on information provided by the Palo Verde Unified School District, at the current grade split, there would be a need to provide only one junior high school, with no need identified for additional elementary or senior high schools through Plan build-out (**Table 5.2-2**). Facilities currently under development include the remodeling and expansion of Palo Verde High School and Blythe Middle School and the replacement of Appleby Elementary School. Sites for new schools are depicted on **Figure 5-1-1** with circles to indicate the general location(s) of proposed school sites.

Funding. School districts throughout the State are limited to levying a State determined maximum fee on residential development to mitigate school impacts. While the 1986 Act, establishing the fee, expressly prohibits denial of a project based on the adequacy of school facilities, courts have held that prohibitions apply only to adjudicatory actions. The November 2000 defeat of a proposition which would have allowed a simple majority vote on local school bonds, has created further uncertainty about school construction financing, and new funding authority (e.g., a parcel tax) is likely to be proposed to supplement mitigation fees which can be levied for General Plan amendments and zone changes

TABLE 5.2-2
PLANNING AREA NEW SCHOOL NEED

Grade	Excess Capacity At Exiting Schools	Students to be Accommodated in New Facilities	New Schools Needed[a]
Elementary (K-6)	**0**	**0**	**0**
Junior High (7-8)	**0**	**500**	**1**
Senior High (9-12)	**0**	**0**	**0**
Maximum enrollment size[a]			
Elementary School	750 students		
Junior High School	1,400 Students		
Senior High School	1,700 students		

Source: Palo Verde Unified School District, August 2006

GUIDING POLICIES: Educational Facilities

8. **Policy:** Support efforts by Palo Verde Unified School District (PVUSD) and Palo Verde College to maintain and improve educational facilities and services.

9. **Policy:** Cooperate with PVUSD in coordinating joint use of school facilities for community recreation.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Educational Facilities

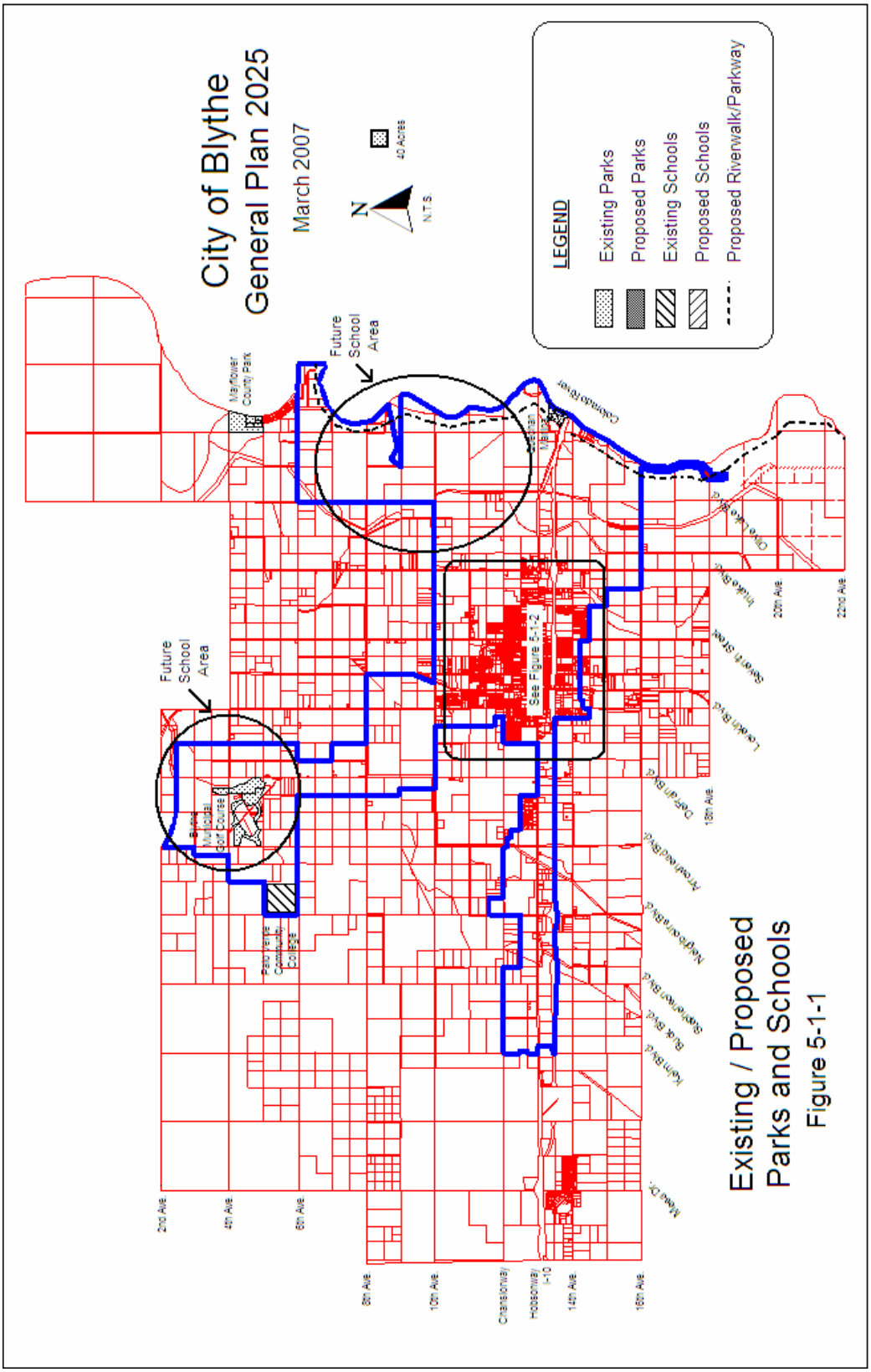
Schools

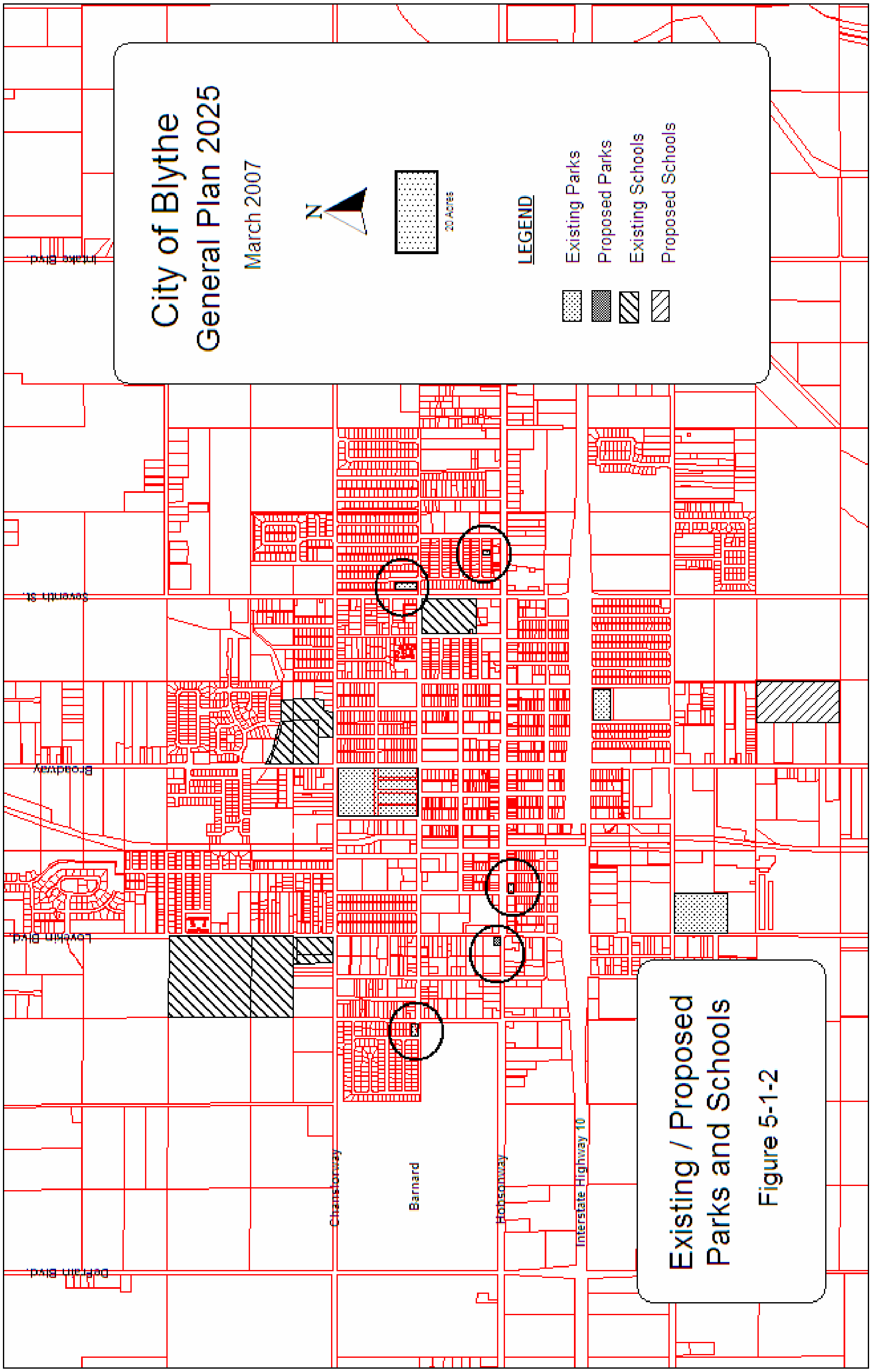
- **Implementation:** Work with PVUSD on preparing a *Twenty Year Student Housing Master Plan* to be consistent with the General Plan to be used for securing sites for future junior high and high schools.

- **Implementation:** Require subdividers to reserve school sites as shown on the General Plan Diagram for PVUSD acquisition for a reasonable period of time.

- **Implementation:** Support PVUSD's efforts to mitigate significant impacts of new projects on school facilities, consistent with State law.

  State law limits the fee that can be imposed on residential development to mitigate school impacts and prohibits denial of a project on the basis of the inadequacy of school facilities or school impacts fees.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S
40 Acres
LEGEND
Existing Parks
Proposed Parks
Existing Schools
Proposed Schools
Proposed Riverwalk/Parkway
Future School Area
Future School Area
Mayflower County Park
Colorado River
Blythe Municipal Golf Course
Palo Verde Community College
See Figure 5-1-2
Lovekin Blvd
Intake Blvd
Seeley Blvd
Dr. Dan Blvd
Neighbours Blvd
Kaiser Blvd
Hobsonway
Chanslorway
Main Dr.
2nd Ave
4th Ave
6th Ave
8th Ave
10th Ave
14th Ave
16th Ave
18th Ave
20th Ave
22nd Ave
Existing / Proposed
Parks and Schools
Figure 5-1-1


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
20 Acres
LEGEND
Existing Parks
Proposed Parks
Existing Schools
Proposed Schools
Intake Blvd.
Seventh St.
Broadway
Lovekin Blvd.
Defrain Blvd.
Chanslor Way
Barnard
Hobsonway
Interstate Highway 10
Existing / Proposed
Parks and Schools
Figure 5-1-2

5.3 WATER SUPPLY AND WASTE WATER SERVICE

As discussed in the opening page of this Element, "A key premise of this General Plan is that growth should be guided by the ability of resources and services to sustain it." This applies equally to public parks and recreation facilities as to any other component of urban growth. For this reason, the following sections regarding water and wastewater services availability are relevant to the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan. Without the City's ability to provide such services, any future expansion of Parks and Recreation facilities is not practical and should not be considered.

For policies related to water quality, see Section 6.5 of the Open Space and Conservation Element.

WATER SUPPLY

Domestic Water. The City of Blythe is the sole domestic water provider in the Planning Area, providing nearly 3,300 water service connections to customers within the City of Blythe municipal boundaries. Residents not currently supplied by the City of Blythe obtain their water through private wells.

The City of Blythe's system consists of three separate pressure zones, the low, high, and Blythe Airport zones. The lower elevations within the Planning Area (approximately 260 feet and lower) fall within the low zone; this zone is not dependent on pumps or any special facilities for delivery.

The sole source of water to the Planning Area is groundwater. The City of Blythe supplies approximately1.75 billion gallons of water per year to the Planning Area. 14 deep-water wells and 5 storage tanks capable of storing a total of 4.0 million gallons of water are currently employed by the City of Blythe. A Water Production and Treatment Facility (WPTF) with 2.0 million gallons of water storage, served by four deep-water wells, is currently under construction. The WPTF, located east of North Seventh Street on the north side of Chanslorway, is expected to begin production and treatment during the winter of 2006. The new WPTF will meet current demand with back up or redundancy provided by the City's existing system. The WPTF ultimate design capacity will serve a future population of approximately 26,000.

Approximately 75 percent of the City of Blythe's service to the Planning Area in 2004 was for residential uses, while the remaining was for industrial, governmental, and miscellaneous uses. The City of Blythe's supply system has not experienced any deficiencies in the Planning Area although water contamination (caulifloram) has caused certain wells to be taken out of service.

Agricultural Water. Agricultural water demand is met entirely by Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID). While water use figures for the Planning Area are not available, for the 120,500 acres of agricultural land in the Palo Verde Valley, about 453,000 acre feet of water was used in 2005.

WASTE WATER SERVICE

The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) located at 15901 South Broadway, is owned and operated by the City of Blythe. The gravity-flow system consists of collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal facilities with ultimate discharge of treated effluent into evaporation/percolation ponds at the WWTP site.

Service Area. The WWTP serves development both inside and outside the City limits. The City recently adopted policies to expand the wastewater service area to include nearly the entire Sphere of Influence. Development within the expanded service area will be connected to the WWTP through mechanisms described in the City's *Sewer Master Plan.*

Capacity. The WWTP has an existing capacity of 2.4 mgd, and operates with current average flows of approximately 1.5 mgd. A population of approximately 8,000 is currently served by the City's WWTP, with average per capita sewage generation of 187.5 gpd. The WWTP's ultimate design capacity is 4.8 mgd, which could serve a future population of 26,000.

GUIDING POLICIES: Water Supply and Waste Water Service

10. **Policy:** Promote orderly and efficient expansion of public utilities to meet projected needs.

11. **Policy:** Encourage water conservation with incentives for decreased water use and active public education programs.

12. **Policy:** Coordinate capital improvements planning for all municipal service infrastructure with the direction, extent, and timing of growth.

13. **Policy:** Establish equitable methods for distributing costs associated with providing water and waste water service to development, including impact mitigation fees where warranted.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Water Supply and Waste Water Service

Extension of Services

- **Implementation:** In unincorporated areas, require annexation to the City as a condition of extending City services.

Water Supply and Distribution

- **Implementation:** Explore ways to encourage use of reclaimed water for parkland irrigation purposes.

- **Implementation:** Because of availability of an adequate supply of water in the past, the urgency of finding alternative sources has not been great. However, with increased demands on existing finite water supplies comes the need for a better understanding of the safe yield level of groundwater.

- **Implementation:** Explore the feasibility of using reclaimed water for irrigation of residential landscaping in new subdivisions and landscaping at public facilities, including any new golf courses.

Water Conservation

- **Implementation:** Establish guidelines and standards for water conservation and actively promote use of water-conserving devices and practices in both new construction and major alterations and additions to existing buildings.

- **Implementation:** Develop a list of water conservation measures to be imposed on projects in the event that groundwater availability drops below acceptable levels.

Waste Water Service

- **Implementation:** Ensure that sufficient wastewater treatment capacity is available to serve anticipated growth through effective capital improvements planning and programming.

5.4 RESOURCE-BASED THRESHOLDS

This section establishes policies linking growth to resource-based service standards. The intent is not to limit growth, but to ensure that growth is linked to carrying capacity of public services and that an adequate standard of services is maintained. The resource-based standards and policies are designed to ensure that:

- Resource-based review of impact on public service is integrated as part of the development review process;
- Where new development impacts a public service or facility, this impact is fully mitigated;
- Development is not permitted if performance standards cannot be adequately met; and,
- Mitigation of impacts is equitable and is related to the actual impacts.

GUIDING POLICIES: Resource-Based Thresholds

14. **Policy:** Establish and maintain standards for public services and facilities to ensure that service demands of new development do not exceed the capacities of streets, utilities, and other public services.

15. **Policy:** Require new development to pay for mitigating impacts on existing public services and facilities to maintain service levels.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Resource-Based thresholds

- **Implementation:** Use resource-based standards for transportation facilities, parks, water, wastewater, and drainage facilities and police and fire service established in **Table 5.4-1** as a basis for decisions on applications for major development projects.
- **Implementation:** Continue to require that new development pay its fair share of costs associated with providing streets and facilities for police and fire protection, parks, wastewater treatment, and drainage.
- **Implementation:** Adopt an "adequate public facilities" ordinance establishing a procedure for reviewing major development applications and requiring a determination as a condition of development approval that:
- **Implementation:** Adequate public facilities, as stipulated in **Table 5.4-1**, would be available at the time of project occupancy and performance standards maintained following project occupancy; or
- **Implementation:** Funding for required improvements is assured and these improvements would be completed within a stipulated time of project occupancy.

TABLE 5.4-1
RESOURCE-BASED STANDARDS AND REVIEW CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Service	Performance Standard	Threshold for Detailed Study[a]	Development Approved Only If
Transportation	Level of Service Standards specified in Section 3.3 for traffic service.	Over 75 peak-hour vehicle trips. *(This translates to approximately 50,000 s.f. of office space, 15,000 s.f. of retail space or 125 housing units).*	Approval will not result in violation of adopted standards at any signalized intersection.
Parks	Neighborhood Parks: 0.9 ac./1,000 residents Community Parks: 1.6 ac./1,000 residents Regional Parks: 2.5 ac./1,000 residents	All residential projects where on-site facilities are proposed, otherwise no detailed study required.	Dedications and/or in lieu fees meet the standards and substitution of private recreation facilities for development park fees or parkland dedication is minimized.
Storm Drainage	No net increase in peak storm-water run-off.	All projects in the vicinity of McCoy wash. All projects over 2 acres in other drainage areas.	Project design incorporates run-off reduction standards, and payment of fee proportionate to run-off.
Schools	As determined by PVUSD.	Detailed study not required.	Payment of state-determined maximum fee.
Water Supply	Adequate supply to serve new projects without adverse effects on groundwater levels.	Residential development over 10 units; Commercial and Industrial developments over 2 acres.	Adequate water supply is available based on basin-wide studies and project design includes water conservation measures.
Fire	Within four minutes response time.	Detailed study not required, unless more than 3.0 miles from a fire station.	Fire sprinklers, fire-retardant materials and other requirements as specified by the City Fire Marshal incorporated into project design.
Police	Within average minimum response time.	Detailed study not required unless outside current service area.	Adequate police service available.
Waste Water	Capacity to treat wastewater available.	Detailed study not required.	Adequate capacity or other mitigation available.

[a] All projects (above or within the threshold) will be required to pay fees to mitigate impacts associated with the project.

Chapter 6

Open Space and Conservation Element

6 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENTS

A major goal of this General Plan is to preserve and enhance the natural environment and ensure that long-term growth does not adversely affect environmental resources. The General Plan Diagram identifies areas proposed for open space uses, including Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety and Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management. These land use classifications are discussed in the Land Use Element. In these Elements of the General Plan, policies for open space lands and for conservation of natural resources within the Planning Area are presented.

In addition to the General Plan Diagram, several figures depict natural resources in the Planning Area and thus, function as an inventory of open space lands, as required by State law.

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Open Space Element of the General Plan is to identify those areas located within the City's Planning Area boundary that merit recognition or preservation because of their location use or/and natural, topographic or aesthetic features. The Element provides a number of policies and programs intended to achieve these ends. They have four primary purposes: preservation and promotion of natural resources, continued availability of recreational facilities, enhancement of the overall scenic quality and the consideration of public safety. The Open Space Element must also be closely coordinated with the goals and policies of the Land Use and Conservation Elements of the General Plan.

Open space is defined as any parcel of land or body of water that is essentially unimproved and undeveloped, with the exception of designated historical properties. Below are examples of Open Space:

- Areas for the preservation of natural resources, plant species or fish and wildlife habitats;
- Areas necessary for management of mineral and agricultural resources;
- Areas for recreation;
- Areas for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas that require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions (such as unstable soil areas, flood plains and areas presenting high fire risks);
- Areas of significant scenic, archeological, historical or cultural value; and,
- Areas that provide access to rivers and other watercourses, natural habitats or open space reservations.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element identifies natural and historical resources within the City's urban Planning Area and establishes policies and programs intended to preserve them. Proper conservation and management is encouraged for the continued use, appreciation and enjoyment of these resources.

There is some overlap between the Conservation Element and the Open Space Element in those categories that concern preservation of natural resources and managed production of resources. It also overlaps the Land Use Element in policies pertaining to agricultural land, natural resources, and aesthetic qualities. The Conservation Element, however, emphasizes conservation of economically productive natural resources.

The following components of the natural environment must be considered for the conservation and protection of Blythe's natural and historical resources:

- The conservation and preservation of Blythe's water corridors and other areas of unique topography or environmental significance;
- The minimization of risk from flood hazards;
- The provision of adequate water supplies for residential, commercial and industrial development and agriculture;
- The minimization of the loss of irreplaceable soil due to erosion;
- The conservation and preservation of Blythe's significant biological resources;
- The conservation and preservation of Blythe's cultural and archaeological resources; and,
- The maintenance of clean air free of pollution for the City of Blythe.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

Open Space Element. The purpose of the Open Space Element is to assure the continued availability of land for the managed production of resources (such as food and fiber), to protect the enjoyment of scenic beauty and ensure provision of recreation, to identify and preserve lands whose indiscriminate development could compromise public health and safety, and to preserve natural resources.

Open Space Action Program. The Government Code requires that the Open Space Element contain an action program consisting of specific programs the City intends to pursue in implementing its open space plan. Blythe's open space action plan for the City of Blythe is the sum total of the open space and conservation policies in this Element of the General Plan and the open space proposals depicted on the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

Conservation Element. The purpose of the Conservation Element is to assure the conservation, development and use of natural resources including water, deserts, soils, rivers, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Open space for outdoor recreation is discussed in the Land Use Element and the Parks and Recreation Element, as is water supply and conservation. Policies concerning open space for public health and safety are in the Safety Element. Preservation of historic resources and landmarks is addressed in the Community Design Element as are policies related to compact urban form.

6.1 OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

Types of Open Space. According to State law, open space is any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to and designated on a local, regional, or State open space plan as one or more of the following open space uses:

- **Open space for the preservation of natural resources.** This category includes areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species, particularly rare, endangered or threatened plant and animal species, areas required for ecological and other scientific study purposes, rivers, streams, banks of rivers and streams, wetlands and watershed lands, and foothill view shed and viewing areas. Policies addressing these issues are found in Section 6.4: Biological Resources. The General Plan Diagram shows Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety.

- **Open space for the managed production of resources.** Desert lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber, areas required for recharge of groundwater basins, wetlands, rivers, and streams that are important for the management of commercial fisheries, and areas containing major mineral deposits all fall into this category. Relevant policies are found in section 6.5 Water Quality, 6.2 Agriculture, and 6.6 Mineral Resources. The General Plan Diagram shows Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management.

- **Open space for outdoor recreation.** Areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value, areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes including access to river shores, beaches, backwaters, streams and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open space reserves, including utility easements, backwater- and riverbanks, trails, and scenic highway corridors are all considered open space for outdoor recreation. Policies on this topic are found in Chapter 5: Parks and Recreation Element. The General Plan Diagram shows existing parks and general locations for future parks.

- **Open space for public health and safety.** This category includes areas requiring special management or regulation due to hazardous or special conditions, such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, airport influence areas, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality. Policies addressing these issues are found in Chapter 7: Safety Element. The General Plan Diagram shows Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety.

GUIDING POLICIES: Open Space

1. **Policy:** Maintain hillsides and viable agricultural lands as open space for resource conservation and preservation of views.

2. **Policy:** Minimize conflicts between urban and agricultural uses by requiring buffers and greenbelts.

3. **Policy:** Maintain existing views of the Mesa and Colorado River from roadways and public uses and other rights-of-way on the valley floor whenever feasible.

4. **Policy:** Where feasible and in conjunction with Palo Verde Irrigation District, promote and integrate canal-side greenways with the City's open space system and encourage public access to canal corridors.

5. **Policy:** Protect aquifer recharge areas needed to maintain adequate groundwater supplies.

6. **Policy:** Maintain riverfront wetlands and habitat for sensitive biological resources as open space for resource conservation and resource management.

7. **Policy:** Maintain public access to the Colorado River for recreational purposes and plan for a future network of River access trails.

8. **Policy:** Maintain specified amounts of open land in each Airport Influence Area Compatibility Zone to provide light aircraft emergency landing area should the need arise.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Open Space

Implementing policies for Open Space are in Section 3.1: Growth and Physical Expansion; Section 5.1: Parks and Recreational Open Space; Section 6.4: Biological Resources; and, Section 6.6: Mineral Resources. Together, these implementing policies constitute the Open Space Action Program required by State law.

Implementing policies for Open Space in the Airport Influence Area are provided in Section 7.4 *Airport Influence Area Hazards.*

6.2 AGRICULTURE

The Planning Area possesses fertile soils, adequate water resources, and a year-round growing season. Agricultural uses in the Planning Area include alfalfa, cotton and hay, orchards and field crops. Generally, lands to the north and south of Interstate Highway 10, and east of the mesa are also suitable for seasonal livestock (sheep) grazing.

Prime agricultural soils, found primarily east of the airport, are used for orchards and field crops. Citrus and deciduous fruits and also dates are the dominant orchard crops grown in the Planning Area. However, the largest acreage is devoted to field crops and pasturelands. **Figure 6-1** shows the overall distribution of cropland.

Lands with active Williamson Act contracts are scattered throughout the Planning Area. Although Williamson Act lands qualify for a lower tax rate on properties' agricultural value, than non-Williamson Act lands, the high production value of citrus and field crops has had equal or greater success than taxation incentives in preserving agricultural uses and prime soils in the Planning Area.

GUIDING POLICIES: Agriculture

See also guiding policies related to open space for agriculture in Section 6.2: Open Space Classifications; and in Chapter 3: Land Use. Policies related to urban form and edges are found in Chapter 2: Community Design.

9. **Policy:** Promote continued agricultural use of important farmland outside the urban area.

10. **Policy:** Minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban uses by requiring buffers or use restrictions or using roads or canals to separate theses uses.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Agriculture

- **Implementation:** Adopt a "right-to-farm" ordinance to inform residents of continued agricultural production and the lawful use of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides and herbicides, in proximity to urban areas and to assert that no preexisting or future agricultural operation shall be considered a nuisance solely due to a change in adjacent land use or adjoining residential development.

- **Implementation:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow organic farms (urban agriculture) in buffer or transitional areas adjacent to the urban area, subject to appropriate standards.

- **Implementation:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish buffering requirements for new urban uses adjacent to agricultural uses, including minimum width and use regulations for these buffer areas and density transfer provisions. Buffers may occur on either side of the green line depending on opportunities and City actions - towards the agricultural side if acquired by the City and towards the urban side if acquired as part of project approval.

  Design criteria for buffers is as follows:

  - Buffers shall generally consist of a wide physical separation, generally at least 500 feet wide, including roadways and canals;

  - Narrower buffers may be approved depending on the natural features of the buffer and the relative intensities of the proposed urban use and the adjacent agricultural use;

  - Buffers shall be established on the parcel proposed for development, fenced along its urban side, and posted against trespass;

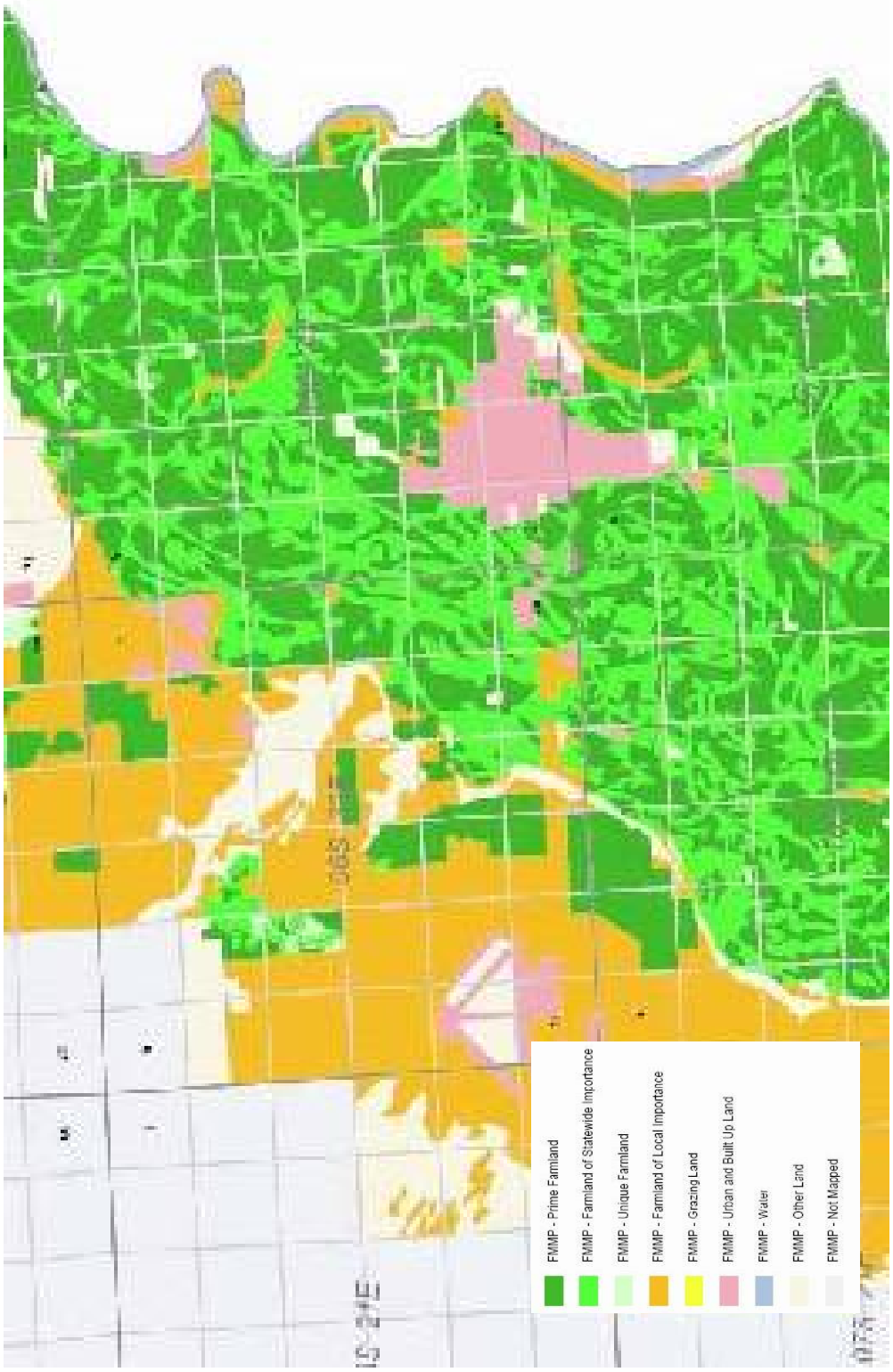
  - Permitted uses of the buffer include landscaping and open space (including organic farming). Detailed use regulations will be specified in the Zoning Ordinance. Buffer zones should be credited to the proposed development as open space; and,

  - In the case where a proposed development adjoins a City acquired or designated buffer, no separate buffer would be required as part of the proposed development.

- **Implementation:** Require payment of an impact fee to offset conversion of agricultural land by purchasing development rights for a greenbelt to further protect agricultural land outside of the urban area.

- **Implementation:** Prepare a nexus study to establish an appropriate mitigation fee to offset impacts to agricultural lands.

- **Implementation:** Prepare a nexus study to establish an appropriate mitigation fee to offset impacts to loss of open space lands.



Source: California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection – Riverside County Important Farmland 2002

Figure 6-1
Important Farmland

6.3 AIR QUALITY

Air is a critical environmental resource that must be protected. Blythe enjoys fairly good air quality in relation to other comparable-sized urban areas in California, however, without conscious efforts to achieve and maintain air quality standards, threats to public health may result. Commercial and industrial facilities that violate State and federal standards are subject to specific penalties. The City may also be subject to penalties unless it cooperates with other public agencies in efforts to meet adopted air quality standards.

In the Planning Area, degradation of air quality is caused, in part, by local topographic and meteorological conditions but, more importantly, by emissions of pollutants from motor vehicles and commercial and agricultural activities. Agricultural activities contribute to air quality degradation in terms of particulate (dust) creation and by aerial spraying. The policies in this Element of the General Plan, along with land use and circulation policies in Chapters 3 and 4, seek continued maintenance of the high quality of air enjoyed by the residents.

Because most readily available pollution control "hardware" has already been applied to stationary sources and motor vehicles, these sources are relatively "set". Changes in land use and travel patterns, particularly measures intended to promote bike and transit use and create "pedestrian-friendly" neighborhoods and commercial areas, will help attain ambient air quality standards and ensure that healthful air is maintained in the future.

Environmental review processes under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will help the City and the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) identify new stationary, mobile and indirect sources. In addition, new stationary sources of air pollutants will be required to meet the rules and regulations of the District. These regulations require that sources of hazardous materials or air pollutants above certain thresholds obtain permits prior to construction or operation of the facility. The district's regulations may require use of Best Available Control Technology (BACT), emission reductions at other locations to offset proposed increases and detailed analysis and/or modeling of air pollution impacts prior to issuing a permit. In certain cases, the District may also require on-site monitoring prior to and after construction and may attach conditions on permit approvals, as necessary to avoid public health hazards and community complaints.

GUIDING POLICIES: Air Quality

11. Policy: Strive to meet all regional and federal ambient air quality standards and reduce the generation of air pollutants.

12. Policy: Encourage mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development and circulation systems that promote use of alternatives to the automobile for transportation, including bicycles and bus transit, along with car-pooling.

Increased use of transit and car pooling, coupled with land use and circulation patterns that promote walking and bicycle use, can lead to a decrease in daily trips, lessen emissions, and improved air quality.

See also policies in Section 4.3: Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation, and Section 4.4: Transportation System Management in the Circulation Chapter.

13. **Policy:** Promote the use of trees and plants in landscaping to reduce air pollutant levels.

Specific proposals for planting are in the Community Design Element. See policies in Section 2.1 and 2.2. Landscaping is required for industrial development to protect adjacent non-industrial uses.

14. **Policy:** Whenever feasible, coordinate air quality, transportation, and land use planning efforts with other jurisdictions and public agencies responsible for air quality management.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Air Quality

- **Implementation:** In new subdivisions with more than 50 dwelling units, require internal street design to include the installation of dedicated pedestrian/bicycle pathways connecting to adjacent residential and commercial areas as well as schools, parks and recreational areas. Bike paths and dedications would be required where allowed by law, as well as connecting paths from internal streets as a condition of development.

  This policy is intended to encourage people to walk or bicycle by making it easier to use these modes and thus eliminate the need for more automobile trips, thereby reducing air polluting emissions.

  See also Transportation Element policies.

- **Implementation:** Cooperate with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District to implement public education measures regarding air quality.

  - Air quality improvement measures should be divided into three categories, including community contact, education and public information.

  - Community contact measures include the occurrence of community events that promote clean air, such as participating in Rideshare Week/Rideshare Fair displays, public presentation for interested community organizations and schools, and public workshops to present proposed strategies and programs.

  - Educational programs include the continued development of multimedia presentations and public displays, development and dissemination of public information materials, and development of advertising and promotion spots.

  - Public information programs include continued development of local media relations, involvement of the community in brainstorming workshops to develop regulations and strategies, coordination with and provision of information to local organizations and schools, and development and coordination of an Advisory Program with local schools and media for health alert advisory episodes.

- **Implementation:** Urge Riverside County to adopt landscaping standards that meet or exceed the City of Blythe's standards for urban development within the Planning Area.

- **Implementation:** Because mobile emissions have been shown to be a direct contributor to air quality problems, encourage childcare centers to be provided near centers of employment and/or residential areas to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

- **Implementation:** Because the rate of emission releases is correlated to the average speeds, idling times and the amount of stop and go movement, take the following actions to reduce emissions from these activities:

    - Explore synchronization of traffic signals on a fair-share basis where new development proposals create the need for intersection signalization along an arterial, secondary, or major highway;

    - Consider completion of circulation links, where deficiencies occur, as a project benefit and thus a potential overriding consideration, if warranted;

    - Work to ensure that new schools provide drop-off facilities that will not impede traffic on adjacent streets;

    - Prohibit roadway construction and improvements or maintenance, during peak hours, for any roadway operating at Level of Service "C" or below, or where average speeds are less than 30 mph; and,

    - Ensure that bus turnouts and sheltered stops are provided along existing and planned transit routes.

- **Implementation:** Work with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District on implementing restrictions on burning of leaves, residential and agricultural burnings, and other waste materials, and programs to encourage composting. Participate in public education efforts and explore means of collecting residential leaves, burning, and composting.

- **Implementation:** Require applicants whose development would result in construction-related fugitive dust emissions to control such emissions as follows:

    - During clearing, grading, earth-moving, or excavation operations, fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering, paving of construction roads or other dust-preventive measures.

    - All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. Watering, with complete coverage, shall occur at least twice daily, preferably in the late morning and after work is done for the day.

    - All clearing, grading, earth-moving, or excavation activities shall cease when winds exceed 15 mph averaged over a 1-hour period.

    - All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

    - The area disturbed by demolition, clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation operations shall be minimized at all times.

    - Portions of the construction site to remain inactive longer than a period of 3 months shall be seeded and watered until a vegetative cover is grown.

- All on-site roads shall be paved as soon as feasible or watered periodically or chemical stabilized.

- **Implementation:** Require applicants whose development would result in construction-related exhaust emissions to minimize such emissions by maintaining equipment engines in good conditions and in proper tune according to manufacturer's specifications and during smog season (May through October) by not allowing construction equipment to be left idling for long periods.

- **Implementation:** Require applicants whose development would result in potential carbon monoxide (CO) "hot spot" impacts to consult with the City to ensure that schools, hospitals, or day care facilities are not located near such "hot spots".

- **Implementation:** Continue to require that all wood burning devices installed in any residence built in a new subdivision or housing development be EPA Phase-II certified or meet EPA standards applicable at the time of project approval.

- **Implementation:** Low No_x water heaters shall be installed in any new residence built within the project area.

- **Implementation:** All new construction shall comply with the energy efficiencies mandated by Title 24 construction requirements. New facilities will be substantially more energy efficient than the facilities they replace or existing units, even at higher densities.

6.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND HABITAT CONSERVATION

The Planning Area includes a rich and diverse range of biological resources. This can be attributed to the quality and quantity of natural habitats and to variations in topography, soil type and elevation. The most notable natural habitat types include lower desert, riparian woodland, and permanent wetland. These habitats deserve special consideration due to their particular sensitivity, presence of one or more rare, endangered or threatened species, and low tolerance to development or limited distribution.

The sensitive habitat types span jurisdictional boundaries, with a multitude of agencies involved in their management and administration. Some of the habitats cover a small range, whereas others are visible at a regional scale. The size of the habitat does not necessarily correlate with its importance; the smaller habitats are often remnants of a much larger past range, and may have the survivor's distinction of being unique.

Although discussed here as distinct entities, these habitats are not functionally discrete. Instead, vegetation associated with one habitat may occur in another, and there are frequently large areas of transition, or ecotones. Animals range between different habitat types, and their movement patterns may vary daily or seasonally. The interaction of the varied plants and animals as an ecosystem, as well as the importance of natural cycles, must be considered when assessing the value of a particular area for preservation or for development.

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Water Resources

The main waterway serving both recreational and open space along the eastern edge of the Planning Area is the Colorado River. Surface water is channeled throughout the Planning Area in open and piped irrigation ditches that are operated and maintained by Palo Verde Irrigation District. Because flow rates within these manmade channels are largely controllable with the water dispersed over agricultural lands, they do not pose a flood hazard. The channels are, however, valuable resources to agricultural interests within the Planning Area.

There are a number of significant and potentially significant biological, archaeological, and cultural resources within the urban area. For the conservation and preservation of these resources, biological surveys, archaeological surveys, or historical site protection measures are needed. Mitigation measures should be implemented, where appropriate, and when development occurs, according to the significance of the identified impact.

The Colorado River provides unique riparian habitat for various flora and fauna, aesthetically appealing open space, and recreational opportunities along the Colorado River for the citizens of Blythe and those of the surrounding area. Consequently, the City needs to encourage the preparation or maintenance of adequate open space uses adjacent to this waterway. This will preserve visual resources and recreation opportunities, and preserve land for wildlife habitats.

Although current groundwater reserves are more than adequate to meet Blythe's projected water needs for many years, it will become increasingly important to plan and implement water reclamation strategies to ensure that the City's existing and future wells continue to supply needed domestic water.

Wildlife Habitat and Fauna

Desert Areas. Desert portions of the Blythe study area are dominated by habitat typical of that found in the creosote bush scrub communities of the Colorado Deserts. The establishment of agriculture, rural residential and urban development, has reduced the abundance and diversity of wildlife within the study area. However, sufficient open space exists for a variety of common reptiles, birds, and mammals to continue to exist. Coyote are still relatively abundant, while less common and more secretive animals, including the badger, ringtail, and bobcat, may avoid the area or have been reduced in numbers. Rattlesnakes, lizards, and a number of desert birds, such as the common roadrunner and Gambel's quail, are common in the desert habitats of the study area.

Farm Lands. While the farmlands in the study area are obviously not native habitat, they are important to many animals that have adapted and flourished since the conversion of desert lands to agriculture. Birds are the most predominant, especially insect eaters. These areas support egrets, and herons, blackbirds, ducks, and other water birds, which take advantage of the varied food resources that change with the crop cycle. Large areas of cultivated lands provide major foraging areas of irrigated open lands for birds, the value of which would not be comparable if these areas were composed of fragmented smaller agriculture areas. Cultivated lands near the Colorado River are very important to migratory birds in the spring and fall.

Desert Habitats

McCoy Wash is a major drainage bisecting the Palo Verde Mesa northwest of the City and contains a relatively good example of the desert wash plant community and habitat. Desert wash habitats are many times more valuable to wildlife than the adjacent open desert, especially to native birds. The wash has high potential for occurrences of LaConte's thrasher, Crissal thrasher, prairie falcon, Colorado Valley wood rat, and desert kit fox.

The slopes of the **Palo Verde Mesa** are generally extending from Interstate-10 south to 20th Avenue and are very sandy, almost dune-like, creating habitat for plant and animals distinct from the creosote bush scrub so common in the surrounding desert areas. This area supports a substantial growth of mesquite at the mesa's edge, providing valuable habitat for wildlife. Upland game, including quail and dove, are especially common here. The desert areas immediately west are good habitat for many native plant and animal species, including the desert kit fox and the Crissal thrasher, and the lack of disturbance in this area increases the value of the Mesa edge. The Federal Bureau of Land Management manages a large parcel of undeveloped desert adjacent to the Mesa.

Wetland Habitat. As discussed above, wetland habitat in the study area occurs on the banks of the Colorado River, and the lining of many of the agricultural canals and drains. The denser riparian vegetation provides cover for many birds and mammals, and the taller trees are valuable nest sites and perches for birds. Of particular interest is the Goodman Slough, which supports a remnant riparian shrub community that includes high value bird habitat. Due to the dominance of non-native tamarisk trees in the riparian habitat, much of the River shoreline habitat is of poor quality. These affected areas, however, have good potential for restoration, expansion and enhancement with plantings of native riparian species.

Important Biological Resource Areas

Wetland Habitats

The Colorado River shoreline extending from Mayflower County Park south to Interstate-10 has limited productive riparian habitat, but has a substantial potential for enhancement. The undesirable tamarisk plants have become well established and have replaced the native willows and cottonwoods. Good existing stands of arrow-weed and saltbush still provide important habitat for the Crissal thrasher. The Arizona cotton rat may be present within this region. The river is also heavily used as a route for migratory birds and farmlands in this area provide important open space buffers near the river's edge. Both State and federal agencies have some certain jurisdiction over proposed development near the river's edge.

The **Goose Flats Park** area of the Colorado River constitutes the best wetlands habitat in or near the General Plan study area. This remnant riparian woodland dominated by cottonwoods and willows is managed for habitat value by State and federal agencies. This area has high potential for harboring the sensitive Arizona cotton rat.

Wetland or riparian plant communities in the Blythe General plan study area consist of bands of riparian vegetation along the banks of the Colorado River, and a limited but important growth of riparian vegetation along the agricultural canals and drains. The majority of the riverbank vegetation is tamarisk, an introduced species, and arrow-weed, a native shrub. Willows and cottonwoods, native and once plentiful, are now scarce in all areas except the Goose Flats area, where a remnant cottonwood forest community is still present. The many unlined canals and drains throughout the study area support a riparian scrub of saltbush, quail bush, and arrow-weed, with cattails occurring in a few locations. These strips of wetland vegetation provide good habitat for many wildlife species.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The General Plan's conservation strategy focuses on habitat conservation as the most effective way to protect individual special status species, minimize impacts on sensitive biological resources, and preserve plant and animal diversity.

Based on anticipated results, fieldwork and other studies should be undertaken as part of the General Plan. A habitat "scoring system" should then be devised to rank sensitive habitats in the Planning Area. This information will then be used to classify certain habitats into either Resource Conservation or Resource Management areas. The purpose of each classification is explained below.

Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) contain the most sensitive and valuable habitat that requires protection and would be conserved. RCAs provide opportunities for various non-development oriented uses. They may be used for limited passive recreation, educational purposes, as sites for scientific study, or as locations for off-site mitigation banking when on-site habitat preservation for development projects proves infeasible. Mitigation could include enhancement or restoration components, expansion of existing RCAs through land purchase and preservation, or creation of new RCAs altogether.

Resource Management Areas (RMAs) generally contain some resources that merit long-term preservation, but further study is necessary before a precise delineation of acreage to be preserved can take place. RMAs indicated on **Figure 6-2** include ecological systems representing important habitat types. Portions of some of the RMAs shown in **Figure 6-2** include areas of highly sensitive habitats that may be appropriate for on-site preservation and management, or for incorporation into an existing RCA, if one is adjacent. This determination would occur during review of development proposals for sites within RMAs.

RMAs, unlike RCAs, would allow some level of development if proposed projects demonstrate that sensitive resources would be protected. The intent of the RMA designation is to ensure that biological resources are considered and responded to in development design, prior to substantial design or engineering work being conducted for a development application. For sites located partly, or wholly, within an RMA, a development applicant would be required to participate in a pre-application review with City staff to identify and discuss the biological resources potentially affected by the project and the applicable policies and review procedures for RMAs. The applicant would then submit a preliminary Resource Management Plan (RMP), or required elements thereof, along with a development application. Information required for the preliminary RMP would be similar to information currently required for environmental review. The RMP would be revised during the environmental review process, and the final RMP would be approved when environmental review is complete to void any additional steps in the process.

Both the Resource Conservation Areas and the Resource Management Areas are intended to be of sufficient size to ensure the long-term viability of the habitats and species included.

GUIDING POLICIES: Biotic Resources

15. **Policy:** Protect habitats that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique or represent valuable biological resources in the Planning Area. These include Resource Conservation and Resource Management Areas and should be mapped as **Figure 6-2**.

16. **Policy:** Preserve and protect populations and supporting habitat of special status species within the Planning Area, including species that are State or federally-listed as Rare, Threatened, or Endangered, all federal "candidate" species for listing and other species on officially adopted federal and/or State listings, and all California Species of Special Concern.

17. **Policy:** Minimize impacts to sensitive natural habitats throughout the Planning Area. In new developments, emphasis should be placed on protecting and preserving valuable and sensitive natural habitats, the comprehensive habitat mapping and biological resource inventory prepared, as part of Plan preparation, shall be consulted when reviewing development applications.

18. **Policy:** Preserve and protect areas determined to function as regional wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats and all areas being considered for future conservation because of their high value.

    For terrestrial wildlife, particularly those species that require large home ranges (such as the bobcat), connecting corridors are an essential habitat element because they permit access into areas that might otherwise be too small to use if isolated. For less mobile species, such as small mammals, corridors become more important in the long-term because they permit occasional movements between populations, which provides for genetic exchange and more healthy individuals. The preservation of corridors includes development of maintenance and monitoring programs, designation of protective buffers, and construction of under crossings, as necessary.

19. **Policy:** Provide for no net loss of overall wetland acreage; where such losses may be unavoidable at the project level, require mitigation that meets the no net loss goal.

    This policy is consistent with State and federal wetlands policies. The City will continue to work with State and federal regulatory agencies, exploring the feasibility of wetlands mitigation alternatives, including provisions for mitigation banking, transfer of development rights, and land purchases, to implement the "no net loss" goal.

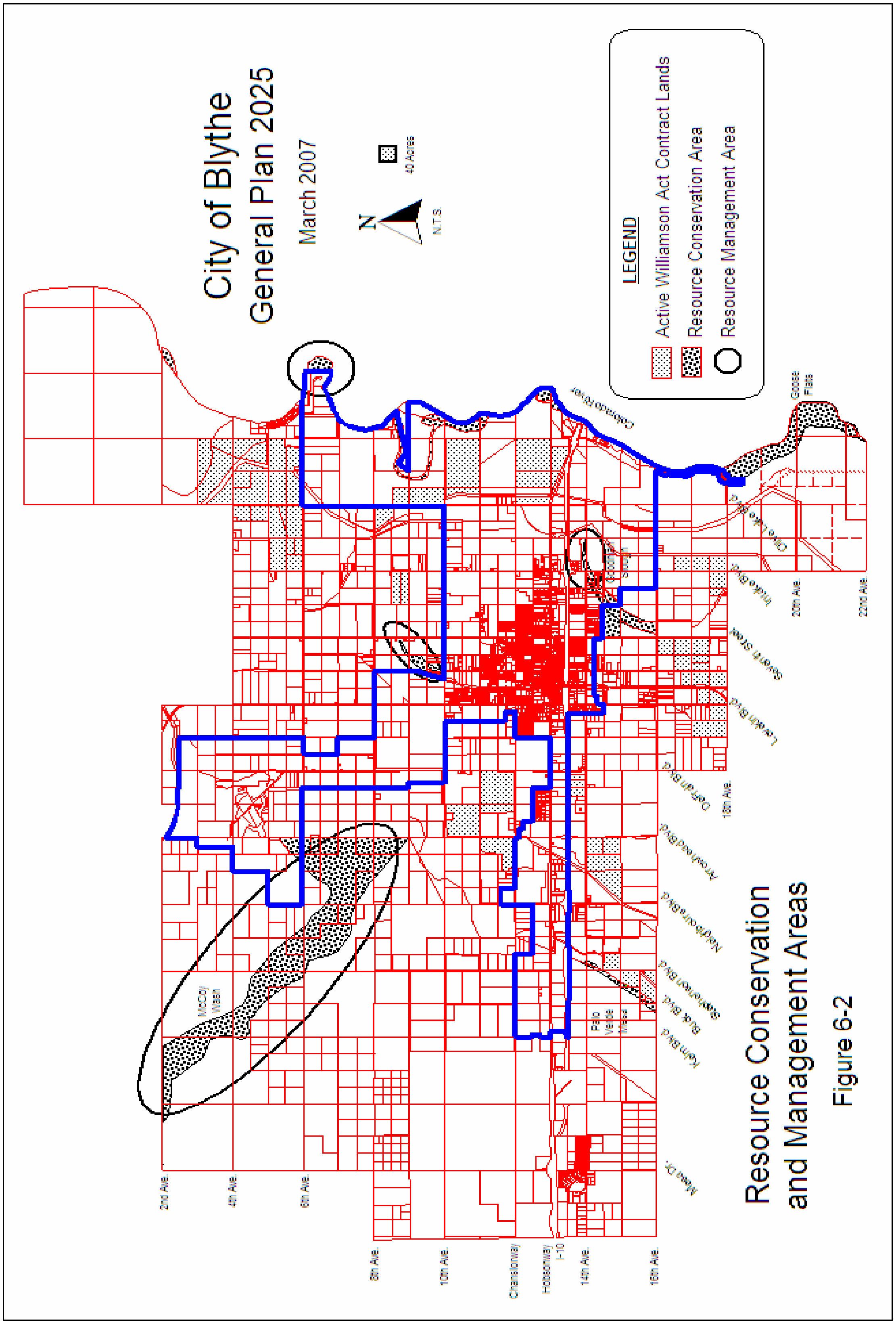
IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Biotic Resources

Resource Conservation Areas

- **Implementation:** Protect and preserve areas identified for Resource Conservation in **Figure 6-2**, and amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Resource Conservation zoning district and habitat protection standards, particularly buffering, for sites abutting Resource Conservation Areas.

- **Implementation:** Establish a fund for acquisition of Resource Conservation Areas to ensure permanent protection, if tax revenues not otherwise committed can be allocated for the purpose. Also, explore the feasibility of establishment of maintenance district(s) for ongoing management activities.

- **Implementation:** Funds are not required for acquiring resource conservation area sites since none have yet been designated in the Planning Area, but only for others that may be identified for acquisition in the future. It is expected that most Resource Conservation Areas would be dedicated as environmental mitigation or exaction.


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
Active Williamson Act Contract Lands
Resource Conservation Area
Resource Management Area
Colorado River
Goose Flats
McCoy Wash
Palo Verde Mesa
Olive Lake Blvd
Intake Blvd
Seventh Street
Lovekin Blvd
Defrain Blvd
Arrowhead Blvd
Neighbours Blvd
Stephenson Blvd
Buck Blvd
Kern Blvd
Mesa Dr.
2nd Ave
4th Ave
6th Ave
8th Ave
10th Ave
Chanslorway
Hobsonway
I-10
14th Ave
16th Ave
18th Ave
20th Ave
22nd Ave

Resource Conservation and Management Areas

Figure 6-2

- **Implementation:** Establish a long-term comprehensive planning program to ensure the long-term viability of Resource Conservation Areas, both under public and private ownership.

- **Implementation:** Explore and implement, where feasible, linking Resource Conservation Areas with interconnecting open space corridors, particularly those which provide access to water sources and enhance overall biological diversity of the resource area.

- **Implementation:** Explore and implement, where feasible, means to minimize or avoid interference with sensitive wildlife on the urban fringe by domestic pets.

- **Implementation:** Ensure that all new developments restrict the use of fencing in locations essential for wildlife movement and place structures so as to minimize interference with wildlife corridors.

Resource Management Areas

- **Implementation:** Protect sites designated as Resource Management Areas by amending the Zoning Ordinance to include a Resource Management (RM) Overlay District to apply to sites designated as Resource Management Areas. Establish use regulations and development standards for the RM District, including provisions for clustering of development in Resource Management Areas, waiver of minimum-lot-width requirements, and narrower local street widths where these would enhance protection of sensitive habitats and resources, and prohibition of grading prior to receipt of discretionary approvals, subject to CEQA review.

- **Implementation:** Establish procedures for reviewing development applications in Resource Management Areas and for approving off-site mitigation to replace resources affected by development.

  Prior to submittal of a development application on sites wholly or partially within an RMA, the project proponent shall meet with City staff at a Project Review Committee meeting, to discuss how the proposed project could affect biological resources, including protected species and sensitive habitats present or potentially present. City staff will review techniques and design solutions to protect those resources, and mitigation alternatives for those resources that cannot be avoided. If the project applicant proposes to remove or irreparably affect sensitive biological resources, then options for habitat compensation will be discussed, including on-site and off-site preservation, creation, or enhancement of RCAs.

  The City will establish a checklist for use in "pre-application" conferences to ensure that all information relevant to sensitive biological resources mitigation and monitoring is reviewed, and all responsible agencies are consulted, and that applicants are aware of the City's interest in and procedures for preserving, protecting and managing resources potentially affected by development in RMAs.

- **Implementation:** Require applicants for development with sites wholly or partially within Resource Management Areas designated on **Figure 6-2** and within the Resource Management Overlay District to submit preliminary resource management information including that necessary for analysis, monitoring, and reporting, as needed for completion of an environmental assessment. The preliminary resource management information and conceptual development plan shall be submitted for review during the pre-application development review process.

It is expected that on sites where biological resources exist and are not identified as Resource Conservation Areas, development and the resources would coexist.

- **Implementation:** Establish guidelines for the preparation and submittal of Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Information in a *Best Practices Manual* to ensure consistency, streamline the development review process, and expedite Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Information preparation.

  The Preliminary Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Information submitted by applicants will be required to include, at a minimum, the following information:

  - An inventory of known or potentially occurring biological resources within the RMA-designated acreage and surrounding buffer areas within 500 feet of the project site. This data should include: descriptions and maps of all habitat areas; list of all special status species observed or suspected of occurring on the property; and an analysis of on-site wildlife movement corridors, demonstrating connectivity between proposed on-site-open space and off-site water-ways and RCAs.

  - An analysis of how the preliminary site plan responds to biological resources and how applicable provisions of the City's *Best Practices Manual* were incorporated into engineering and design; identification of all proposed open space (including parks and private open space), habitat preserves, protective setbacks (non-development buffers), any proposed corridor connections to off-site open space and RCAs, and general "footprints" of structures, major access roads and parking areas.

  - Measures proposed to mitigate unavoidable impacts to biological resources. This "mitigation package" can include combinations of on-site preserved (managed) and created acreage, with restoration and enhancement components to increase habitat value when a loss of sensitive habitat acreage is unavoidable. Clustering preserved acreage on-site, or with contiguous open space parcels just off-site, will be encouraged. When habitat preservation on-site is not feasible (i.e., preserved parcels would be too small to be of any value), then off-site mitigation should occur, preferably at priority expansion areas for existing RCAs, or as expansions of proposed or existing open space acreage within adjoining or nearby RMAs.

  - Topographic map and aerial photograph, showing property boundaries and delineated habitats (by type).

  - Preliminary information on soils and hydrology, including drainage basin and watershed boundaries, surface flow patterns, depth to groundwater, and boundaries of known wetlands, backwaters and open water bodies. No detailed hydrologic analysis (e.g., peak flow or flood stage data) is necessary.

  - Other information, as requested by City staff, which may be relevant to the type(s) of biological resources present in the RMA.

  - Draft environmental documents prepared (e.g., negative declaration, environmental impact report) will consider the development application materials and the Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Information together. After City staff review and approval, the Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Information will be published along with the draft environmental document.

- The final environmental document(s) will generally include the additional Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting components listed below; the specific details and level of effort required to define each component will differ depending on the type of biological resources present on the site. The City's *Best Practices Manual* should be followed unless a qualified biologist approved by the City develops other suitable protection and management methods.

    - **Buffer Zones.** Standards and requirements for buffering sensitive natural habitats, including allowable uses, minimum widths and interface function, revegetation plans (if proposed), management practices, and access limitations.

    - **Wildlife Movement Corridors.** Proposals to encourage wildlife use of RMAs shall be based on field surveys by a qualified biologist documenting current wildlife movement and activity on-site. The focus here should be on the more mobile terrestrial vertebrates, with mule deer, bobcat, raccoon, gray fox, and coyote being some examples of suitable "target" species. Every effort should be made to preserve and enhance connections of on-site corridors with off-site open space, waterways, and RCAs. If not already part of the mitigation acreage, then long-term management and monitoring of the corridors should be addressed.

    - **Recreational & Education Plan.** Guidelines and standards for providing, and limiting, recreational activities, if applicable to the RMA, including descriptions of proposed recreation activities within public open space (e.g., parkways, green space, or golf courses). Where biological resources will abut urban uses, ways to restrict or prevent access into those habitats should be prescribed. An educational program to increase public awareness of sensitive resources and use restrictions, including instructional and interpretive signage, hiking trails with descriptive pamphlets/guides, wildlife viewing platforms near preserve areas, and other types of public information should be included, if appropriate.

    - **Habitat for Special Status Species.** In most cases, habitat supporting special status species should be incorporated into larger mitigation areas. However, with some species, such as isolated plant populations, smaller set-asides may be necessary. This section of the Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Program should address the unique management techniques associated with managing and maintaining the viability of these areas.

    - **Habitat Enhancement.** Measures proposed to enhance habitats on-site not associated with mitigation acreage should be described. Some relevant examples would include limitations on fencing, uses of native species in landscaping, installation of wildlife nest boxes/nest structures, establishment of thickets and shrubby borders for small mammal cover, and promoting or planting of emergent and submergent vegetation in created ponds.

    - **Mitigation and Monitoring Program.** Actions to be taken for maintenance and long-term monitoring of both on-site and off-site mitigation acreage should be listed, including annual management practices to prevent no loss of value through disturbance, and remedial actions which may be taken to ensure success for created, restored or enhanced habitats. Funding responsibilities for mitigation and monitoring should also be defined.

- **Implementation:** Ensure that biological resources protected on-site or in combination with adjoining sites are of sufficient acreage to represent the natural diversity of the landscape adequately enough, to protect the supporting watershed for wetlands, backwaters and vernal pools, and to maintain viability of species inhabiting the RMA.

- **Implementation:** Allow off-site mitigation when preserving and protecting biological resources on-site in an RMA proves to be infeasible (i.e., acreage too small, use intensity too high, etc.). Priority should be given to in-kind mitigation at specially designated expansion areas for existing RCAs. As an alternative, expanding existing or proposed preserves through land acquisition within other RMAs should be allowed.

  All policies related to on-site mitigation also apply to off-site mitigation, including the requirement for preparation of a preliminary Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Program for off-site mitigation areas.

- **Implementation:** Encourage groups of property owners to prepare a joint Resource Management, Monitoring and Reporting Program and permit transfer of development between properties when joint development and management efforts are undertaken.

Habitat Conservation

- **Implementation:** Prepare a *Best Practices Manual,* including general development standards and resources management guidelines for all sensitive habitats found in the Planning Area.

- **Implementation:** Coordinate with non-profit conservation groups and land trusts to identify target sites and projects for fund raising and volunteer participation for protection, enhancement, maintenance, and public education on protected natural resource areas.

Biological Resource Areas Outside RCAs and RMAs

- **Implementation:** Review development in areas not designated as RCAs or RMAs under current procedures that require an environmental assessment, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and State and federal agency requirements for resources protection.

- **Implementation:** Update the biological resources map as needed following adoption of the General Plan with site-specific biological information provided by qualified biologist(s) for development projects, information on special status species, and any other relevant document information.

  This updating process will minimize the need for the City to undertake additional fieldwork, while still having the most accurate information available for planning purposes.

- **Implementation:** Work with the Riverside County Vector Control District to ensure that acceptable disease vector control measures are coordinated with preservation of resources such as wetlands, recognizing the community's interest in meeting federal and State wetlands protection policies.

- **Implementation:** Work with the California Department of Fish and Game to ensure the preservation and enhancement of species of resident and andramous fish in waterways in the Planning Area.

6.5 WATER QUALITY

The State Water Resources Control Board has jurisdiction over nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards, whose charge it is to identify and implement water quality objectives. The Planning Area falls under the authority of the Colorado River Basin Board (Region 7), and is located within the Colorado River Basin. The Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan), which affects this hydrologic sub-basin, was most recently revised in 1993.

Declining water quality is a concern not only because of potential public health effects but also because of the combined effects of polluted discharges on aquatic life. Although the Planning Area is not yet subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting process because the Planning Area's existing population is less than 100,000, this is the time to begin adopting policies that address water quality issues. Given current population growth projections, the City will not become subject to the permit requirements during this Plan's time frame.

The groundwater basin underlying Blythe supplies the majority of municipal water demands of the Planning Area. The groundwater system is largely sustained by recharge in the foothills north of Blythe, stream flow infiltration from the Colorado River, and to a much lesser degree by direct infiltration of precipitation. There is no evidence of substantial overdraft in the Planning Area, but this issue is currently under scrutiny by others interested in the groundwater basin. Agricultural water supplies are primarily provided via surface canals from the Colorado River and are administered by the Palo Verde Irrigation District.

Groundwater Contamination

Extensive agricultural production offers the potential for high nitrate concentrations. However, this is not the case locally according to Don Park, Assistant Public Health Engineer, and Riverside County Department of Environmental Health. Extensive testing of groundwater in the Planning Area by the Department of Environmental Health has not found nitrate levels that exceed the State's Maximum Contaminant Level (45 mgl). Park noted that this might be because the extensive irrigation system utilized in the Blythe area flushes the nitrates away. The eventual transition of residences from septic systems to wastewater treatment service and limitations on the issuance of new septic system permits may serve to further safeguard Blythe's environment from any potential for higher nitrate levels in the future.

Because lands used for agricultural production are subject to surface water flows that carry particles way from the site, there is the potential for this to result in downstream sedimentation, which can impair drinking water, as well as adversely affect fisheries and water-related habitat. In addition, toxic substances may bind to soil particles, which serve as "taxis" to distribute and circulate contaminants throughout the riparian, estuarine and marine systems.

GUIDING POLICIES: Water Quality

20. Policy: Enhance the quality of surface water resources of the Planning Area and prevent their contamination.

21. Policy: Comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations and standards to maintain and improve groundwater quality in the Planning Area.

22. **Policy:** Where feasible, given flood control requirements, maintain the natural condition of waterways and flood plains and protect watersheds to ensure adequate groundwater recharge and water quality.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Water Quality

- **Implementation:** Require that new residential development at a density greater than one unit per acre and commercial and industrial areas annexed to the City be connected to the City's wastewater collection system. Existing residential development and individual houses where septic systems have failed should also be connected to the system in those areas where systems exist.

- **Implementation:** Maintain an inventory of known sources of groundwater and soil contamination within the Planning Area, including underground storage tanks, landfills, septic tanks, agricultural and industrial uses and prepare annual reports of groundwater quality and efforts being undertaken to eliminate groundwater and soil contamination.

- **Implementation:** Require use of Best Management Practices to control runoff from all new development within the Planning Area.

- **Implementation:** Require older houses to convert to low-flow water systems upon sale or as a condition of approval of a major alteration or addition.

6.6 MINERAL RESOURCES

Existing Mining Operations. There are no active mines within the Planning Area, although several areas along Midland Road were historically mined for gypsum and gravel. The majority of the closest mining operations are located north, outside of the Planning Area. There are inactive mines located in the Planning Area.

Potential Mining Resource Areas. Urban preemption of prime mineral deposits and conflicts between mining and other uses throughout California led to passage of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA), which establishes policies for conservation and development of mineral lands, and contains specific provisions for the classification of mineral lands by the State Geologist. SMARA requires all cities and counties to incorporate in their general plans mapped designations approved by the State Division of Mines and Geology. These designations are to include lands categorized as Mineral Resource Zones, the most significant of which is a designation of mineral resources that are of regional or statewide significance.

GUIDING POLICIES: Mineral Resources

23. **Policy:** Work with the State and Riverside County to identify and protect significant mineral resources in the Planning Area.

24. **Policy:** Coordinate mineral resource extraction with other land uses.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Mineral Resources

- **Implementation:** If the State Division of Mines and Geology determines that the Planning Area contains significant aggregate resources, identify areas where sufficient aggregate resources can be conserved to meet the Planning Area's fair share of future regional needs, consistent with State law.

- **Implementation:** If mineral resources of regional or statewide significance are identified by the State within the Planning Area, amend the General Plan to incorporate, as appropriate, policies for conservation and possible future extraction of these resources, consistent with State law.

- **Implementation:** If aggregate mineral resources of regional or statewide significance are identified by the State within incorporated portions of the Planning Area, apply zoning regulations permitting extraction as a conditional use and prohibiting incompatible land uses in Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas (RSCARA's), consistent with State law.

  This policy meets a requirement of the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975.

6.7 ARCHAEOLOGIC, HISTORIC, PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCES

The Planning Area contains cultural resources, both prehistoric and historic. Development of lands that are now vacant or in agricultural use could disturb surface and subsurface archaeological resources that may, or may not, have been identified to date. Site-specific analysis is needed for future development projects, particularly in areas with a high sensitivity for archaeological resources.

GUIDING POLICY: Archaeologic, Historic, and Paleontologic Resources

25. Policy: Protect archaeologic, historic, and paleontologic resources for their aesthetic, scientific, educational, and cultural value.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Archaeologic, Historic, and Paleontologic Resources

- **Implementation:** Require a records search for any development project proposed in areas of high archaeological sensitivity to determine whether the site contains known prehistoric or historic cultural resources and/or to determine the potential for discovery of additional cultural resources.

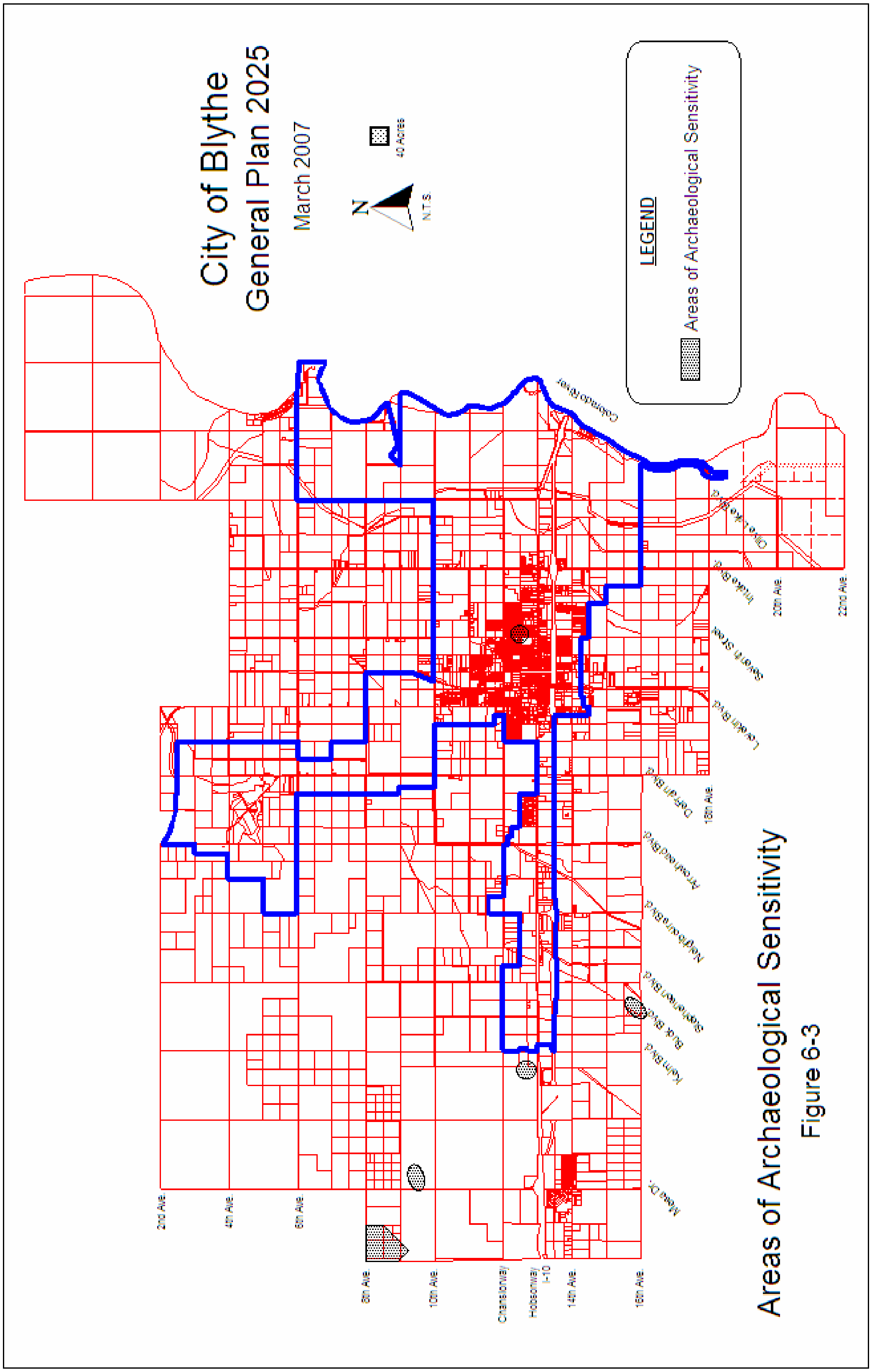
- **Implementation:** Require that sponsors of projects on sites where probable cause for discovery of archaeological resources (as indicated by records search and where resources have been discovered in the vicinity of the project) retain a consulting archaeologist to survey the project site. If unique resources, as defined by State law, are found, require preparation of an archaeologic resource mitigation plan; monitor the project to ensure that mitigation measures are implemented.

  More specifically, project sponsors will be required to adhere to the following, which will be implemented as an environmental mitigation measure or condition of project approval:

- In the event that any cultural resources are discovered during clearing, grading or construction, project operations shall cease until a qualified archaeologist has evaluated the situation. Following the evaluation, the project sponsor shall implement recommendations provided by the archaeologist, in consultation with the City, that are consistent with State law.

- If human skeleton remains are encountered during construction of a project, the County Coroner shall be notified. If the remains are Native American, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission.

- Any cultural resources found on the proposed project site will be recorded or described in a professional report and submitted to the University of California at Riverside.



Areas of Archaeological Sensitivity

Figure 6-3

6.8 ENERGY RESOURCES

Southern California Edison (SCE) and The Gas Company provide electricity and natural gas to the Planning Area respectively. Several high voltage transmission lines traverse the Planning Area providing power to the area and beyond. The load planning and forecasting conducted by The Gas Company and SCE estimate the demand for natural gas and electric service within the Planning Area to serve future anticipated growth. Power is acquired from outside sources, and facilities are designed before the need is present. Blythe Energy LLC has constructed a 520 megawatt combined cycle generating plant in the City of Blythe. As such, the City of Blythe does not foresee any difficulties in meeting demand to provide electricity to the Planning Area for future growth.

Cogeneration, including waste to energy development, is a resource that has not been fully developed within the County, and is an area of potential growth. The types of local waste that could be used include cotton trash, orchard pruning remains, and row crop waste. Mass production of solar energy is not currently considered economically feasible in the City, however, passive and active solar energy systems are economically feasible at the professional level. Wind, geothermal, and other alternative energy sources are not expected to occur at any significant levels.

Reliance on wood products as the primary material in residential construction maintains dependency on a forest products industry that is becoming less able to meet the demand, resulting in increased construction cost and reduced home affordability. Over-reliance on wood products damages remaining forests, including siltation and pollution of streams, loss of wildlife, and reduced recreational potential. The Plan encourages research and use of alternative materials, consistent with safe construction practices.

GUIDING POLICIES: Energy Resources

26. Policy: Conserve scarce or nonrenewable energy resources.

27. Policy: Promote energy efficiency in new subdivisions and in building design and encourage use of alternative building materials.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: Energy Resources

- **Implementation:** Coordinate with the utility companies to educate the public about the need to conserve scarce energy resources, insulate buildings to reduce energy required for heating and cooling, and use energy-efficient appliances.

- **Implementation:** Require consideration of passive solar energy techniques in subdivision design, including house orientation, street and lot layout, vegetation and protection of solar access.

- **Implementation:** Continue to require new buildings to meet State energy efficiency standards, and develop a Design Manual that shows examples of energy conservation in subdivision planning, site layout, landscaping and building design.

- **Implementation:** New development will be substantially more energy-efficient because of State standards and advances in technology for the building industry. Policies calling for compact development, included in the Community Design and Land Use Elements, also will promote energy conservation.

- **Implementation:** Adopt a resolution committing the City to convert a portion of City-owned vehicles to alternative fuels within a specified period of time, subject to budget considerations, to reduce energy consumption.

- **Implementation:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit alternative fuel/recharging facilities in Neighborhood Commercial and Community Commercial districts, and other districts, subject to appropriate standards.

- **Implementation:** Support research and experimental use of alternative (to wood) building materials in all new public and private construction and remodeling, in accordance with Federal, State and local health/safety and building codes and standards.

6.9 WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

The City's and Riverside County's Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMP) comply with State-mandated waste reduction goals requiring local agencies to implement source reduction, recycling, and composting activities to reduce solid waste generation by 25 percent by the year 1995, and by 50 percent by the year 2000.

State law requires that each city and county prepare a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) and a Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE). Together, the SRRE and HHWE comprise the City's IWMP. Household hazardous wastes within Riverside County are addressed in the Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The IWMP for each city in the County, the County's IWMP, and the countywide siting element will comprise the countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. The countywide siting element to identify preferred sites for new solid waste facilities is not yet complete.

SOLID WASTE

Source Reduction and Recycling. The City's *Source Reduction and Recycling Element* (which is not included in the General Plan, but is published as a separate document) provides an analysis of existing or needed source reduction, recycling, and composting programs and facilities, and strategies for handling special wastes.

Implementation measures include variable rate structures to create economic incentives for reduction of waste generation, regulatory programs, and public education and awareness programs. Recycling programs for residential, commercial, and industrial areas are proposed to be expanded, as are various composting and special waste programs. The latter includes programs that address the disposal of medical waste, dead animals, asbestos, ash, bulky items, and construction and demolition debris.

The Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), which was approved and adopted in April 1996, complies with State mandated waste reduction goals requiring local agencies to implement source reduction, recycling, and composting activities to reduce solid waste generation by 25 percent by the year 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000.

Source Reduction and Recycling Element Goals

- Promote effective coordination among the public, private and non-profit sectors to insure effective management and administration of solid waste programs; and,

- Support efforts on a local, State and national level for the expansion of recycling markets and increase use of post-consumer secondary materials recovered from the waste stream.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous Waste. Hazardous materials management includes the identification, proper transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials include liquids, solids, and gases which, by themselves, or when placed in contact with other materials, can result in contamination of soil or water, poisonous vapors, fires, or explosions. Hazardous materials can enter the environment via air, soil transport, or surface runoff. When improperly stored or disposed, they contaminate soil and groundwater and pose a general health hazard to the population. Hazardous materials are used and created everyday by certain industries. They are also common household items such as insecticides, waste motor oil and cleaning fluids.

The local Riverside County Landfill, a Class III facility, is not permitted to accept hazardous materials. Class I landfills are permitted to accept these materials. There are two remaining Class I facilities in California permitted to receive untreated hazardous wastes: Safe Kleene in Imperial County and Kettelman Hills in Kings County.

Most hazardous materials transported through Riverside County and the Planning Area, are carried by truck on the State highway system. Riverside County has not quantified the amount of hazardous materials that are transported through Riverside County in route to adjoining counties or states.

Trains are also utilized to transport large quantities of hazardous materials primarily for agricultural uses inside and outside the Planning Area. In 1999, 220 carloads of hazardous agricultural chemicals were transported via rail into the Planning Area (See **Table 6.9-1**). County roads and City streets are used to transport such chemicals through the Planning Area. This local road system is also utilized to transport locally generated wastes from the source to the regional highway system.

TABLE 6.9-1
PLANNING AREA HAZARDOUS COMMODITIES TRANSPORT
Arizona/California Railroad Transported the following hazardous commodities to/from the Planning Area

Description	Car Type	Carloads
Anhydrous Ammonia	Tank car	113
Urea Ammonium Nitrate	Tank car	103
Phosphatic Fertilizer Solution	Tank car	4

Source: Arizona & California Railroad, November 2000

In the event of a hazardous materials emergency, several agencies are responsible for timely response, depending on the extent, and type of the incident. The Joint Powers Hazardous Materials Response Team, composed of representatives of the Riverside County Fire Department, California Department of Forestry, and members of the City of Blythe Fire Department respond to large scale, emergency hazardous materials incidents within the Planning Area. Blythe City and Riverside County fire departments provide first response for hazardous materials emergencies within the urban area. The Hazardous Materials Division of the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health regulates underground storage tanks. If the Hazardous Materials Division identifies a leak, the matter is then refereed to the Regional Water Quality Control Board who is empowered to regulate the clean up. Above ground storage tanks in the county are regulated and monitored by the County Fire Department. Above ground storage tanks within the City are regulated by the City of Blythe Fire Marshal.

Household Hazardous Waste. Hazardous materials, used in many household products (e.g., drain cleaners, waste oil, cleaning fluids, insecticides, and car batteries), are often improperly disposed of as a part of normal household trash. These materials can interact with other chemicals to create a risk to the general population and can also result in soil and groundwater contamination. Several collection locations have been established throughout the City for collection of used motor oil to ensure its proper disposal. These collection points serve the entire Planning Area.

- Goals of the City's Household Hazardous Waste Element include:

  - Minimize the use of and disposal of household hazardous wastes in the City. Establish and promote an environmentally sound methodology for the collection, transportation and disposal of household hazardous wastes; and,

  - Evaluate effective methods and alternatives for the collection, transportation and disposal of household hazardous wastes as part of the City's overall solid waste collection and recycling program.

GUIDING POLICY: Waste Management and Recycling

28. Policy: Reduce the generation of solid waste, including hazardous waste, and recycle those materials that are used, to slow the filling of local and regional landfills, in accord with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989.

IMPLEMENTING POLICY: Waste Management and Recycling

- **Implementation:** Implement measures specified in the City's Source Reduction and Recycling Element and the Household Hazardous Waste Element.

Chapter 7

Safety Element

7 SAFETY ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE SAFETY ELEMENT

The City cannot fully serve its residents unless it protects their safety. The urban and natural environments of Blythe contain a number of hazards which require special consideration and treatment in the land use planning process to protect the public's safety. These hazards include flooding, unstable earth conditions, wild-land and urban fires, crime, and hazardous materials. Public safety can be reasonably assured in the City by establishing policies and implementing mitigation measures designed to reduce hazards, providing for emergency response strategies, and coordinating emergency response agencies. This Element examines a range of issues related to safety, including those mandated by State Policies, and mitigates hazards associated with natural and man-made disasters.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

The Safety Element complies with the Government Code which requires "...safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, ... dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides, subsidence, liquefaction and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 of the Public Resources Code and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wild land and urban fires..."

The Safety Element also contains policies related to the provision of fire services and law enforcement.

PURPOSE OF THE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Element is to identify potential safety hazards and to establish appropriate policies to protect life and property from hazardous conditions. An emphasis is placed on relating land use decisions to public safety concerns. The Safety Element also stresses the importance of emergency preparedness in reducing the risk of community upset in the event of a major disaster.

Much of the background information necessary to formulate public safety goals and policies is included in the Blythe Program Plan Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). This report describes in detail the hazards that might affect Blythe, as well as resources that are available in the event of an emergency. All potential safety issues were researched for preparation of the PEIR, although not all of these issues are addressed in the Safety Element. The Circulation Element addresses safety issues associated with vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This Element contains three sections: Issues Identification, Goals and Policies, and the Plan. The Issues Identification section examines safety-related issues confronting the City. The Goals and Policies section utilizes this information to create objectives for Blythe that will protect its citizens, and establish a decision-making framework for City leaders to evaluate land use issues for their safety impact. Building on the Element's goals and policies, and on the description of local hazards presented in the PEIR, the Riverside County Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) provides detailed recommendations for hazard mitigation and ensures that adequate emergency response to identified hazards can be provided when needed.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Hazard management plans prepared by public agencies are considered vital for reducing the potential for disaster and the level of community upset in the event of a major emergency. These plans identify known hazards, outline emergency response procedures, and indicate the public agencies and officials responsible for implementing such procedures. In April, 2004, the City of Blythe adopted a revised Emergency Operations Plan to be utilized by City officials and the general public during natural and man-made emergencies and disasters.

Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan is the only hazard management plan applicable to the Blythe General Plan Safety Element. In recent years, the increased use of hazardous materials in manufacturing processes, as well as within households, has created problems related to hazardous waste disposal. In the interest of public safety, treatment and disposal sites should be distanced from urban centers in general, and residential development in particular.

In response to both these concerns and State legislation requiring that these issues be addressed by all jurisdictions (State Assembly Bill 2948), the Riverside County Planning Department has coordinated preparation of the Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The Plan, which was adopted in March of 1989, contains policies and objectives as well as recommendations for hazardous waste minimization, recycling and reclaiming, treatment, and disposal. The Plan identifies future hazardous waste treatment and disposal needs and establishes County wide policy for waste treatment, transportation, and disposal. The Plan also outlines criteria for choosing appropriate treatment and disposal sites. These criteria are discussed briefly in the Public Safety Plan section of this element.

7.1 SAFETY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The potential for flooding, geologic hazards, wild-land and urban fire, crime, and hazardous materials accidents have the potential to seriously affect life and property in Blythe. The issues identified in this section establish the basis for the City's Public Safety goals and policies.

FLOODING HAZARDS

In Blythe, potential flood hazards may result from overflow of natural watercourses and man-made drainage systems due to excessive and unusual storm run-off. While the flooding potential of the Colorado River has been substantially reduced in this century, flooding did occur in the 1980s as a result of water released from dams located upstream of the Palo Verde Valley. Other potential sources of flooding are tributary drainage below Parker dam including McCoy Wash. Significant floods are still a distinct possibility. However, the magnitude, frequency and destructive potential have been greatly reduced.

The City's existing storm drain system and flood control facilities generally have sufficient capacity to provide developed areas with adequate protection from flooding. However, the *Master Plan of Storm Water (October 1984)* identifies localized areas of the City currently needing drainage improvements as well as areas which will require improvements in conjunction with future development.

Other areas of the City requiring drainage improvements, either currently or in conjunction with anticipated future development include; the Hidden Beaches and Mesa Bluff Developments and East Blythe. *The Master Plan of Storm Water* provides further details on the specific improvements that are required, including cost estimates and a priority schedule to be included in the City's Capital Improvements Plan.

SEISMIC HAZARDS

The most serious direct earthquake hazard is the damage or collapse of buildings and other structures by ground shaking. Ground shaking is the vibration which radiates from the epicenter of an earthquake. Damage to structures from ground shaking is caused by the transmission of earthquake vibrations from the ground into the structure. The intensity of the vibration or shaking and its potential impact on building and other urban development is determined by several factors:

- The nature of the underlying materials, including rock and soil;
- The structural characteristics of a building;
- The quality of workmanship and materials used in its construction;
- The location of the epicenter and the magnitude of the earthquake; and
- The duration and character of the ground motion.

Older buildings constructed before building codes were in effect, and even newer buildings constructed before earthquake resistance provisions were included in building codes, are the most likely to suffer damage in an earthquake. Most of Blythe's buildings are one story high and are of wood frame construction, which is considered the most structurally resistant to earthquake damage.

Older masonry buildings without earthquake-resistant reinforcement are the most susceptible to the sort of structural failure which causes the greatest loss of lives. The susceptibility of a structure to damage from earthquake ground shaking is also related to the foundation material underlying the structure. A foundation of rock or very firm material intensifies short period motions which affect low-ridged buildings more than tall, flexible ones. A deep layer of logged soft alluvium may cushion low-ridged buildings, but accentuate the motion in tall buildings. The amplified motion resulting from softer alluvium soils can also severely damage older masonry buildings. Some unreinforced masonry buildings are located in downtown Blythe. No assessment of these buildings has been made.

Other potentially dangerous conditions include building projections which are not firmly anchored, such as parapets and cornices. These projections could collapse during periods of strong and/or sustained ground shaking.

Fire is often a major form of damage resulting from ground shaking effects. Most earthquake-induced fires start because of ruptured gas lines, damage to wood, gas or electric stoves and damage to other gas or electric equipment.

NON-SEISMIC GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Issues associated with non-seismic geological hazards include soil erosion from wind and water, ground subsidence, and slope failure along the banks of the Colorado River and along the Palo Verde Mesa. The likelihood of slope failure and erosion is related to natural conditions and the development of these areas.

Soil erosion typically results from concentrated run-off on unprotected slopes, along unlined river channels or wind erosion of tilled agricultural land or exposed soil surfaces. Soil erosion has largely been reduced

throughout most of the City due to soil coverage by various land uses and the construction of flood control facilities. However, undeveloped hillsides and mesas within the City could experience substantial erosion from run-off if the vegetation cover is destroyed by fire or removed by grading operations. City development review procedures include consideration of soil erosion. The procedures contain measures to identify and, to the extent possible, eliminate erosion hazards.

The potential for subsidence is considered to be moderate to low based on the current hydrological conditions present in the valley. Despite annual seasonal fluctuations in ground water levels of more than 6 feet, no evidence of major subsidence has been reported. However, a dramatic lowering of the water table beyond the normal range of fluctuations could strongly increase the potential for subsidence in the Palo Verde Valley.

Slope failures such as bank and slope erosion may occur in the City, especially where graded cut and fill slopes have been poorly constructed. Development on or adjacent to the Colorado River poses the potential threat of bank erosion. Natural erosion caused by flooding along the River also threatens the riverbank and improvements located nearby. Additionally, development on or adjacent to the terraces of the Mesa poses the potential threat of slope erosion or slumping. The terraces of the Mesa vary in percentage of slope from 3% to 30%. While the Mesa slopes are generally stabilized by naturally occurring vegetation, the steeper slopes are subject to destabilization from development activities. While development across gentle slopes appears to be feasible, development on lands having a slope of 15% or greater should be avoided.

WILD-LAND AND URBAN FIRE

The City of Blythe is susceptible to both urban and wild-land fire hazards. Urban fires can result from a number of causes, including arson, carelessness, home or industrial accidents, or from ignorance of proper safety procedures. Wild-land fires can also result from numerous causes, but carelessness is a major cause.

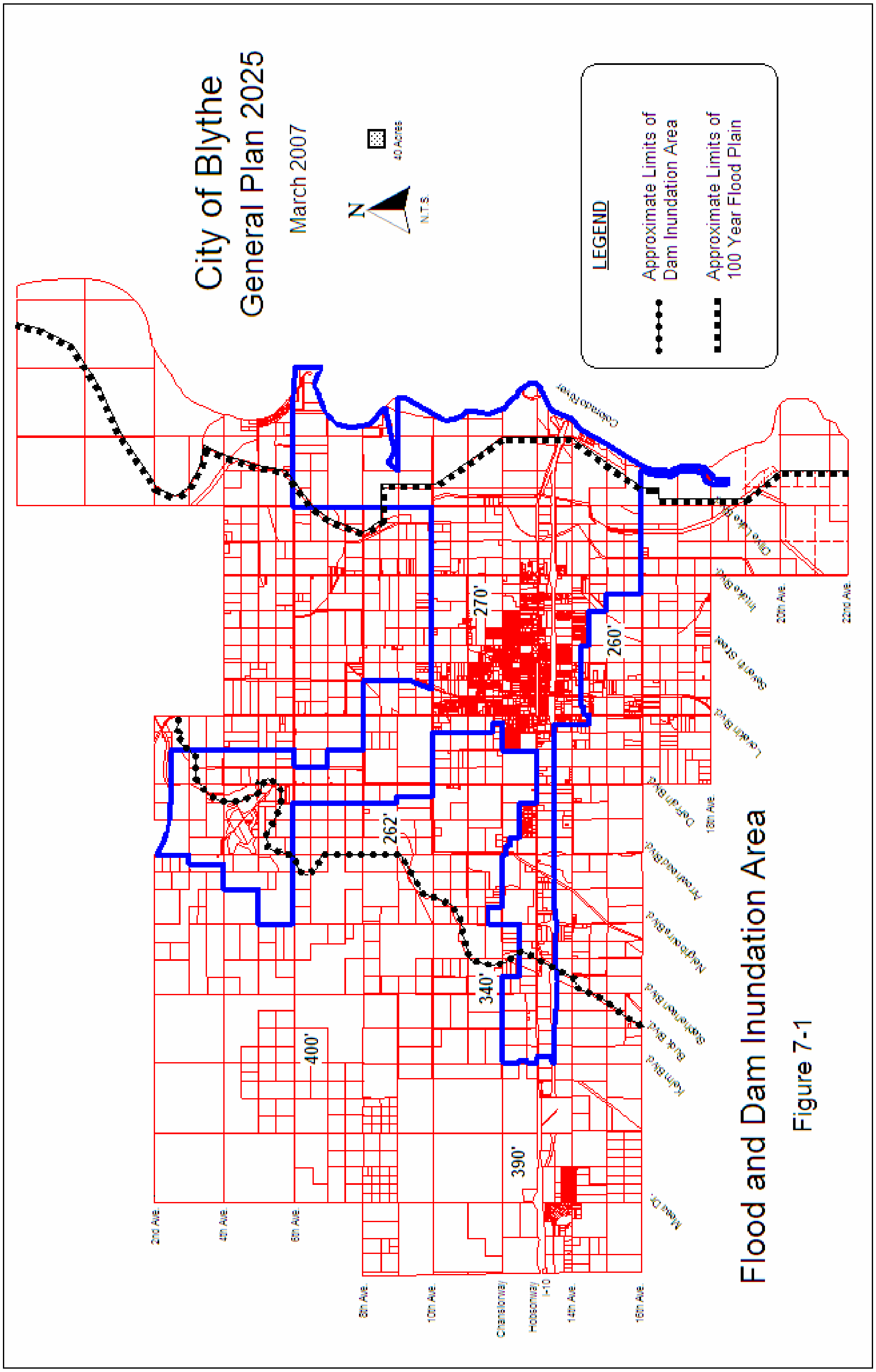
Both urban land uses with inappropriate building materials and the existing native landscape that surrounds Blythe are potential fire hazards. According to the City of Blythe Fire Marshal, overall the community has been constructed with safe building materials; however, some commercial buildings on the Hobsonway corridor were constructed without fire walls. Where these buildings share a common wall, the potential for fire hazards is increased. Also, outside of the built environment, wild-land fires are a concern due to the dense and dry nature of the growth during much of the year and the undeveloped and un-maintained character of much of the area surrounding the Colorado River. Dense undergrowth poses a particular hazard during summer months when temperatures reach upwards of 100°F.

A number of measures are pursued to alleviate urban and wild-land hazards in Blythe. Standards for minimum road widths and clearances around structures will continue to be implemented through City codes to protect the public's safety in the City. In 1994 in accordance with State law, the City outlawed wood shingle roofs and required all new roofs be constructed of Class A materials. In addition, City water pressure requirements listed below will continue to be maintained.

- For residential projects up to 3,600 square feet, 1,000 gallons per minute at 20 pounds per square inch residual pressure for a two-hour duration.

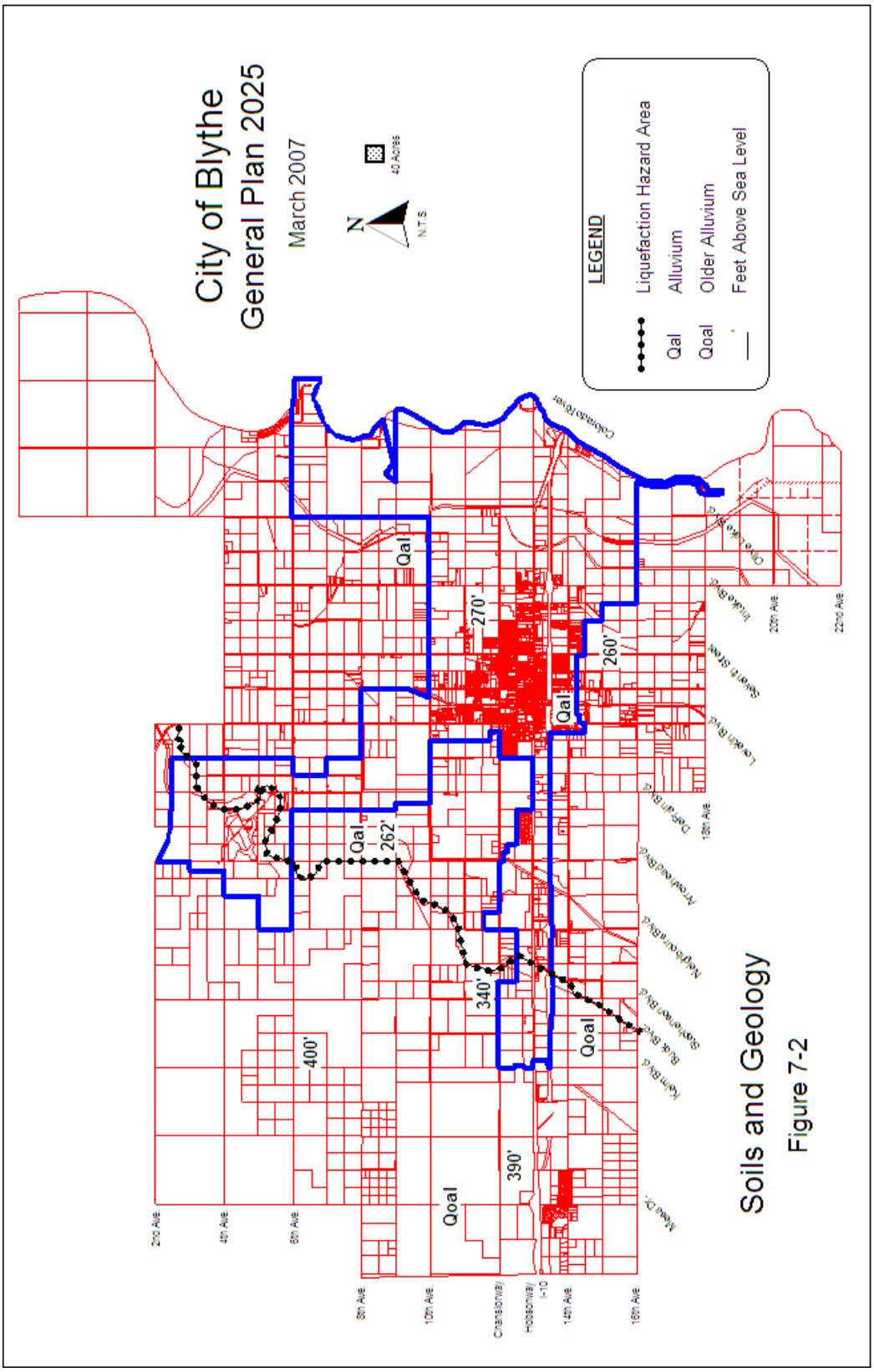
- For commercial and industrial projects, 2,750 gallons per minute at 20 pounds per square inch residual pressure for a two hour duration.

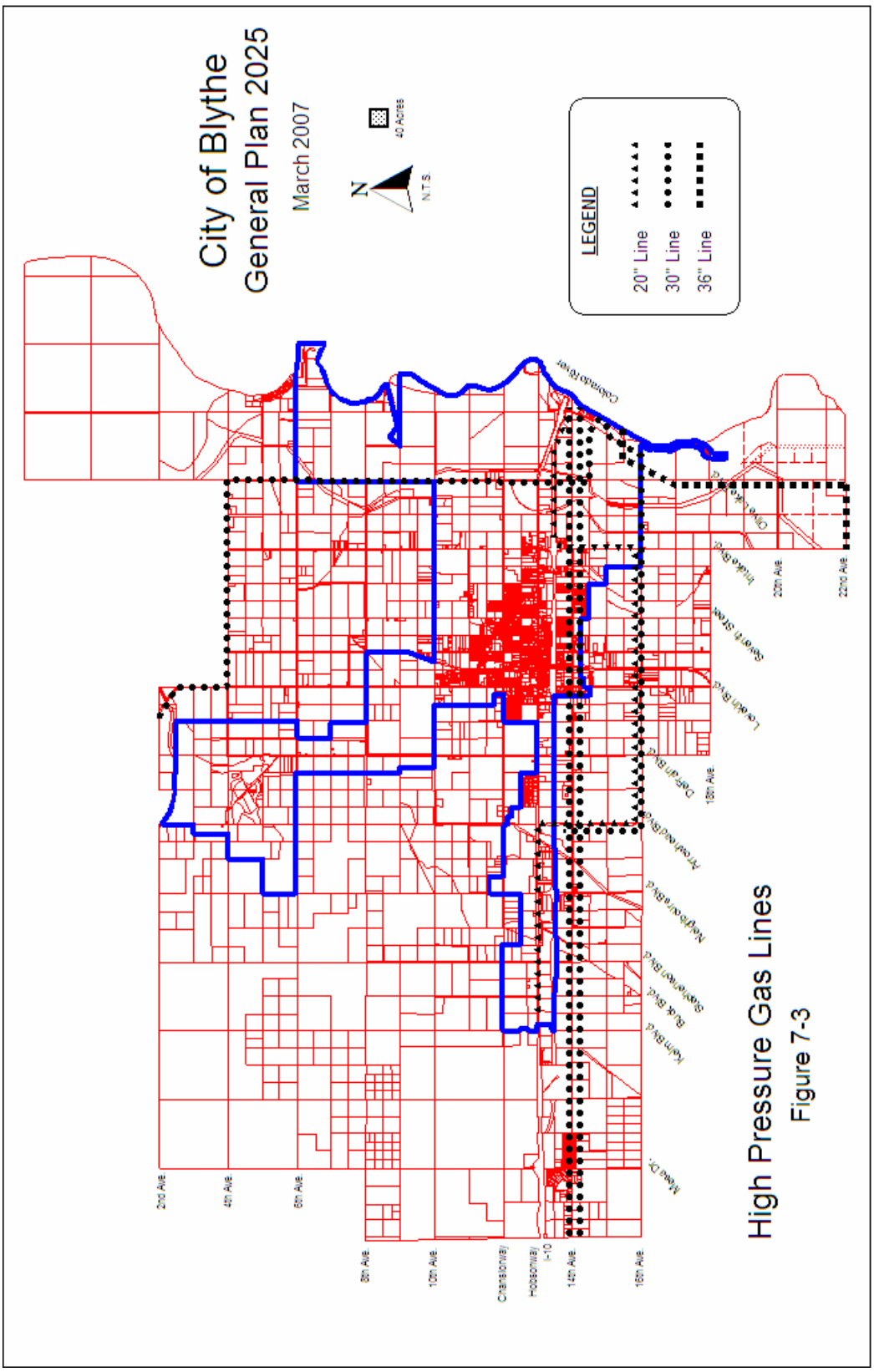
The City of Blythe will continue to lessen the potential impacts of both urban and wild-land fires through an active Code Enforcement program.



Flood and Dam Inundation Area

Figure 7-1


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
Liquefaction Hazard Area
Qal Alluvium
Qoal Older Alluvium
Feet Above Sea Level
Qal
Qoal
270'
260'
262'
340'
400'
390'
Colorado River
Soils and Geology
Figure 7-2



High Pressure Gas Lines

Figure 7-3

CRIME RELATED HAZARDS

Part of the quality of life sought in Blythe is a feeling of security and safety from criminal activity. According to statistics maintained by the Blythe Police Department, most of the reported crimes involved petty theft, residential and vehicle burglaries, auto theft and assaults. Few of the reported crimes involved homicide, rape, armed robbery or arson. To reduce the incidence of crime and increase the level of community safety, it is essential that the Blythe Police Department maintain adequate law enforcement operations in Blythe.

The City has several characteristics which are conducive to criminal activity, including its location along Interstate 10 and its large percentage of migrant and seasonal population. The Colorado River has presented unique law enforcement challenges.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The ongoing generation, use, and transportation of hazardous materials in Blythe constitutes a serious threat to the safety of the community. Leaks or explosions have the potential to affect large segments of the City's population, although such accidents generally have only localized impact due to diligent efforts on the part of the City of Blythe and Riverside County Fire Departments to respond quickly to accidents involving hazardous materials. City and County Fire Departments secure the spill area, evacuate residences and business within the area, and confine a hazardous materials spill until the County's Hazardous Materials Division in Riverside arrives at the location.

The transport of hazardous materials on Interstate 10 is one of the most important safety issues in the City. The numerous residential and commercial developments lying within the freeway corridor face a potentially serious risk of exposure to hazardous materials if a freeway accident occurred involving a vehicle transporting hazardous materials.

Another important safety issue involves underground facilities, such as storage tanks and natural gas pipelines. As of April 1999, the Public Works Department in conjunction with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board Palm Desert Region 7, had identified 109 hydrocarbon sites. Sixty-seven of which have resulted in nine co-mingled plumes. In accordance with Federal Secondary Containment requirements which took effect on December 22, 1998, all identified leaking fuel tanks have been removed and all remaining underground storage tanks have complied with secondary containment requirements.

Blythe is underlain by a network of natural gas pipelines. Three 36' gas lines cross the Colorado River south of Interstate 10 into the City. Two run from the Colorado River west along 14th Avenue through the City. The third turns south at D-10-13 canal and runs parallel to the canal to 16th Avenue where it turns west and runs along the north side of 16th Avenue. One half mile west of Intake Boulevard, the line crosses to the south side of 16th Avenue, leaving the City limits. Natural gas is distributed under high pressure, thereby increasing its explosive potential. Natural gas leaks and explosions can occur as a result of either strong earthquakes or accidental rupture of gas lines during excavation operations at construction sites.

Hazardous materials are present throughout the City, but are widely varied in terms of both quantity and type. Such uses as light industry, dry cleaners, automotive service shops, and hospitals routinely utilize solvents and other toxic substances, and also generate hazardous wastes which must be properly disposed of in compliance with strict Federal and State regulations. Households also utilize and store materials which could be considered hazardous, although usually not of the same type and quantity as commercial and industrial uses.

Homeowners need to be properly informed about the proper use, storage, and disposal of consumer goods containing hazardous materials.

AIRPORT SAFETY CONCERNS

Safety is a factor in the interaction between airports and nearby land uses in three distinct ways:

- Protecting people and property on the ground;
- Minimizing injury to aircraft occupants; and,
- Preventing creation of hazards to flight.

Protecting People and Property on the Ground - Protecting people and property on the ground from the potential consequences of near-airport aircraft accidents is a fundamental land use compatibility planning objective. To accomplish this, some limitations or restrictions on land use are essential. Land use characteristics are the most important factors to consider in developing safety compatibility criteria. The potential severity of an off-airport aircraft accident is highly dependent upon the nature of the land use at the accident site. For the purposes of evaluating the relative risks presented by different land uses, three characteristics are most important:

- **Intensity of Use** – The most direct means of limiting the potential consequences of an off-airport accident is to limit the intensity of use. Intensity of nonresidential use is measured in terms of the number of people which the development can attract per acre. This metric serves as a common denominator among various types of nonresidential uses. Even when safety compatibility criteria are formatted in terms of a detailed list of land uses, usage intensity is generally the basic factor upon which the acceptability or unacceptability of each use is judged. Except for certain especially risk-sensitive uses, as noted below, the degree of safety compatibility is usually considered the same for any two land uses having similar usage intensities.

- **Residential versus Nonresidential Function** – Residential densities are typically measured in dwelling units per acre rather than people per acre. This is principally a practical measure to simplify implementation. However, residential uses are also normally afforded a comparatively higher degree of protection than nonresidential ones. That is, for a given location, higher occupancy levels are permitted for nonresidential uses than for residential uses.

- **Sensitive Uses** – Certain other types of land uses are also commonly regarded as requiring special protection from hazards such as potential aircraft accidents. These uses fall into two categories:

    - *Low Effective Mobility Occupancies:* Society normally seeks a high degree of protection for certain groups of people, especially children and the infirm. A common element among these groups is inability-either because of inexperience of physical limitations-to move out of harm's way. Among the types of land uses which are regarded as particularly risk sensitive are elementary and secondary schools, day care centers, hospitals, and nursing homes.

    - *Hazardous Materials:* Uses or activities, such as aboveground storage of large quantities of flammable materials or other hazardous substances that could substantially contribute to the severity of an aircraft accident if they were to be involved in one.

Minimizing Injury to Aircraft Occupants - In accidents involving an aircraft that is out of control as it descends, the character of the land uses below are not likely to have a significant effect on the survivability

of the crash. However, some aircraft mishaps involve situations in which the aircraft is descending, often without power, but otherwise under control. If the aircraft has sufficient altitude, the pilot has some choice as to where to attempt an emergency landing. Under these circumstances, the pilot of a disabled aircraft will, if possible, direct the aircraft toward some form of open land when an off-airport emergency landing is inevitable.

This propensity forms the premise behind the primary form of land use control intended to minimize the severity of injury to aircraft occupants in the event of an off-airport emergency landing. Specifically, some amount of useful open land should be preserved in the vicinity of airports. This concept is largely limited to airports that serve small aircraft.

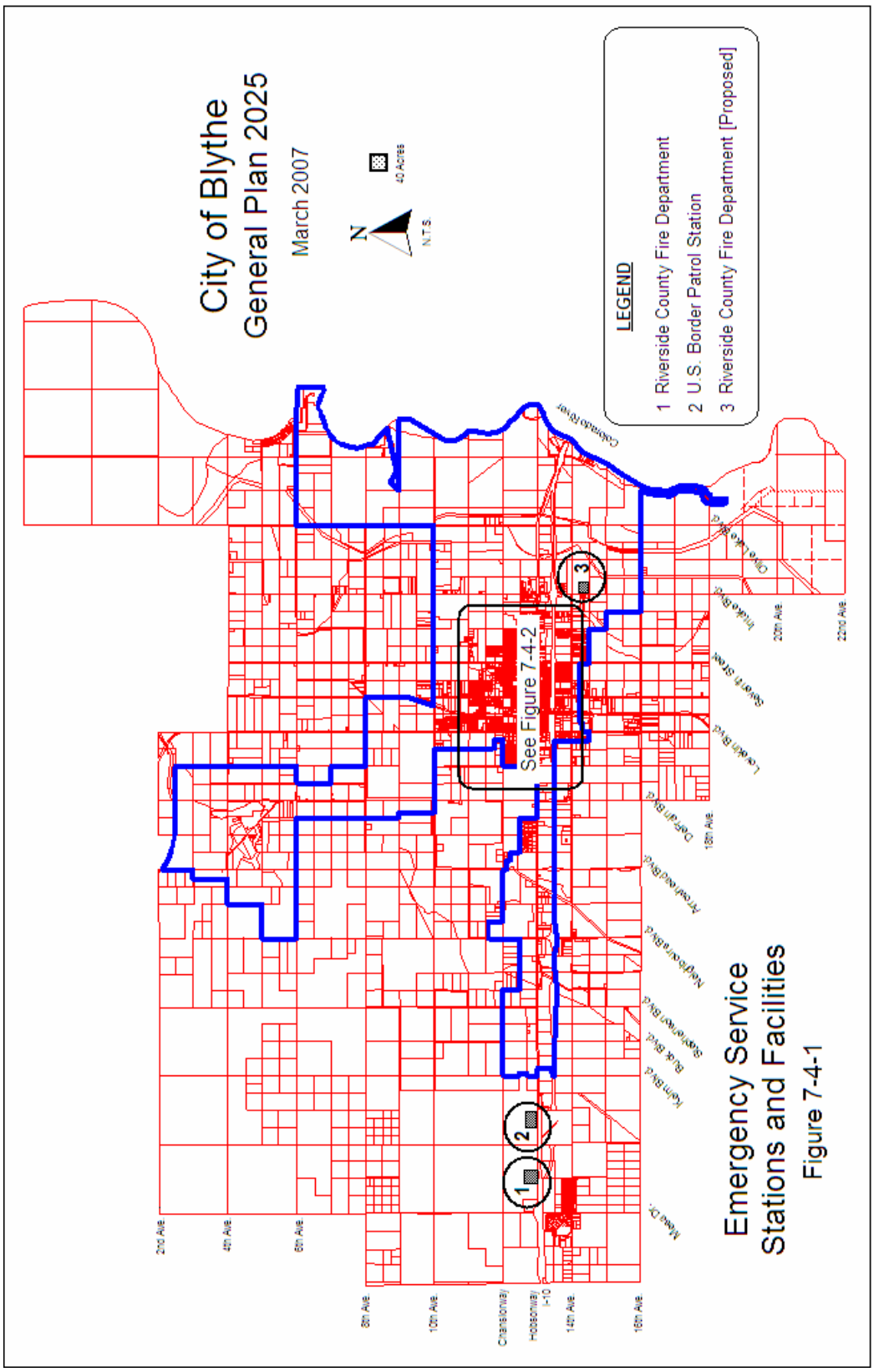
Preventing Creation of Hazards to Flight - Unlike the preceding land use characteristics which can only affect the consequences of an aircraft accident (for better or worse), hazards to flight can be the cause of an accident. Hazards to flight fall into three basic categories:

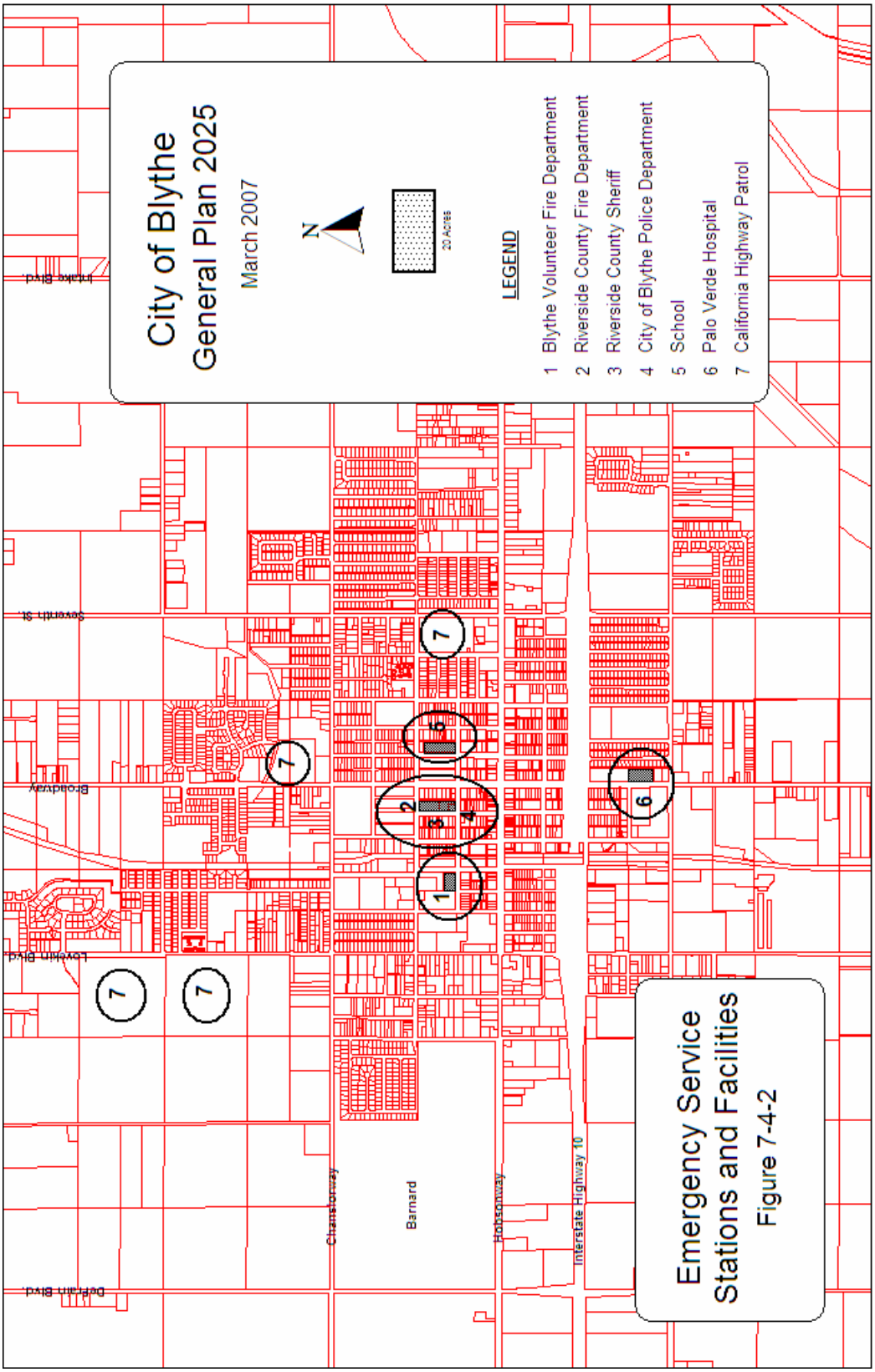
- Obstructions to the airspace required for flight to, from, and around an airport;
- Wildlife hazards; and,
- Other forms of interference with safe flight, navigation, or communication.

Information Sources:

California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook, January 2002, State of California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, October 2004, Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission


City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
March 2007
N
N.T.S.
40 Acres
LEGEND
1 Riverside County Fire Department
2 U.S. Border Patrol Station
3 Riverside County Fire Department [Proposed]
See Figure 7-4-2
Emergency Service
Stations and Facilities
Figure 7-4-1



Emergency Service Stations and Facilities
Figure 7-4-2

7.2 SAFETY ELEMENT OBJECTIVES

This section sets forth the City's goals and policies for promoting and ensuring public safety in Blythe. The goals and policies contained in this Element are grouped according to the topics identified in the Issues Identification section, and focus on reducing the risks associated with hazardous conditions in the City. The goals and policies also focus on developing emergency response strategies to be implemented in the event of a disaster or accident.

FLOOD HAZARDS

Blythe does not have a significant flooding problem, since the City's flood control facilities and storm drainage system generally have sufficient capacity to adequately protect developed areas from excessive storm runoff. The *City of Blythe Master Plan of Storm Water* identifies areas needing flood control improvements, either due to current conditions or in anticipation of future development. The following goal and policies provide the City with guidance in reducing present and future flood hazards.

GUIDING POLICIES: Flood Hazards

1. **Policy:** Coordinate with regional bodies to design storm drain improvements to accommodate storm water.

2. **Policy:** Locate and improve deficiencies in the storm drain system.

3. **Policy:** Require new developments to upgrade storm drains to handle the increased run-off generated from a developed site or mitigate the increase in storm water through the use of detention and retention areas.

4. **Policy:** Protect the public's safety from flooding hazards.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Flood Hazards

- **Implementation:** Identify and construct needed local and regional storm drain improvements to prevent local flooding problems in the City.

- **Implementation:** Require storm water mitigation measures as part of all new development approvals.

- **Implementation:** Implement to the maximum extent possible actions outlined in the *City of Blythe Master Plan of Storm water* to eliminate existing and potential flooding hazards in the City.

- **Implementation:** Adopt the Master Plan of Drainage for the City of Blythe as a sub-element of the Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services Element.

- **Implementation:** Land uses and flood control facilities shall be designed so that no structures of substantial value for human use or habitation exist in flood hazard areas.

- **Implementation:** Land uses and flood control facilities shall be designed so that structures for human use or habitation are capable of surviving anticipated flood levels without major structural damage.

- **Implementation:** Construction and preservation of flood retention/detention facilities shall be required as part of all development approval.

NON-SEISMIC GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Blythe has a variety of potential hazards which involve geological conditions which are not related to regional seismicity. These include erosion from wind and water including slumping, bank erosion, soil erosion, and soil shrinkage/swelling. The following objective and policies provide the City with guidance in reducing and/or avoiding non-seismic geological hazards.

GUIDING POLICIES: Non-Seismic Geological Hazards

5. **Policy:** Maintain and enforce appropriate building standards and codes to avoid and/or reduce all risks associated with geologic constraints.

6. **Policy:** Ensure through available engineering solutions that buildings designed for human habitation will not be adversely impacted by geological hazards.

7. **Policy:** Educate the public about potential geologic hazards in Blythe and maintain emergency response policies.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Non-Seismic Geological Hazards

- **Implementation:** Revise the City's grading ordinance, when appropriate, to reflect any modifications to the grading guidelines in the Uniform Building Code.

- **Implementation:** Require thorough geological investigations by a certified geologist prior to development of sites which have known or potential geologic constraints.

- **Implementation:** Require developers to be responsible for supplying a preventative maintenance program for all major manufactured slopes.

- **Implementation:** Develop standards and review procedures to address problems associated with surfacing groundwater within graded or fully constructed development sites.

- **Implementation:** Establish restricted use areas in any new subdivision which contains identified geologic constraints.

- **Implementation:** Continue to enforce City building standards.

- **Implementation:** Maintain readiness to respond to geologic accidents.

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

Fire protection and prevention services are considered essential for protecting the public's safety in Blythe. Fire protection services in the City are adequately provided by the City of Blythe Volunteer Fire Department, Riverside County Fire Department and California Department of Forestry through a mutual assistance agreement. Substantial improvements to City policy and requirements pertaining to fire safety have been made since the City's incorporation. The following goal and policies address public safety issues pertaining to fire prevention and protection.

GUIDING POLICIES: Fire Protection and Prevention

8. **Policy:** Cooperate with the City of Blythe Fire Department, Riverside County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry in periodically evaluating services and service criteria to ensure that the City continues to receive adequate fire protection and prevention services.

9. **Policy:** Coordinate with the City's Traffic Safety Committee in assessing the impact of incremental increases in development and traffic congestion on fire hazards and emergency response time.

10. **Policy:** Require new developments to install fire protection equipment/systems.

11. **Policy:** Require new developments to pay for increased fire protection as necessitated by a particular development.

12. **Policy:** Continue to support the Fire Department's coordination with surrounding departments to provide fire protection services.

13. **Policy:** Enforce policies to protect the public's safety from urban and wild-land fires.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Fire Protection and Prevention

- **Implementation:** Adopt a developer fee for fire facilities in outlying areas of the City such as Hidden Beaches and Mesa Bluffs.

- **Implementation:** Require all new commercial and multiple unit residential developments to install fire protection systems, and encourage the use of automatic sprinkler systems.

- **Implementation:** Limit development in areas not served by adequate water pressure until sufficient pressure can be provided.

- **Implementation:** Maintain development guidelines which mandate adequate access for fire fighting equipment and appropriate buffer areas for protection of property from wild-land fires.

- **Implementation:** Support efforts to maintain the mutual aid agreement with the Riverside County Fire Department and California Department of Forestry to continue receiving fire protection services in emergency situations that require outside assistance.

- **Implementation:** Maintain an ongoing fire inspection program to reduce fire hazards associated with commercial buildings.

- **Implementation:** Incorporate and periodically review fire prevention and protection procedures in the City's Emergency Response Plan.

- **Implementation:** Require fire prevention measures to be incorporated into all new construction. Fire prevention and suppression regulations to consider include roofing materials, vent placement in relation to winds, smoke alarm installation for resale of homes, regulation of use of combustible or inflammable materials.

- **Implementation:** Maintain guidelines for the maintenance of public and private open space areas to provide adequate access for fire control equipment and appropriate buffer areas for protection of structures from wild-land fires.

- **Implementation:** Support efforts to locate fire sub-stations at the Hidden Beaches and Mesa Bluff Developments.

- **Implementation:** Continue to provide for Fire Marshal review of development plans as part of the review process for all new developments.

- **Implementation:** The Fire Marshal shall be included on the City's Traffic Safety Committee.

CRIME PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

As with fire prevention and protection, law enforcement is also an essential service for protecting the public's safety in Blythe. Law enforcement services provided by the City of Blythe Police Department policies serve to enhance public safety in the City through maintenance of adequate law enforcement services.

GUIDING POLICIES: Crime Protection and Prevention

14. **Policy:** Cooperate with the City of Blythe Police Department in periodically evaluating services and service criteria to ensure that the City continues to receive adequate law enforcement services.

15. **Policy:** Continue to cooperate with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and other nearby law enforcement agencies to provide back-up police assistance in emergency situations.

16. **Policy:** Promote public education programs involving safety issues.

17. **Policy:** Ensure through the design review process that developments incorporate safety concerns into the site, circulation, building design and landscaping plans.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Crime Protection and Prevention

- **Implementation:** Promote the use of defensible space concepts (site and building lighting, visual observation of open spaces, secured areas, etc.) in all project designs.

- **Implementation:** Provide for law enforcement review of development plans as part of the review process for all new development projects.

- **Implementation:** Encourage citizen participation in public safety programs such as Neighborhood Watch, and facilitate educational programs dealing with personal safety awareness.

- **Implementation:** Require private residential and commercial security patrol services to coordinate crime prevention and law enforcement activities with the City of Blythe Police Department.

- **Implementation:** Maintain preparedness for civil disorders through preparation of contingency plans and review of permits for parades, demonstrations, and special events.

- **Implementation:** Coordinate evacuation planning among the City of Blythe Police Department, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, the City of Blythe Disaster Response Team, and law enforcement agencies in other local jurisdictions.

- **Implementation:** Support, as appropriate, the maintenance of Police and Sheriff's Department personnel training in crime prevention techniques.

- **Implementation:** Maintain an ongoing crime prevention program offering a range of services.

- **Implementation:** Maintain crime prevention guidelines for building construction.

CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are present in various forms and concentrations throughout the City of Blythe. The major concerns regarding these materials include the transport of hazardous substances along the Interstate 10 Freeway; use and storage of hazardous materials within industrial, commercial, and residential areas; hazardous waste disposal; leaking underground storage tanks; and the network of pressurized natural gas pipelines underlying the City. The following goal and supporting policies focus on the need for hazardous materials to be handled properly, thereby protecting the public's safety and the environment. These goals are consistent with, and supportive of, the detailed provisions of the Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

GUIDING POLICIES: Control of Hazardous Materials

18. Policy: Identify facilities utilizing, storing, or transporting hazardous materials in Blythe.

19. Policy: Ensure that new facilities involved with handling hazardous materials are located at a safe distance from other land uses that may be adversely affected by this activity.

20. Policy: Apply, as appropriate, provisions of the *Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan* to decisions involving hazardous materials in Blythe.

21. Policy: Coordinate enforcement of the Hazardous Materials Disclosure Law with the City of Blythe Fire Department.

22. Policy: Encourage citizens and crime watch organizations to report unlawful dumping of hazardous materials.

23. Policy: Minimize the impact of transportation related accidents involving hazardous materials.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Control of Hazardous Materials

- **Implementation:** Initiate and maintain, to the extent feasible, a permit process for nonresidential uses which store, use, or transport hazardous materials within the City.

- **Implementation:** Support the enforcement of State and Federal safety standards for the transportation of hazardous materials.

- **Implementation:** Restrict vehicles which carry hazardous materials from traveling on roadways within the City to the extent possible.

- **Implementation:** To the extent possible, the City will monitor dry cleaners, film processors, auto service establishments, and other businesses which generate hazardous waste through code enforcement to promote compliance with disposal procedures mandated by State and Federal laws.

- **Implementation:** Support development of a household hazardous waste disposal program with Riverside County which enables residents to bring household toxics to one or more centralized collection facility for proper disposal.

- **Implementation:** Support the City's prosecution of any person or organization found responsible for unlawfully dumping hazardous materials within the City.

- **Implementation:** Recognize the necessity of transporting hazardous materials along key transportation routes.

- **Implementation:** Limit stops and travel by hazardous materials transport vehicles in Blythe to the maximum extent possible within Federal guidelines.

AIRPORT/ AIRPORT INFLUENCE AREA HAZARDS REDUCTION

Blythe Airport Master Plan: In an effort to meet the community's aviation needs and serve existing and future businesses that value proximity to the airport and capitalize on the growing use of aircraft for shipping and other uses, the Blythe City Council adopted the *Final Blythe Airport Master Plan* in September, 2000. The Master Plan provides short-, mid- and long-range airport use and improvement policies for both aeronautical and non-aeronautical use of airport lands. The Blythe Airport Master Plan was prepared by the City of Blythe in cooperation with Riverside County and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan: The Blythe component of the *Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) was adopted by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) in October, 2004. The ALUCP serves as a guide for future development within the airport environs and is intended to facilitate orderly development and avoid land use conflicts. The primary function of the ALUC is to "...protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports..." Similarly, it is the goal of the City of Blythe to promote development on and around the Blythe Municipal Airport while maintaining safety both on the ground and in the air.

The Airport Influence Area is delineated on the General Plan Land Use Map, **Figure 3-2** and the Compatibility Map, showing each of the various land use compatibility zones, is provided as **Figure 7-5**.

Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77: Part 77 is the part of Federal Aviation Regulations which deals with objects affecting navigable airspace in the vicinity of airports. Objects which exceed the Part 77

height limits constitute airspace obstructions. The Part 77 Airspace Plan for the Blythe Municipal Airport is provided as **Figure 7-6**.

GUIDING POLICIES: Airport / Airport Influence Area Hazards Reduction

24. Policy: Minimize the risks associated with an off-airport accident or emergency landing.

25. Policy: Ensure that hazardous obstructions to the navigable airspace do not occur.

26. Policy: Minimize and/or avoid land uses which can attract wildlife into the flight path.

27. Policy: Minimize the risks associated with visual hazards including distracting lights, glare and sources of smoke.

28. Policy: Minimize the risk of electronic hazards which interfere with aircraft instruments or radio communications.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES: Airport / Airport Influence Area Hazards Reduction

- **Implementation:** Development within the airport influence area shall comply with the safety and airspace protection policies contained in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

- **Implementation:** Development within the airport influence area shall comply with the height limits established in accordance with Part 77 of the Federal Aviation Regulations.

Information Sources:

California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook, January 2002, State of California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, October 2004, Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission

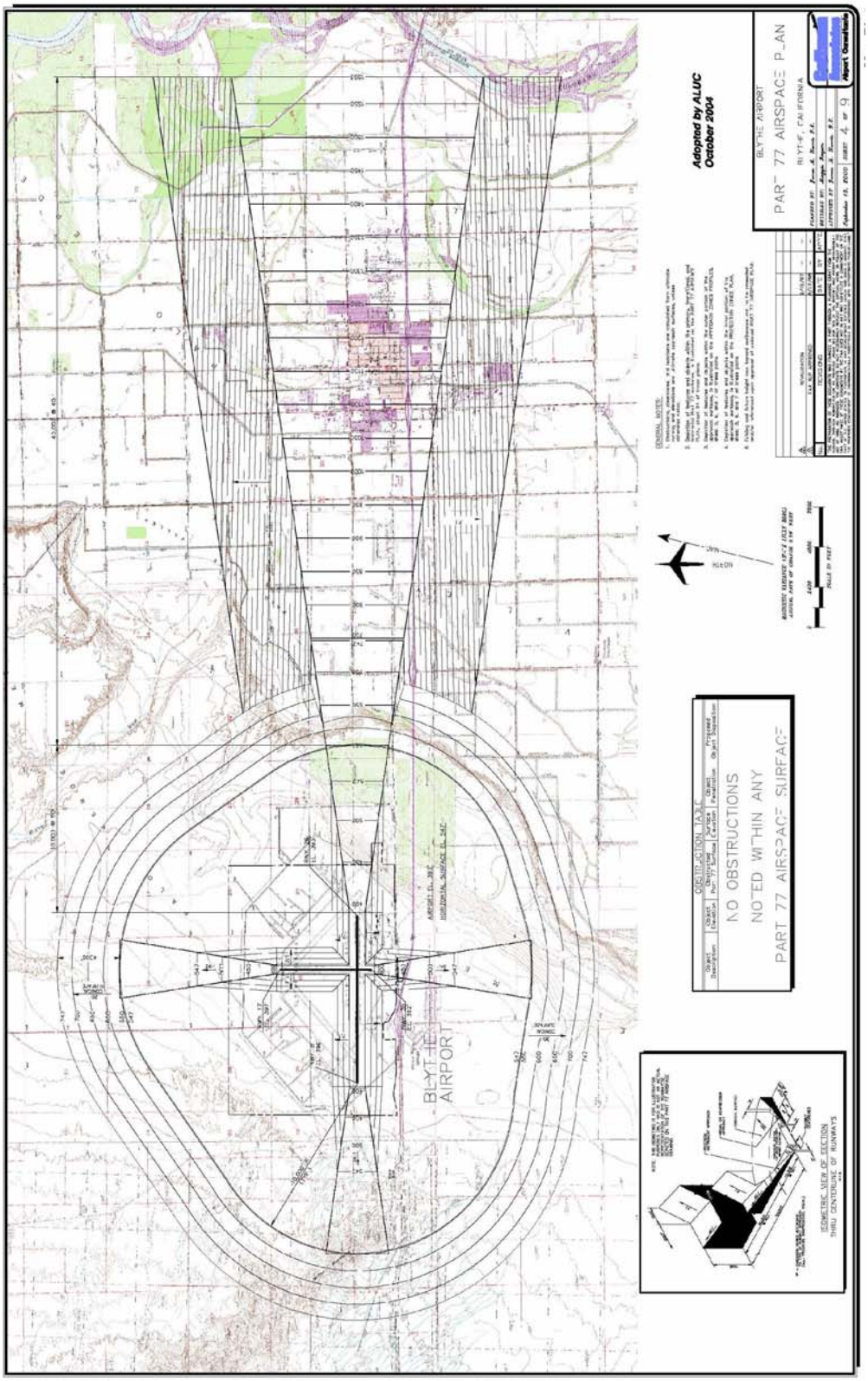


Figure 7.5
Part 77 Airspace Plan

7.3 THE SAFETY PLAN

This section of the Safety Element includes an assessment and discussion of emergency preparedness planning needed both to provide everyday safety and emergency services, and to respond to major disasters. This section serves as a supplement to the City's Multi-Hazard Function plan which identifies appropriate actions to be taken by City staff in response to an emergency. In addition, the Plan identifies standards needed to ensure that an adequate level of emergency service is provided in the future.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY AND COORDINATION

A broad variety of public safety services is provided by several public agencies. Most significant are fire fighting and law enforcement provided by the City Police and Fire Departments. City departments provide day-to-day services related to public safety. The Public Works Department of the City is responsible for the maintenance of streets, flood control, and some aspects of public safety.

The City Building Department is responsible for the enforcement of construction codes for safety. Other agencies involved in public safety services which have jurisdiction or public safety services within the City include the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, the State/National Guard, and the County Health Department and its branches. Service from these outside agencies should continue to be available, somewhat independent of the City's planned development and control. Therefore, the following sections concentrate primarily on services provided by the City Fire and Police Departments.

Major accidents or disasters may force the evacuation of thousands of people. Thousands of others may require emergency shelter and medical treatment. The Emergency Response and Action section of this Element identifies emergency evacuation procedures and emergency shelters. An emergency preparedness strategy will assist existing efforts by public officials in improving public readiness. The emergency operations procedures described in the City's Multi-Hazard Function Plan outline responsibilities of the City and contract County personnel in the event of disaster. As indicated, this information serves as a basis for future emergency preparedness planning in the City.

Emergency planning and preparedness, as considered in this Element, consist of the following:

- Potential public safety hazard areas and assessment;
- Mitigation of non-seismic geologic hazards;
- Emergency response and action; and,
- Hazardous Materials Plan.

Potential natural and man-made hazards have been identified in the issues identification section and the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The PEIR contains supporting data and background material needed to assess the level of risk in the City. Hazards mitigation is accomplished by a number of goals and policies contained in the Element which reduce the likelihood of environmental upset or the damaging effects that might result from a disaster or accident.

POTENTIAL HAZARD AREAS

Figures 7-1, 7-2 and 7-3 indicate the locations of the potential hazard areas in the City that could pose a public safety threat. Hazardous areas include those areas that may be threatened by flooding, fire, unstable earth conditions, or explosion from breaks in a major gasoline or natural gas line.

The City's Program Environmental Impact Report describes the major environmental hazards and their associated risks. Unstable geologic and soils conditions and areas that contain steep slopes over 25 percent grade present developmental constraints that could pose a risk to building safety. Wild-land fire-prone areas occur in the undeveloped areas outside of the City adjacent to the Colorado River; however, a major fire could threaten nearby homes. Because the City is located along the Interstate 10 Freeway, potential hazards are also associated with hazardous materials that may be transported along this route. Flooding hazards in addition may pose a threat to those areas located within a 100-year floodplain.

NON-SEISMIC GEOLOGIC HAZARDS MITIGATION

There are few geologic and geotechnical problem areas in the City. (See **Figure 7-2**). Certain planning practices will be considered when assessing development proposals within areas where hazardous risks may be associated. The City's zoning and building codes and the policies contained within this Element serve to reduce or avoid risks associated with the placement of development within hazardous areas. The areas designated for residential development that are susceptible to bank or slope erosion will require that detailed geotechnical/soils analyses be performed to: 1) determine areas that should be avoided; or, 2) identify site preparation requirements necessary to reduce site instability.

Potential hazards are also mitigated through the Fire Code and Land Use Element which establishes requirements for minimum roadway widths and minimum building clearances. Most of the City has been developed under modern safety codes for building construction and essentially no deficiencies associated with fire equipment access exist.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND ACTION

The City is able to adequately provide the needed fire and police facilities and services. Information concerning fire service and police protection is also included in the City's Public Facilities Element.

The City's Emergency Operations Plan designates the proper procedures that are to be followed in the case of a major emergency. Emergency procedures include knowledge of the facilities within the City that are available for emergency assistance. **Figure 7-4-1 and 7-4-2** shows emergency facilities within the City. These include, the Palo Verde Hospital, emergency shelters and the Blythe Emergency Operations Center.

Medical Facilities. Blythe has one hospital, with a 53 bed capacity and a 24-hour-a-day staffed emergency room.

Shelters. The American Red Cross, as the official director of emergency shelters, has designated the public schools within Blythe as emergency shelters. These schools are only available as shelters for persons other

than students when activated by the Red Cross in case of a major flood, earthquake or other significant disaster and would provide food and shelter for those persons displaced from their homes. Supplies to accommodate large numbers of disaster victims will be provided through the Red Cross.

The emergency shelters also offer emergency first aid, disseminate information, and serve as a community information center where individuals can leave messages for friends and relatives.

The **Blythe Emergency Operations Center** (EOC) was established in 1990. The purpose of the EOC is "creating a bond between members of the community in the event of a disaster, and to engage in receiving and giving education and service to members and the community." The EOC is a voluntary network of citizens from Blythe, unincorporated areas of Eastern Riverside County and Ehrenberg, Arizona. They provide training in the area of disaster response and in the event of a disaster activate efforts to coordinate the resources of the police, fire, and sheriff departments and City and County officials to serve as needed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS PLAN

Emergency response procedures in the case of a disaster involving hazardous materials are outlined in the City's Emergency Operations Plan and the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The City will cooperate and assist in emergency operations as required. Policies contained in this element serve to protect the City's inhabitants from hazardous waste disasters through implementation of the City's Emergency Operations Plan and the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

Chapter 8

Noise Element

8 NOISE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE NOISE ELEMENT

The Noise Element of the General Plan is a planning document which is intended to provide a policy framework within which potential noise impacts may be addressed in the project review and long range planning process. The Noise Element is a pro-active document which is directed at minimizing future noise conflicts, whereas a noise ordinance is a reactive document which is directed at resolving existing noise conflicts. The adopted policies of the Noise Element should generally be consistent with the noise level standards of the local noise control ordinance (if one is adopted) to achieve consistency in the implementation of noise control programs, and to provide local industry with design criteria for future development or expansion.

According to the Government Code requirements for Noise Elements and to the California Office of Noise Control (ONC) Guidelines, noise exposure information should be developed for the following major noise sources:

- Highways and freeways;
- Primary arterials and major local streets;
- Railroad operations;
- Aircraft and airport operations;
- Local industrial facilities; and,
- Other stationary sources.

Noise-sensitive areas to be considered during the development of noise exposure information should include areas containing the following noise-sensitive land uses:

- Residential development;
- Schools;
- Hospitals, rest homes and long-term medical or mental care facilities;
- Churches; and,
- Other uses deemed noise sensitive by the local jurisdiction.

Noise is "unwanted sound" and is known to have several adverse effects on people. For planning purposes, an A-weighted scale is used to describe environmental noise at any one particular time; however, community noise levels vary continuously. In order to account for the time-varying characteristics of noise, all of the individual noise readings must be averaged over a 24-hour period to give an equivalent level. This equivalent noise level, expressed as CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level) or L_{dn} (Day/Night Average Level) values represented on noise contour maps include an addition of 5 dBA for evening noise levels and 5 dBA for nighttime levels within the 24-hour averages calculated.

The known effects of noise on people include hearing loss (not generally a factor with community noise), communication interference, sleep interference, physiological responses and annoyance. Detailed information on these effects and on noise terminology, measurement scale, and definitions of noise contours is in Appendix C of this document.

8.1 NOISE COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS

Community Noise: From the known effects of noise, criteria have been established to help protect the public health and safety and prevent disruption of certain human activities. Noise compatibility standards, published by the California Office of Planning and Research, are shown in **Table 8.2-1**. They match each land use type with an appropriate range of noise levels. These standards should be used in conjunction with noise exposure contours shown on the noise maps **(Figure 8-1 and 8-2)** to determine where noise levels exceed the "normally acceptable" range and an acoustic report and noise mitigation will be required for development projects.

Airport Noise: Noise is one of the most basic airport land use compatibility concerns. The clear objective of airport noise compatibility criteria is to minimize the number of people exposed to frequent and/or high levels of airport noise capable of disrupting noise-sensitive activities. The basis strategy for achieving noise compatibility in the vicinity of an airport is to limit development of land uses which are particularly sensitive to noise. The most acceptable land uses are ones which either involve few people (especially people engaged in noise-sensitive activities) or generate significant noise levels themselves (such as other transportation facilities and some industrial uses). Airport Noise Compatibility Criteria is shown in **Table 8.2-2.** Existing, future and ultimate airport noise impact contours are shown in **Figures 8-3**, **8-4** and **8-5**, respectively.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

The Noise Element provides an understanding of existing and future noise conditions in the Planning Area, establishes a basis for evaluating potential noise level impacts on future development, and includes policy statements intended to guide public and private planning to attain and maintain acceptable noise levels. Implementation of the Noise Element is designed to promote a comprehensive and long range program of achieving acceptable noise levels throughout the Planning Area, and to increase the community's awareness of the need to control and reduce levels in areas of excessive noise.

The Noise Element is designed to ensure compliance with the Government Code. This Element has been prepared in quantitative terms, including maps showing noise contours of present and future noise levels.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Land Use Element. Future noise contours were used as a guide for establishing a pattern of planned land uses as depicted on the General Plan Land Use Diagram that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

Circulation Element. Traffic volumes are one of the major Planning Area noise sources, and noise contours are based on existing and projected traffic volumes on the planned street system.

Open Space Element. Excessive noise can adversely affect enjoyment of recreational pursuits in designated open space, so noise exposure levels have been considered in the planning for such open space uses. Open space also can be used to buffer sensitive land uses from noise sources through the use of setbacks and landscaping.

GUIDING POLICIES: Noise

1. **Policy:** Protect the citizens of the City of Blythe from the harmful effects of exposure to excessive noise.

2. **Policy:** Protect the economic base of the City of Blythe by preventing the encroachment of incompatible land uses near known noise producing industries, airports, freeways and other sources.

POLICIES AND STANDARDS: Specific

S-1. Policy: Areas shall be recognized as noise impacted if exposed to existing or projected future noise levels at the property line which exceed 65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL).

S-2. Policy: Noise sensitive land uses should be discouraged in noise impacted areas unless effective mitigation measures are incorporated into the specific design of such projects to reduce exterior noise levels to 65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less and 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less within interior living spaces. Areas shall be designated as noise-impacted if exposed to existing or projected future noise levels at the exterior of buildings which exceed 60dB L_{dn} (or CNEL).

S-3. Policy: New industrial, commercial or other noise generating land uses (including roadways, railroads, and airports) should be discouraged if resulting noise levels will exceed 65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) at the boundary areas of planned or zoned noise sensitive land uses.

S-4. Policy: The City shall enforce applicable State Noise Insulation Standards (California Administrative Code, Title 24) and Uniform Building Code (UBC) noise requirements.

S-5. Policy: New equipment and vehicles purchased by the City should comply with noise level performance standards consistent with the best available noise reduction technology.

S-6. Policy: The preferred method of noise control used is thoughtful site design. Secondarily, noise control should be achieved through the use of artificial noise barriers. Site and building design guidelines may include:

- Noise sensitive land uses should not front onto the primary noise source. Where this is not possible, the narrow portion of the building should face the primary noise source, and the interior layout should locate the most sensitive areas away from the noise source by placing garages, storage facilities, carports or other such areas nearest the noise source.

- Noise sensitive areas include the following land uses:

    - Residential developments;
    - Schools
    - Hospitals, rest homes, long-term medical care facilities;
    - Churches; and,
    - Other uses deemed noise sensitive by the local jurisdiction.

- Site design should permit noise to pass around or through a development. This can be achieved by placing the narrow or convex portion of the structure toward the primary noise source.

- Commercial and industrial structures should be designed so that any noise generated from the interior of the building is focused away from noise sensitive land uses.

- Two-story residential construction should be avoided, where possible, immediately adjacent to arterials or collectors unless an adequate combination of noise attenuation procedures is used.

- When possible, residential cul-de-sacs should be perpendicular to adjacent arterials or collectors.

- Loading and unloading activities for commercial uses should be conducted in an enclosed loading dock, preferably with a positive seal between the loading dock and trucks.

S-7. Policy: The City shall review all relevant development plans, programs and proposals to ensure their conformance with the policy framework outlined in this Noise Element.

S-8. Policy: Prior to the approval of a proposed development in a noise impacted area, or the development of an industrial, commercial or other noise generating land use in or near an area containing existing or planned noise sensitive land uses, an acoustical analysis may be required if all of the following findings are made:

- The existing or projected future noise exposure at the exterior of buildings which will contain noise sensitive uses or within proposed outdoor activity areas (patios, decks, backyards, pool areas, recreation areas, etc.) exceeds 65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL).

- Interior residential noise levels resulting from off-site noise are estimated to exceed 45 dBA.

- Estimated or projected noise levels cannot be reduced to the noise exposure limitations specified in this Noise Element by the application of Standard Noise Reduction Methods. When noise studies are necessary they should:

    - Be the responsibility of the applicant.
    - Be prepared by an individual or firm with demonstrable experience in the fields of environmental noise assessment and architectural acoustics.
    - Include representative noise level measurements with sufficient sampling periods and locations to adequately describe local conditions.
    - Include estimated noise levels in terms of dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) for existing and projected future (10-30 year hence) conditions, with a comparison made to the adopted policies of the Noise Element.
    - Include recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures to achieve compliance with the adopted policies and standards of the Noise Element.
    - Include estimates of noise exposure after the prescribed mitigation measures have been implemented. If compliance with the adopted standards and policies of the Noise Element will not be achieved, a rationale for acceptance of the project must be provided.
    - The acoustical analysis should be prepared as early in the project review or permitting process as possible, so that noise mitigation measures may be an integral part of the project design rather than an afterthought.

S-9. Policy: Development on the Blythe Municipal Airport shall conform with the *Blythe Airport Master Plan* to minimize the impact of airport operation on noise sensitive land uses.

S-10. Policy: Proposed land uses within the Airport Influence Area shall be reviewed for consistency with the Noise Compatibility Criteria set forth in Table 8.2-2, with Figure 8-5 *Ultimate Noise Impacts* used as a review guide.

S-11. Policy: Land uses that are compatible with higher noise levels will be located adjacent to major roads and other significant noise sources.

Figure 8-1
Existing Generalized Noise Contours

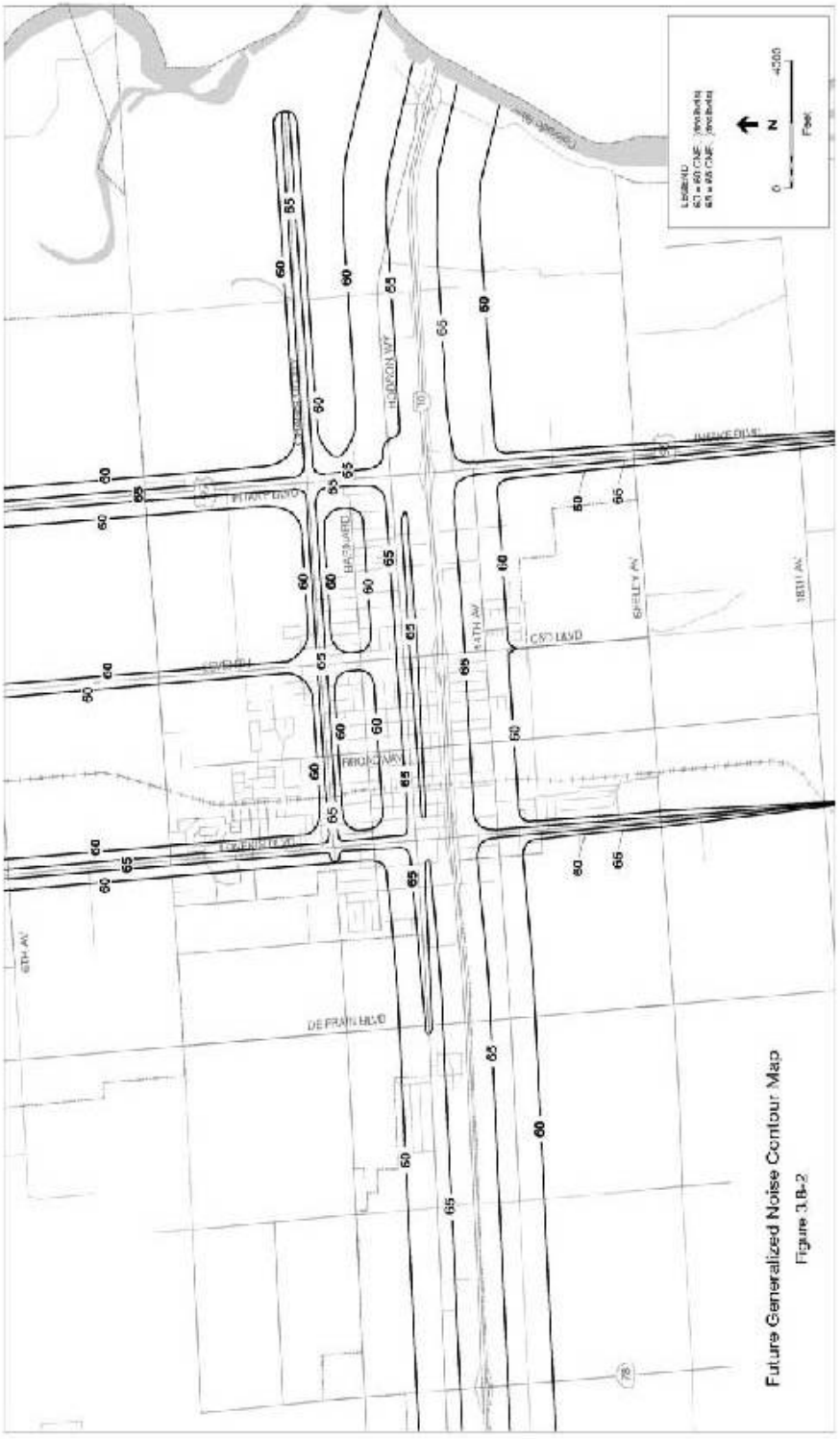


Figure 8-2
Future Generalized Noise Contours

8.2 LAND USE COMPATIBILITY GUIDELINES

Table 8.2-1 is provided as a reference concerning the sensitivity of different land uses to their noise environment. It is intended to illustrate the range of noise levels which will allow the full range of activities normally associated with a given land use. For example, exterior noise levels in the range of 50-65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or below are generally considered acceptable for residential land uses, since these levels will usually allow normal outdoor and indoor activities such as sleep and communication to occur without interruption. Industrial facilities, however, can be relatively insensitive to noise and may generally be located in a noise environment of up to 75 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) without significant adverse effects. Specific noise compatibility criteria in terms of L_{dn} or CNEL for residential and other noise sensitive land uses in the City of Blythe are defined in the policy statements section below. Specific noise level criteria are based upon the recommendations of the State of California, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the results of field observations conducted during the preparation of this Element.

GUIDEING POLICIES: Land Use Compatibility

The following policy statements reflect the commitment of the City of Blythe to the goals outlined above:

1. **Policy:** Areas within the City of Blythe shall be designated as noise-impacted if exposed to existing or projected future noise levels at the exterior of buildings which exceed 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL). Maps which indicate areas exposed to existing or projected future noise levels exceeding 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) for the major noise sources identified in **Figures 8-1** and **8-2** are included in Appendix C of this document.

2. **Policy:** New development of residential or other noise-sensitive land uses will not be permitted in noise-impacted areas unless effective mitigation measures are incorporated into the specific design of such projects to reduce noise levels to 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less within outdoor activity areas and 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less within interior living spaces. Where it is not possible to reduce exterior noise levels within outdoor activity areas to 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less after the practical application of the best available noise reduction technology, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) will be allowed. Under no circumstances will an interior noise level exceeding 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) be allowed with the windows and doors closed. It should be noted that in instances where the windows and doors must remain closed to achieve the required acoustical isolation, mechanical ventilation or air conditioning must be provided.

3. **Policy:** New development of industrial, commercial or other noise-generating land uses (including roadways, railroads and airports) will not be permitted if resulting noise levels will exceed 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) at the boundary of areas containing or planned and zoned for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses.

4. **Policy:** Noise level criteria applied to land uses other than residential or other noise-sensitive uses shall be consistent with the recommendations of the California Office of Noise Control.

5. **Policy:** The City of Blythe shall enforce the State Noise Insulation Standards (California Administrative Code, Title 24) and Chapter 35 of the Uniform Building Code (UBC). Title

24 requires that interior noise levels not exceed 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) with the windows and doors closed within new developments of multi-family dwellings, condominiums, hotels or motels. UBC Chapter 35 requires that common wall and floor/ceiling assemblies within multi-family dwellings comply with minimum standards concerning the transmission of airborne sound and structure-borne impact noise. Title 24 requires that conformance with the above-described standards be documented by the submission of an acoustical analysis whenever new multi-family dwellings, condominiums, hotels or motels are proposed for areas within the 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) contour of a major noise source as determined by the local jurisdiction.

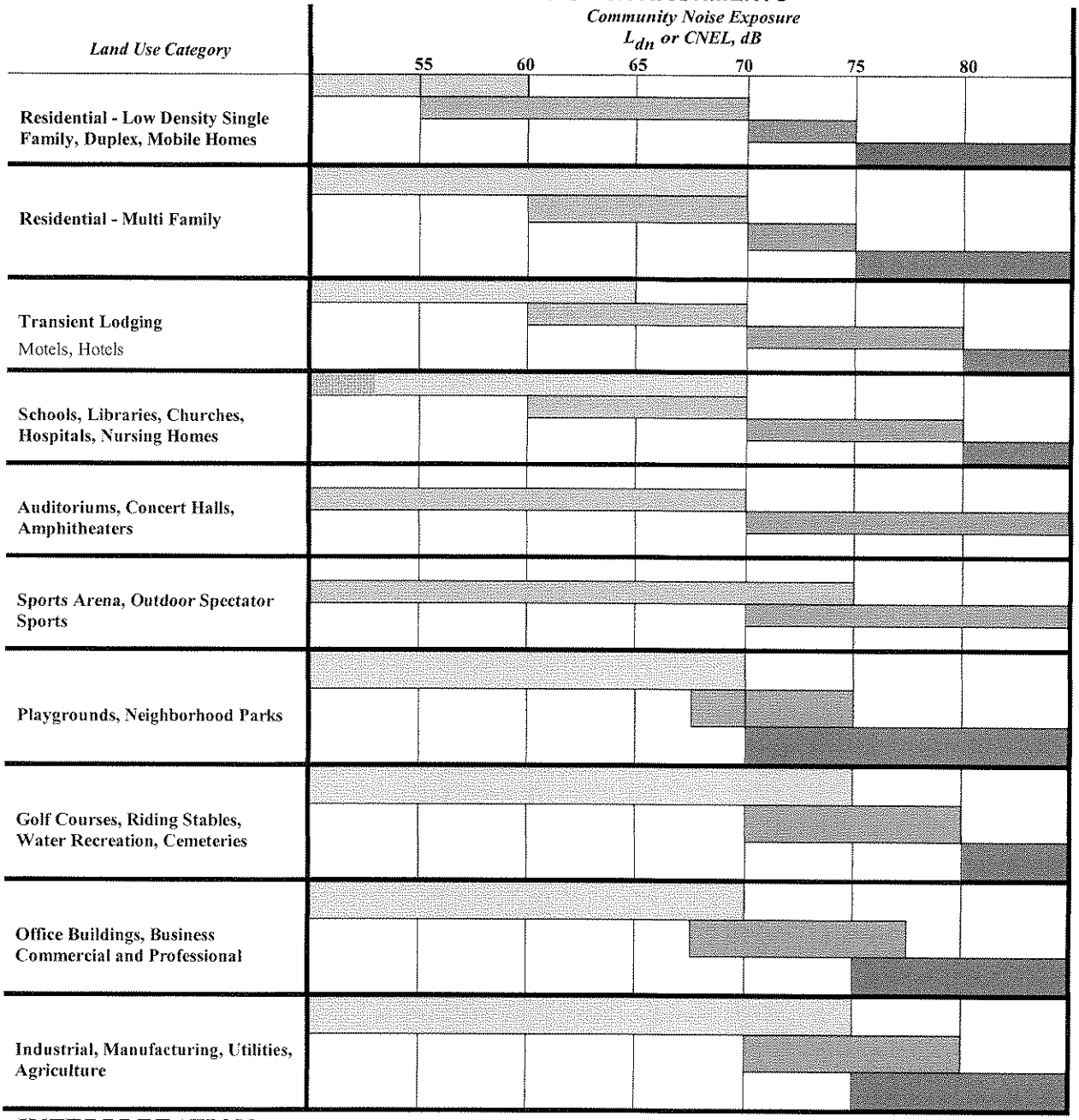
6. **Policy:** New equipment and vehicles purchased by the City of Blythe shall comply with noise level performance standards consistent with the best available noise reduction technology.

7. **Policy:** In conformance with the directives of State planning law, the City of Blythe shall ensure that the Noise Element is consistent with and does not conflict with other elements of the City's General Plan.

8. **Policy:** As required by and pursuant to Section 11010 of the Business and Professions Code and Sections 1102.6, 1103.4 and 1353 of the Civil Code, airport proximity should be disclosed in conjunction with certain real estate transactions within the Airport Influence Area.

TABLE 8.2-1

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NOISE ENVIRONMENTS



INTERPRETATION

Normally Acceptable

Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Conditionally Acceptable

New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

Normally Unacceptable

New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Clearly Unacceptable

New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: Office of Planning and Research, State of California General Plan Guidelines, appendix A: Guidelines for the Preparation and Content of the Noise Element of the General Plan, 1990.

TABLE 8.2-2
AIRPORT INFLUENCE AREA - SUPPORTING COMPATIBILITY CRITERIA - NOISE

Land Use Category	CNEL (dB)				
	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70	70-75
Residential*					
single-family, nursing homes, mobile homes	+ +	O	-	- -	- -
multi-family, apartments, condominiums	+ +	+	O	- -	- -
Public					
schools, libraries, hospitals	+	O	-	- -	- -
churches, auditoriums, concert halls	+	O	O	-	- -
transportation, parking, cemeteries	+ +	+	+ +	O	O
Commercial and Industrial					
offices, retail trade	+ +	+	O	O	-
service commercial, wholesale trade, warehousing, light industrial	+ +	+ +	+	O	O
general manufacturing, utilities, extractive industry	+ +	+ +	+ +	+	+
Agricultural and Recreational					
cropland	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+
livestock breeding	+ +	+	O	O	-
parks, playgrounds, zoos	+ +	+	+	O	-
golf courses, riding stables, water recreation	+ +	+ +	+	O	O
outdoor spectator sports	+ +	+	+	O	-
amphitheaters	+	O	-	- -	- -

Land Use Acceptability		Interpretation/Comments
+ +	*Clearly Acceptable*	The activities associated with the specified land use can be carried out with essentially no interference from the noise exposure.
+	*Normally Acceptable*	Noise is a factor to be considered in that slight interference with outdoor activities may occur. Conventional construction methods will eliminate most noise intrusions upon indoor activities.
O	*Marginally Acceptable*	The indicated noise exposure will cause moderate interference with outdoor activities and with indoor activities when windows are open. The land use is acceptable on the conditions that outdoor activities are minimal and construction features which provide sufficient noise attenuation are used (e.g., installation of air conditioning so that windows can be kept closed). Under other circumstances, the land use should be discouraged.
-	*Normally Unacceptable*	Noise will create substantial interference with both outdoor and indoor activities. Noise intrusion upon indoor activities can be mitigated by requiring special noise insulation construction. Land uses which have conventionally constructed structures and/or involve outdoor activities which would be disrupted by noise should generally be avoided.
- -	*Clearly Unacceptable*	Unacceptable noise intrusion upon land use activities will occur. Adequate structural noise insulation is not practical under most circumstances. The indicated land use should be avoided unless strong overriding factors prevail and it should be prohibited if outdoor activities are involved.

* Subtract 5 dB for low-activity outlying airports (Chiriaco Summit and Desert Center)
Source: Table 2B - *Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (Adopted October 2004)

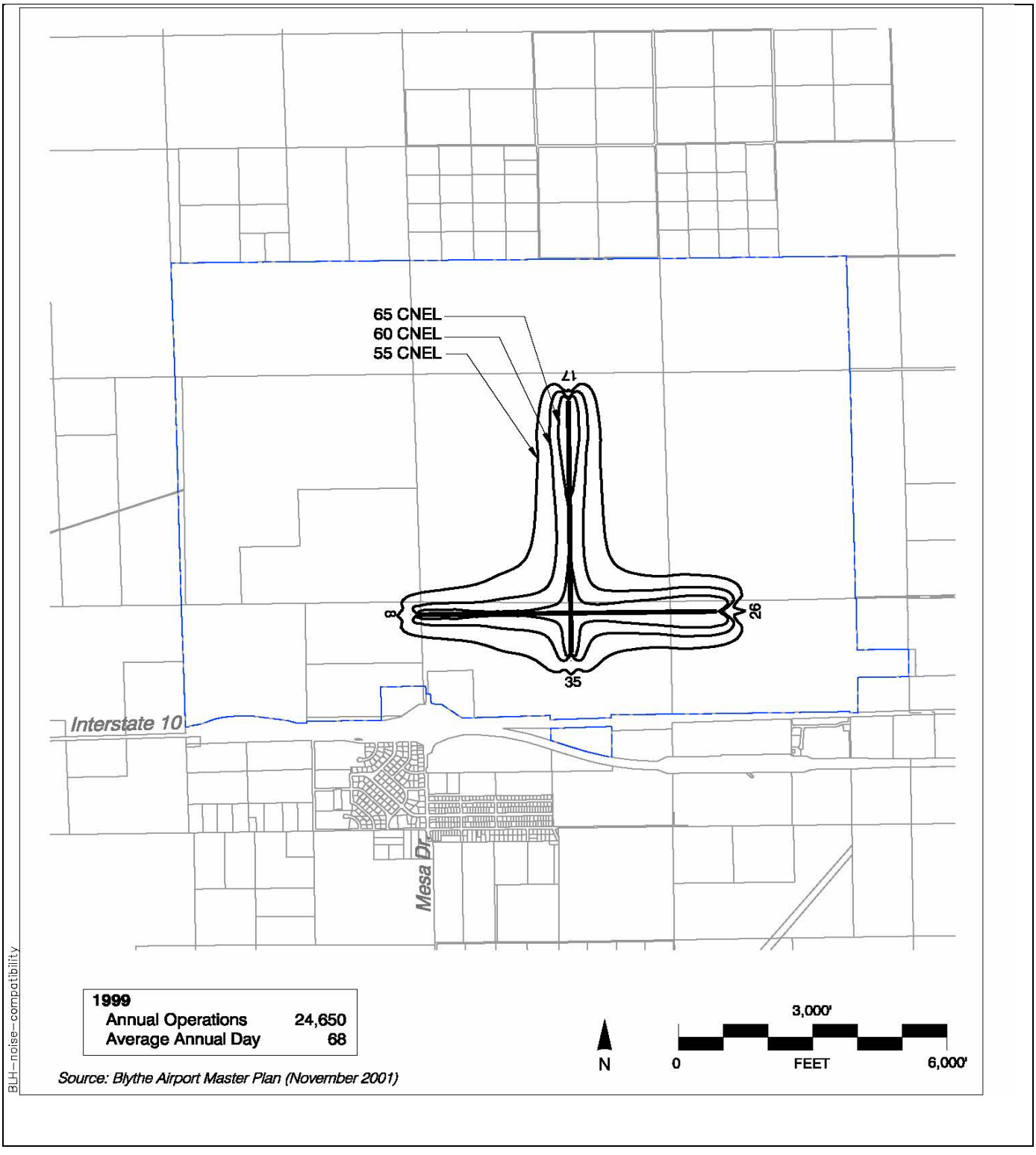


Figure 8-3
Existing Noise Impacts

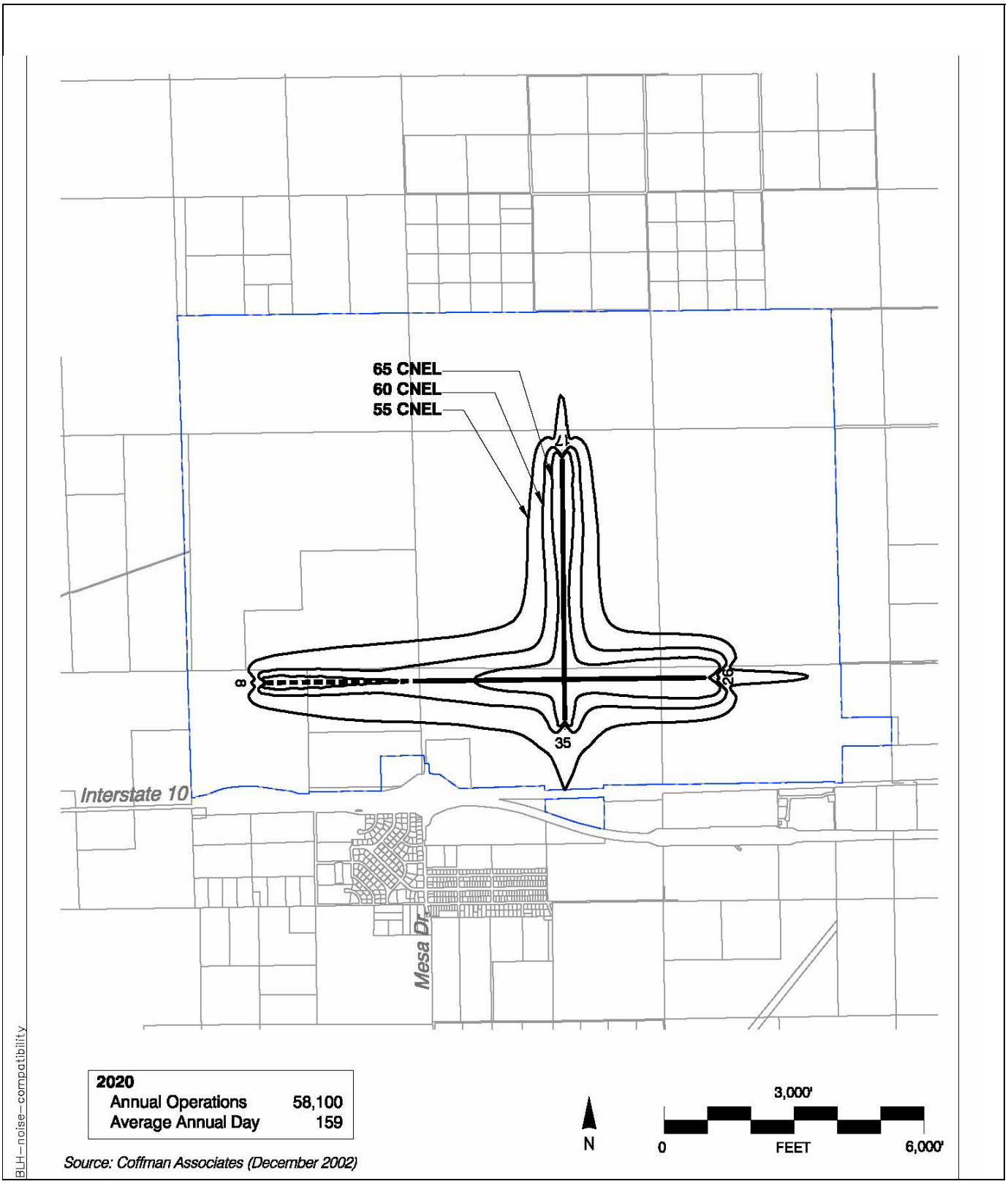


Figure 8-4
Future Noise Impacts

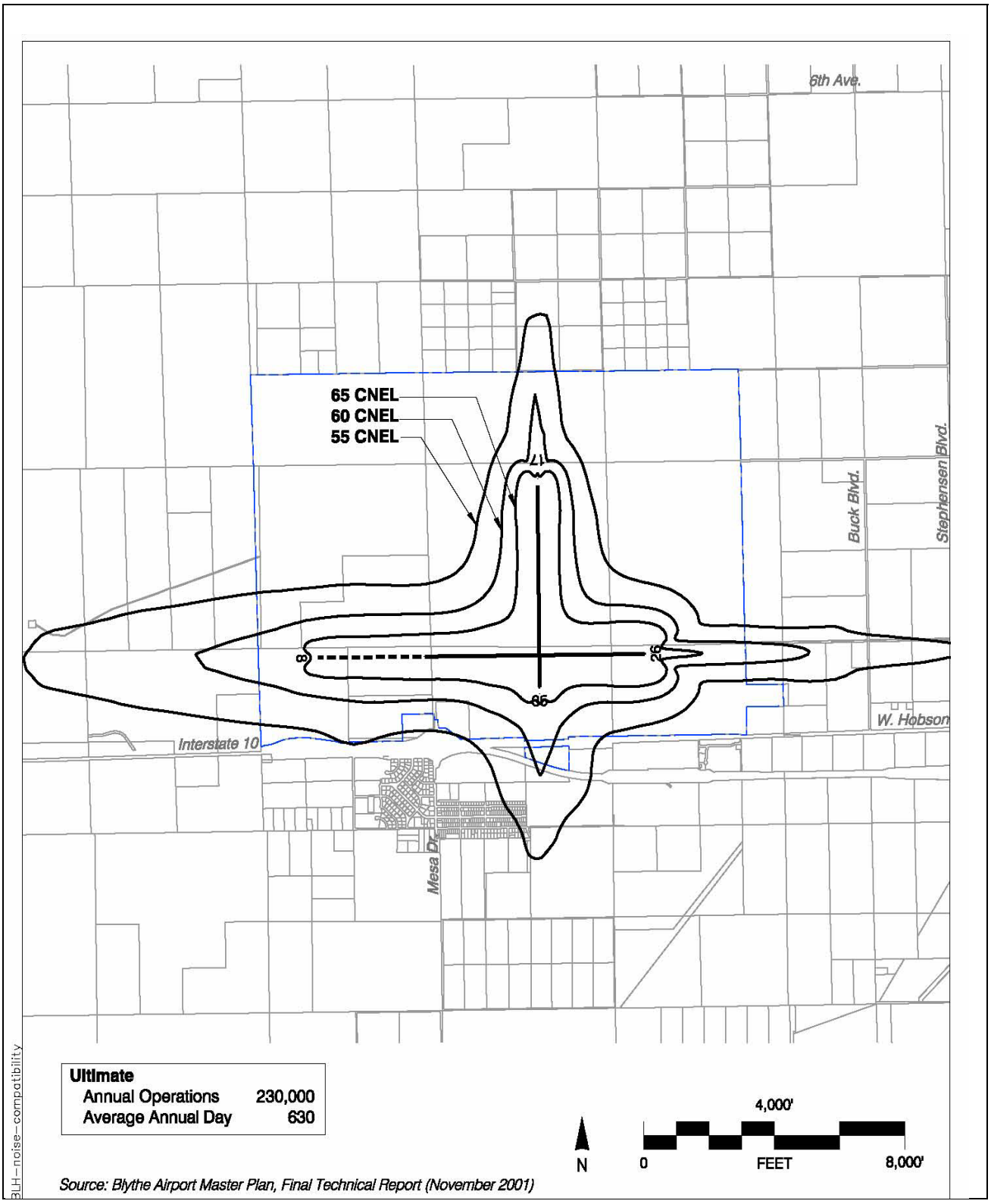


Figure 8-5
Ultimate Noise Impacts

8.3 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

In order to achieve compliance with the policies of the Noise Element, the City of Blythe shall undertake the following implementation program. The implementation program focuses on the prevention of new noise-related land use conflicts by requiring that all relevant development plans, programs and proposals be reviewed to determine whether such plans, programs and proposals adequately address noise and its potential effects.

The information contained should be used as a guideline for determining whether or not proposed noise mitigation measures are a reasonable application of the techniques available, and which are likely to achieve the desired results. Control of noise at the source and through the thoughtful location and orientation of receiving uses should be given preference over the control of noise at the path of transmission through the use of noise barriers.

The primary source of noise in the City is the Interstate 10 Freeway. Noise measurement within 300' of Interstate Highway 10 ranges from 65 dBA to levels exceeding 82 dBAs caused by the passage of heavy trucks.

The City of Blythe shall review all relevant development plans, programs and proposals, including those initiated by both the public and private sectors, to ascertain and ensure their conformance with the policy framework outlined in this Noise Element.

Prior to the approval of a proposed development of residential or other noise-sensitive land uses in a noise-impacted area, or the development of an industrial, commercial or other noise-generating land use in or near an area containing or planned and zoned for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses, an acoustical analysis shall be required. At the discretion of the reviewing agency, the requirement for an acoustical analysis may be waived provided that all of the following conditions exist:

- The proposed development is not subject to the provisions of California Administrative Code Title 24.
- The existing or projected future noise exposure at the exterior of buildings which will contain noise-sensitive uses or within proposed outdoor activity areas (patios, decks, backyards, pool areas, recreation areas, etc.) does not exceed 65 dB L_{dn}.
- The topography in the project area is flat, and the noise source and receiving land use are at the same grade.
- Effective noise mitigation, as determined by the reviewing agency, is incorporated into the project design to reduce noise exposure to the levels specified by the policies of the Noise Element. Such measures may include the use of building setbacks, building orientation and noise barriers. If a noise barrier is required for mitigation of exterior noise levels, it should be constructed of tight-fitting, massive materials (1" thick wood, stucco, masonry, etc.) and should be of sufficient height to interrupt line-of-sight between the source and receiver. Line-of-sight should be determined by drawing a straight line between the effective heights of the noise source and receiver. For traffic noise, and in instances where the number of heavy trucks exceeds five (5) percent of the Average Daily Traffic (ADT), an effective source height of at least eight (8) feet above the crown of the roadway should be used. For all other roadways, an effective height of two (2) feet above the roadway should be used.

For industrial, commercial or other stationary noise sources, or for aircraft noise, a detailed evaluation of noise source spectra and effective height(s) should be conducted. Receiver height should be assumed to be five (5) feet above project grade for outdoor activity areas such as backyards.

Interior noise levels may be assumed to be in compliance with the 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) standard as long as the building construction complies with today's more stringent thermal insulation requirements and when windows and doors remain closed. This will require the installation of air conditioning or mechanical ventilation.

When the above-described conditions do not exist and an acoustical analysis is required, it should:

- Be the responsibility of the applicant.
- Be prepared by an individual or firm with demonstrable experience in the fields of environmental noise assessment and architectural acoustics.
- Include representative noise level measurements with sufficient sampling periods and locations to adequately describe local conditions.
- Include recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures to achieve compliance with the adopted policies and standards of the Noise Element.
- Include estimates of noise exposure after the prescribed mitigation measures have been implemented. If compliance with the adopted standards and policies of the Noise Element will not be achieved, a rationale for acceptance of the project must be provided.

The City of Blythe shall develop and implement procedures to ensure that requirements imposed pursuant to the findings of an acoustical analysis are implemented as part of the project permitting process. The appropriate time for requiring an acoustical analysis would be as early in the project review or permitting process as possible, so that noise mitigation may be an integral part of the project design rather than an afterthought.

The Land Use and Circulation Elements of the City of Blythe General Plan shall be reviewed and amended if necessary, to ensure consistency with the findings and policies of the Noise Element as they relate to the prevention of future noise conflicts.

8.4 TECHNIQUES FOR NOISE CONTROL

Use of Setbacks. Noise exposure may be reduced by increasing the distance between the noise source and receiving use. Setback areas can take the form of open space, frontage roads, recreational areas, storage yards, etc. The available noise attenuation from this technique is limited by the characteristics of the noise source, but is generally 4 to 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the source.

Use of Barriers. Shielding by barriers can be obtained by placing walls, berms or other structures, such as buildings, between the noise source and the receiver. The effectiveness of a barrier depends upon blocking line-of-sight between the source and receiver, and is improved with increases in distance the sound must travel

to pass over the barrier as compared to a straight line from source to receiver. The difference between the istance over a barrier and a straight line between source and receiver is called the "path length difference," and is the basis for calculating barrier effectiveness. **Figure 8-6** illustrates the principles of noise control by barriers. The path length difference is the difference between (R + D) and (X + Y).

Barrier effectiveness depends upon the relative heights of the source, receiver and barrier. In general, barriers are most effective when placed close to either the receiver or the source. An intermediate barrier location yields a smaller path length difference for a given increase in barrier height than does a location closer to either source or receiver.

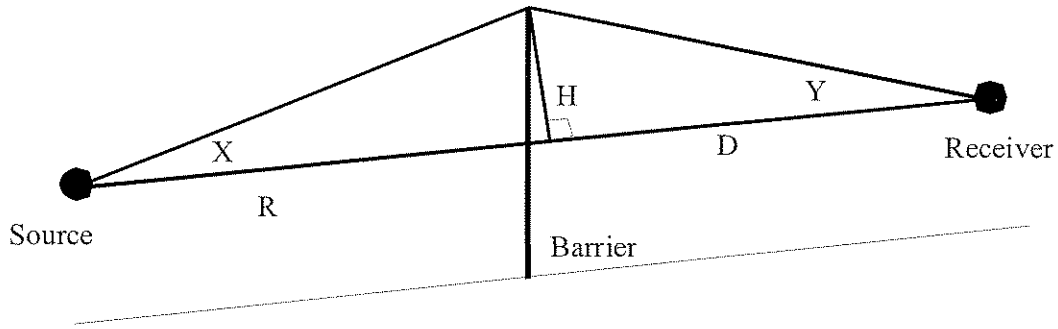


Figure 8-6

For maximum effectiveness, barriers must be continuous and relatively airtight along their length and height. To ensure that sound transmission through the barrier is insignificant, barrier mass should be about 4 lbs./square foot, although a lesser mass may be acceptable if the barrier material provides sufficient transmission loss in the frequency range of concern. Satisfaction of the above criteria requires substantial and well fitted barrier materials, placed to intercept line-of-sight to all significant noise sources. Earth, in the form of berms or the face of a depressed area, is also an effective barrier material.

Another form of barrier is the use of a depressed noise source location, such as depressed roadways or depressed loading areas in shopping centers. The walls of the depression serve to break line-of-sight between the source and receiver, and will provide some absorption if left in earth or vegetative cover.

There are practical limits to the noise reduction provided by barriers. For highway traffic noise, a 5 to 10 dBA noise reduction may often be reasonably attained. A 15 dBA noise reduction is sometimes possible, but a 20 dBA noise reduction is extremely difficult to achieve. Barriers may be provided in the form of walls, berms, or berm/wall combinations. The use of an earth berm in lieu of a solid wall will provide up to 3 dBA additional attenuation over that attained by a solid wall alone, due to the absorption provided by the earth. Berm/wall combinations offer slightly better acoustical performance than solid walls, and are often preferred for aesthetic reasons.

Site Design. Buildings can be placed on a project site to shield other structures or areas, to remove them from noise-impacted areas, and to prevent an increase in noise level caused by reflections. The use of one building to shield another can significantly reduce overall project noise control costs, particularly if the shielding structure is insensitive to noise. As an example, carports or garages can be used to form or compliment a barrier shielding adjacent dwellings or an outdoor activity area. Similarly, one residential unit can be placed to

shield another so that noise reduction measures are needed for only the building closest to the noise source. Placement of outdoor activity areas within the shielded portion of a building complex, such as a central courtyard, can be an effective method of providing a quiet retreat in an otherwise noisy environment. Patios or balconies should be placed on the side of a building opposite the noise source, and "wing walls" can be added to buildings or patios to help shield sensitive uses.

Another option in site design is the placement of relatively insensitive land uses, such as commercial or storage areas, between the noise source and a more sensitive portion of the project. Examples include development of a commercial strip along a busy arterial to block noise affecting a residential area, or providing recreational vehicle storage along the noise-impacted edge of a mobile home park. If existing topography or development adjacent to the project site provides some shielding, as in the case of an existing berm, knoll or building, sensitive structures or activity areas may be placed behind those features to reduce noise control costs as shown in **Figure 8-7**.

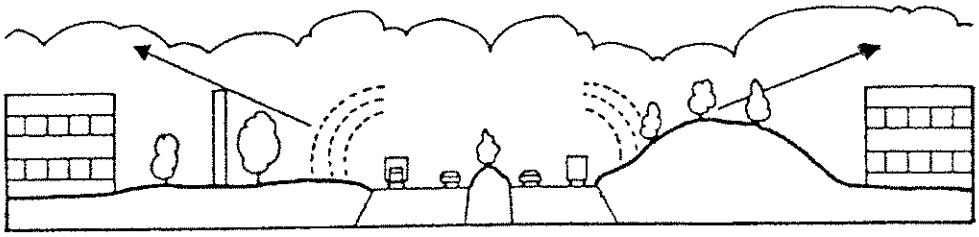


Figure 8-7

Where project design does not allow using buildings or other land uses to shield sensitive uses, noise control costs can be reduced by orienting buildings with the narrow end facing the noise source, reducing the total area of the building requiring acoustical treatment. Some examples of building orientation to reduce noise impacts are shown in **Figure 8-8**

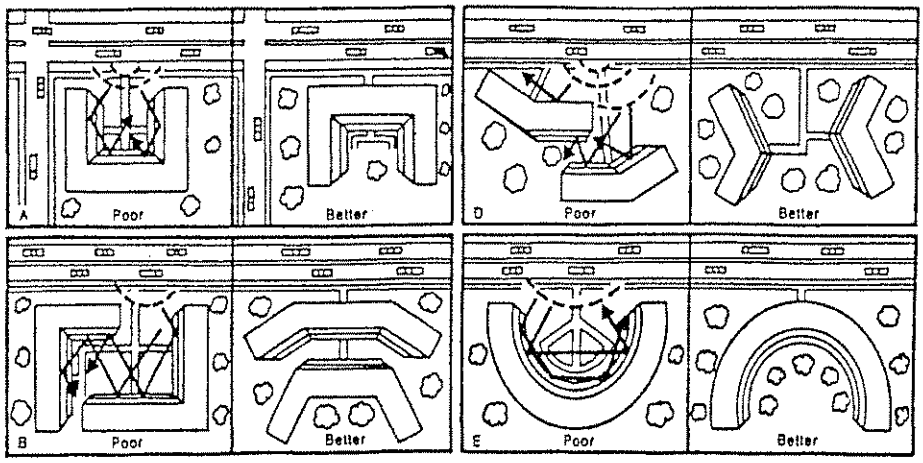


Figure 8-8

Site design should also guard against the creation of reflecting surfaces which may increase on-site noise levels. For example, two buildings placed at an angle facing a noise source may cause noise levels within that angle to increase by up to 3 dBA. The open end of a "U"-shaped building should point away from noise sources for the same reason. Landscaping walls or noise barriers located within a development may inadvertently reflect noise back to a noise-sensitive area unless carefully located. Avoidance of these problems, as well as attaining an effective, aesthetic site design requires close coordination between local agencies, the project engineer and architect, and the acoustical consultant.

Unit Design. When structures have been located to provide maximum noise reduction by barriers or site design, noise reduction measures may still be required to achieve an acceptable interior noise environment. The cost of such measures may be reduced by placement of interior dwelling unit features. For example, bedrooms, living rooms, family rooms and other noise-sensitive portions of a dwelling can be located on the side of the unit farthest from the noise source, as shown by **Figure 8-9**.

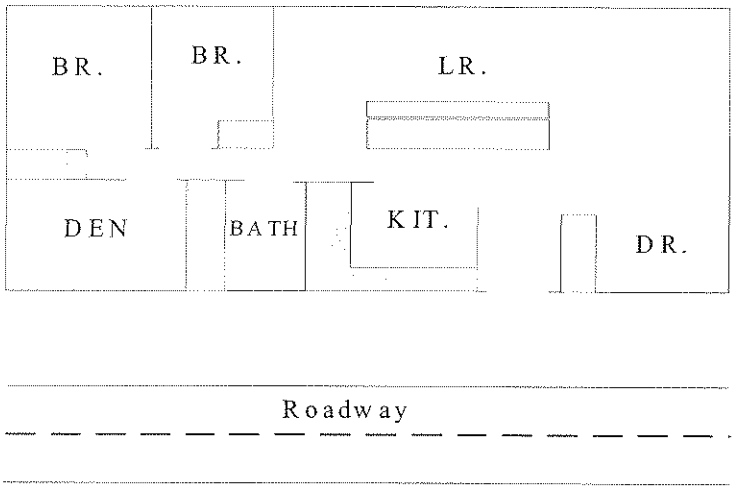


Figure 8-9

Bathrooms, closets, stairwells and food preparation areas are relatively insensitive to exterior noise sources, and can be placed on the noisy side of a unit. When such techniques are employed, noise reduction requirements for the building facade can be significantly reduced, although the architect must take care to isolate the noise impacted areas by the use of partitions or doors.

Where greater noise reduction is required, acoustical treatment of the building facade is necessary. If window area is critical, use of acoustical glazing (thicker glass or increased air space between panes), fixed (non-movable) glazing and reduction of windows are effective noise control techniques. Standard energy-conservation double-pane glazing with a 1/8" or 1/4" air-space is not considered acoustical glazing, as its sound transmission loss may be less than single-pane 1/8" glazing. Noise transmitted through walls can be reduced by increasing wall mass (using stucco or brick in lieu of wood siding), isolating wall members by the use of double- or staggered- stud walls, or mounting interior walls on resilient channels.

Noise control measures for exterior doorways include reducing door area, using solid-core doors, and acoustically sealing door perimeters with suitable gaskets. Roof/ceiling treatments may include the use of plywood sheathing under roofing materials or resilient channels for ceiling panels. Vent ducts and openings

for attic or subfloor ventilation may also require acoustical treatment. Tight-fitting fireplace dampers and glass doors may be needed in aircraft noise-impacted areas.

Whichever noise control techniques are employed, it is essential that attention be given to installation of weatherstripping and caulking of joints.

Use of Vegetation. It is often supposed that trees and other vegetation can provide significant noise attenuation. However, approximately 100 feet of dense foliage (so that as no visual path extends through the foliage) is required to achieve a 5 dBA attenuation of traffic noise. The use of vegetation as a noise barrier should not be considered a practical method of noise control unless large tracts of dense foliage are part of the existing landscape.

Vegetation can be used to acoustically "soften" intervening ground between a noise source and receiver by increasing ground absorption of sound. Vegetative barriers have been shown to reduce tire noise and other high frequency components of traffic noise. Planting of trees and shrubs is also of aesthetic and psychological value, and may reduce adverse public reaction to a noise source by removing the source from view, even though noise levels may be largely unaffected.

Building Design. In some cases, external building facades can influence reflected noise levels affecting adjacent buildings. This is primarily a problem where high-rise buildings are proposed, and the effect is most evident in urban areas, where an "urban canyon" may be created. Bell-shaped or irregular building facades, setbacks and attention to building orientation can reduce this effect.

Noise Reduction by Building Facades. When interior noise levels are of concern in a noisy environment, noise reduction may be obtained through acoustical design of building facades. Standard residential construction practices provide 12-15 dBA noise reduction for building facades with open windows, and 20-25 dBA noise reduction when windows are closed. A 20 dBA outdoor-to-indoor noise reduction can be obtained by requiring that the building design include adequate ventilation systems, allowing windows on a noise-impacted facade to remain closed under any weather condition.

Sound Absorbing Materials. Absorptive materials such as fiberglass, foam, cloth, and acoustical tiles are used to reduce reflections or reverberation in closed spaces. Their outdoor use is usually directed toward reducing reflections between parallel noise barriers or other reflective surfaces. Maintenance of absorptive materials used outdoors is difficult because most such materials are easily damaged by sunlight and moisture. Their application as an outdoor noise control tool is limited to cases where the control of reflected noise is critical.

Chapter 9

Housing Element

Under Separate Cover

Chapter 10

Colorado River Corridor (Area) Plan

Under Separate Cover

Chapter 11

Glossary of Terms

11 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acoustical Engineer - A engineer specializing in the measurement and physical properties of sound. In environmental review, the acoustical engineer measures noise impacts of proposed projects and designs measures to reduce those impacts.

Acoustics - The physical qualities of a room or other enclosure (such as size, shape, amount of noise) that determine the audibility and perception of speech and music.

Acre, Gross - Area of a site calculated to the centerline of bounding streets and other public rights-of-way.

Acre, Net - The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. Not included in the net acreage of a site are public or private road rights-of-way, public open space, and flood ways.

Ambient Conditions - Initial background concentration sensed/measured at a monitoring/sampling site, as in air quality or noise.

Ambient Noise Level - The composite of noise from all sources near and far. In this context, the ambient noise level constitutes the normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

Aquifer - A natural underground formation that is saturated with water, and from which water can be withdrawn.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) - A federal agency responsible for the design and implementation of publicly-supported engineering projects. Any construction activity that involves filling a watercourse, pond, lake (natural or man-made), or wetlands (including seasonal wetlands and vernal pools), may require an ACOE permit.

Arterials - A vehicular right-of-way whose primary function is to carry through traffic in a continuous route across an urban area while also providing some access to abutting land.

ADT - Average daily traffic. The weighted average of the number of vehicle trips or trip ends per unit being measured (occupied dwelling unit, employee, etc).

CEQA - California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA is the foundation of environmental law and policy in California.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) - A 24-hour energy equivalent level derived from a variety of single-noise events, with weighting factors of 5 and 10 dB applied to the evening (7:00 to 10:00 p.m.) and nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during those hours. An alternative measure is day-night average sound level (Ldn), the A-weighted average sound level for a given area (measured in decibels) during a 24-hour period with a 10 dB weighting applied to nighttime sound levels. The Ldn is approximately numerically equal to the CNEL for most environmental settings.

Conservation - The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Critical Facility - Facilities having a vital role in a potential emergency, the failure of which might prove catastrophic.

CSA - County Service Area.

Culvert - A drain, ditch or conduit not incorporated in a closed system that carries drainage water under a driveway, roadway, railroad, pedestrian walk or public way. Culverts are often built to channelize streams and as a part of flood control systems.

Curb Cut - The opening along the curb line at which point vehicles or other wheeled forms of transportation may enter or leave the roadway. Curb cuts are essential at street corners for wheelchair users.

Day-Night Average Sound Level (Ldn) - The A-weighted average sound level in decibels during a 24-hour period with a 10 dB weighing applied to nighttime sound levels (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). This exposure method is similar to the CNEL, but deletes the evening time period (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.) as a separate factor.

Decibel - A unit for measuring the relative intensity of sounds.

Decibel "A-Weighted" (dBA) - The scale for measuring sound in decibels that weights or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing.

Density - A measure of the number of dwelling units that are permitted per gross acre of land. Typically used for residential development planning, density ratios can range from very low to very high with any number of classifications in-between.

Environment - The physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions.

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency.

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq) - A single-number representation of the fluctuating sound level in decibels over a specified period of time. It is a sound-energy average of the fluctuating level.

Erosion - The process by which materials is removed from the earth's surface (including weathering, dissolution, abrasion, and transportation), most commonly by wind or water.

FAR - Floor Area Ratio - A broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generated and which is independent of the type of use occupying the building.

Fault - A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted. An active fault is a fault that has moved recently and which is likely to move again. An inactive fault is a fault which shows no evidence of movement in recent geologic time and no potential for movement in the relatively near future.

Federal Candidate Species, Category 1 (Candidate 1) - Species for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient biological information to support a proposal to list the species as

Endangered or Threatened Federal Candidate Species, Category 2 - (Candidate 2) - Species for which existing information indicates that these species may warrant listing, but for which substantial biological information to support a proposed rule is lacking.

Federal Flood Insurance - Affordable flood insurance offered by the federal government to property owners whose communities participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Floor Area, Gross - The total horizontal area in square feet of all floors within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of unroofed inner courts or shafts enclosures.

FIRM - Flood Insurance Rate Map. The City of Blythe has not been mapped by FEMA (see above) with firm data as of this date - 11/2000.

Impervious Surface - Any material which reduces or prevents absorption of water into land. Examples include buildings, paving, and other non-porous surfaces.

Indirect Source - Any structure or installation which attracts an activity which creates emissions of pollutants. For example, a major employment center, a shopping center, an airport, or stadium can all be considered to be indirect sources.

Infill - The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant lots in a built-up area or on new building parcels created by permitted lot splits.

Infiltration - The introduction of underground water, such as groundwater, into wastewater collection systems. Infiltration results in increased wastewater flow levels.

Infrastructure - Permanent utility installations, including roads, water supply lines, sewage collection pipes, and power and communications lines.

Intersection Capacity - The maximum number of vehicles that has a reasonable expectation of passing through an intersection in one direction during a given time period under prevailing roadway and traffic conditions.

Inversion - Temperature inversions limit the amount of vertical mixing of air and thus trap pollutants in the lower atmosphere where people breathe. Inversions are characterized by a layer of warmer air above a layer of cooler air, a reversal of the normal decline in temperature with increasing altitude.

Jobs-Housing Balances - The jobs/housing ratio divides the number of jobs in an area by the number of employed residents. A ratio of 1.0 typically indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

LAFCO - Local Agency Formation Commission of Riverside County.

Landslide - The downslope movement of soil and rock.

Land Use - The purpose or activity for which a piece of land or its buildings is designed, arranged, or intended, or for which it is occupied or maintained.

Level of Service (LOS) - The different operating conditions which occur in a roadway when accommodating various traffic volumes. A qualitative measure of the effect of traffic flow factors such as special travel time, interruptions, freedom to maneuver, driver comfort, and convenience, and indirectly, safety and operating cost. Levels of service are usually described by a letter rating system A through F, with LOS A indicating stable traffic flow with little or no delays and LOS F indicating excessive delays and jammed traffic conditions.

Ldn. Day/Night Average Level - The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of ten decibels to sound levels in the night before 7:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m.

NOTE: CNEL and Ldn represent daily levels of noise exposure averaged on an annual basis, while Leq represents the equivalent energy noise exposure for a shorter term period, typically one hour.

Lmax - The maximum A-weighted noise level recorded during a noise event.

Ln - The sound level exceeded "n" percent of the time during a sample interval. L10 equals the level exceeded 10 percent of the time (l90, L50, etc.)

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA is the nation's broadest environmental law. NEPA applies to all federal agencies and most of the activities they manage, regulate, or fund that affect the environment. NEPA establishes environmental policy for the nation.

Noise Contour(s) - Isolines (a line on a map or chart along which there is a constant value) representing noise, measured in decibels. See also Community Noise Equivalent Level.

Noise Exposure Contours - Lines drawn about a noise source indicating constant energy levels of noise exposure. CNEL and Ldn are the descriptors utilized herein to describe community exposure to noise.

Non-point Source - A pollutant source introduced from dispersed points and lacking a single, identifiable origin. Examples include automobile emissions or urban run-off.

NPDES - National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.

100-Year Flood - That flood event which has a one percent chance of occurrence in any one year.

Open Space - Any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in the General Plan or designated on a local, regional, or state open-space plan as one of the four types of open space defined by State planning law. The four types are:

Open space for the preservation of natural resources;
Open space for the managed production of resources;
Open space for outdoor recreation;
Open space for public health and safety.

Oxidant - The production of photochemical reactions in the atmosphere between reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen.

Ozone - A compound consisting of three oxygen atoms, that is the primary constituent of smog. It is formed through chemical reactions in the atmosphere involving volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, and sunlight. Ozone can initiate damage to the lungs as well as damage to trees, crops, and materials. There is a natural layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere which shields the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation.

PM-10 - The current standard for measuring the amount of solid or liquid matter suspended in the atmosphere ("particulate matter including dust"). Refers to the amount of particulate matter over 10 micrometers in diameter. The smaller PM-10 particles penetrate to the deeper portions of the lung, affecting sensitive population groups such as children and people with respiratory diseases.

Peak Hour Traffic - The number of vehicles passing over a designated section of a street during the busiest one-hour period during a 24-hour period.

Pedestrian-oriented Development - Development designed with an emphasis on the street sidewalk and on pedestrian access to buildings, rather than on auto access and parking areas.

Percent Slope - A common way of expressing the steepness of the slope of terrain, which is derived by dividing the change in elevation by the horizontal distance traversed. An increase of 20 feet elevation over a 100 foot distance is a 20 percent slope.

Riparian - Pertaining to the bank of a natural course of water, whether seasonal or annual. Riparian habitat is defined by the surrounding vegetation or presence of known wildlife movement pathways; it borders or surrounds a waterway.

Sedimentation - Process by which material suspended in water is deposited in a body of water. (See siltation below).

Sensitive Receptors - Members of the population who are most sensitive to air quality include children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill. The term "sensitive receptors" can also refer to the land use categories where these people live or spend a significant amount of time. Such areas include residences, schools, playgrounds, child care centers, hospitals, retirement homes, and convalescent homes.

Siltation - The process of silt deposition. Silt is a loose sedimentary material composed of finely divided particles of soil or rock, often carried in cloudy suspension in water.

SMARA - California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975.

Solid Waste - Unwanted or discarded material, including garbage, with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing.

Source Separation - A process in which solid waste materials are produced as an autonomous waste product, which are stored separately at the site of generation, or are physically separated from all other solid wastes into recyclable, compostable, or other fractions at the site of generation.

Sphere of Influence (SOI) - The ultimate service area of the City of Blythe as established by the City of Blythe and approved by Riverside County LAFCO.

Stationary Source - A source of air pollution that is not mobile, such as a heating plant or an exhaust stack from a laboratory.

Subdivision - The division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, or other divisions of land for sale, development, or lease.

Subsidence - The gradual sinking of land as a result of natural or man-made causes.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO2) - A heavy, pungent, colorless air pollutant formed primarily by the combustion of fossil fuels. It is a respiratory irritant, especially for asthmatics and is the major precursor to the formation of acid rain.

Waste Stream - All solid, semi-solid and liquid wastes including garbage, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof, discarded home and industrial appliances, manure, vegetable or animal solid and semisolid wastes, and other discarded solid and semisolid wastes.

Wetlands - an area at least periodically wet or flooded; where the water table stands at or above the land surface (bogs and marshes). Also those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Wildlife Corridors - A natural corridor, such as an undeveloped ravine, that is frequently used by wildlife to travel from one area to another.

Williamson Act - Known formally as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, it was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a ten-year contract between the City or County and an owner of land, whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

Xeric - Vegetation requiring only a small amount of moisture.

Zoning District - A specifically delineated area on a zoning map within which regulations and requirements uniformly govern the use, placement, spacing, and size of buildings. open spaces, and other facilities.

Zoning Ordinance - The City ordinance which divides Blythe into districts and establishes regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of parcels, open spaces, buildings, and other facilities.