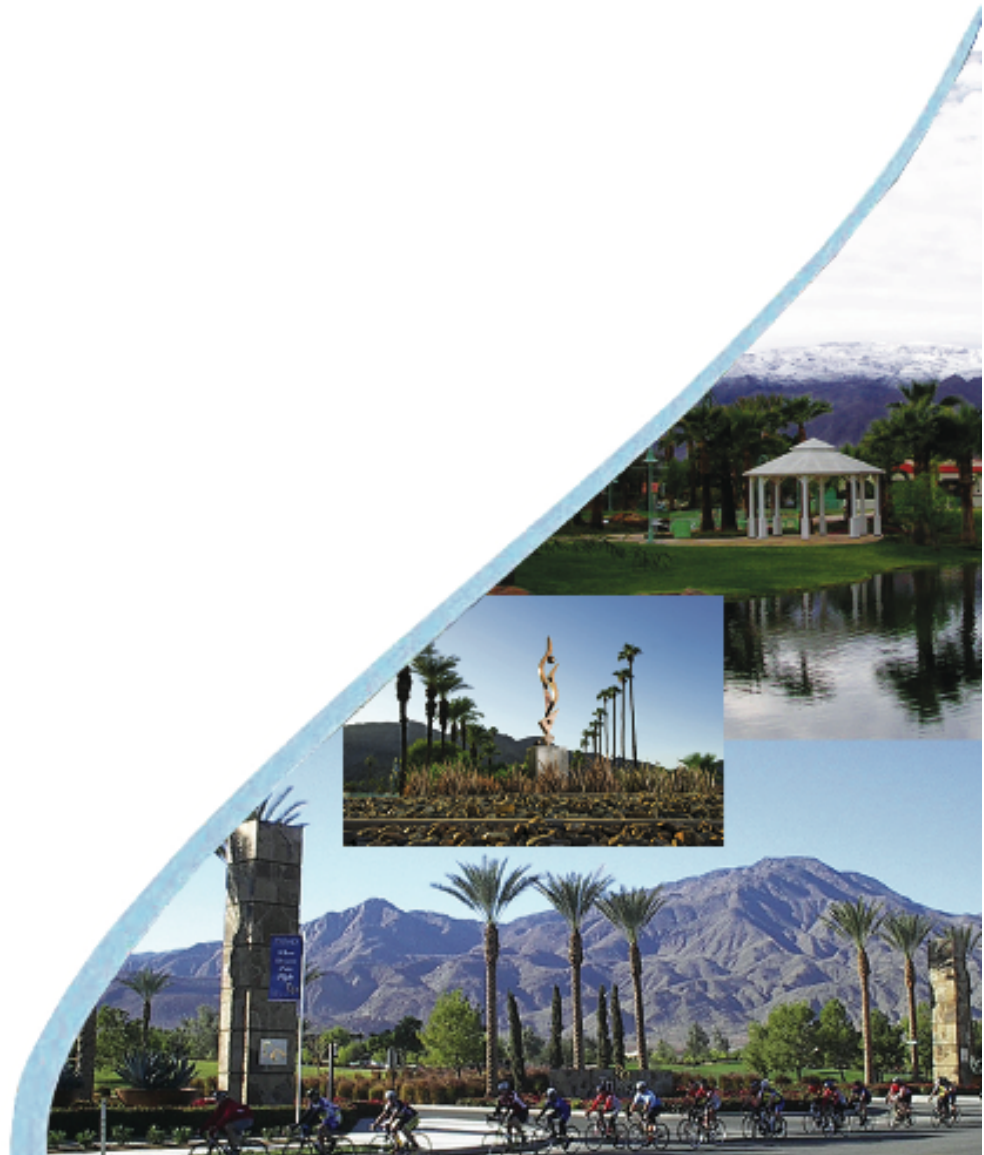


Chapter I

ADMINISTRATION





La Quinta

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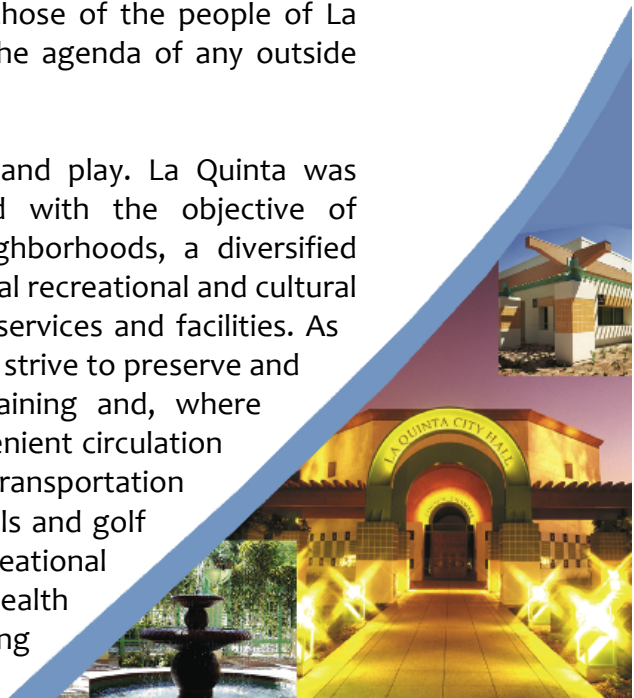


COMMUNITY VISION

"We the people of the City of La Quinta declare our intent to restore to our community the historic principles of self-governance inherent in the doctrine of home-rule. Sincerely committed to the belief that local government has the closest affinity to the people governed, and firm in the conviction that the economic and fiscal independence of our local government will promote the health, safety and welfare of all the citizens of this City..."
City Charter 1994

As stated in the City's Charter, it is a fundamental tenet of the City of La Quinta, its citizens and its leaders, to protect and maintain the public health, safety and welfare through self-governance at a local level. As such, this plan is crafted as the guiding policy document for the City per the vision expressed by its citizens and established by the City Council. While it is written to be in compliance with applicable State and Federal legislation, as it has been since the City's first General Plan, its goals, policies and programs are those of the people of La Quinta and are not intended to facilitate the agenda of any outside group or foreign entity.

La Quinta is a great place to live, work and play. La Quinta was originally established and has developed with the objective of providing well planned and desirable neighborhoods, a diversified economic base, excellent schools, exceptional recreational and cultural opportunities, and a variety of community services and facilities. As our community continues to mature, we will strive to preserve and adapt these desirable qualities by maintaining and, where necessary, improving upon a safe and convenient circulation system that includes alternative transportation opportunities as well as bike/pedestrian trails and golf cart routes; by providing additional recreational opportunities and cultural facilities for the health and well-being of our residents; by preserving our natural and historic resources, focusing



on sustainable existing and future use of water and energy resources; and, by ensuring that La Quinta remains a safe and desirable place for both residents and visitors. We will continue to emphasize the importance of community participation and recognize the commitment property owners have and continue to make through their investment of time and resources. We will work with regional and other local government entities to solve common problems and coordinate our shared interests. La Quinta's future depends on maintaining a balanced budget and the conservative management of our financial resources, and continuing efforts to promote our community as a premier place to live, work and play.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The General Plan supports, encourages and upholds individual rights and freedoms, and the protection of private property rights and is designed with the intent of enhancing and improving our quality of life in La Quinta. That intent supports and upholds the rights, liberties and freedoms of the people of La Quinta, as afforded by the Federal and State constitutions.

In order to achieve and support our Community Vision, the following eight guiding principles will shape the La Quinta General Plan:

- ◆ **A Neighborhood Oriented Community** – Strive to ensure that existing and future housing for all residents continues to be diverse in type and of high quality. Establish and maintain connections between existing and future neighborhoods, including existing housing stock and associated infrastructure.
- ◆ **A Healthy, Vibrant and Heritage Minded Community** – Ensure parks, public facilities and open spaces are appropriately sized and designed to meet the needs and interests of all segments of the community. Continue to ensure that all land uses cohesively exist with the area's natural, cultural and historical heritage.
- ◆ **A Fiscally Sound Community** – Capitalize on our unique development opportunities, especially within the Highway 111 Corridor and the Village area by focusing on shopping, dining, entertainment, professional and mixed use options while improving the aesthetics of the community.

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- ◆ **A Safe Community** – Continue to enforce development standards that promote safe indoor and outdoor spaces and provide emergency services that are adequately funded, staffed, and equipped to provide timely response.
 - ◆ **A Full Service Community** – Ensure that streets, water and sewer systems, storm drains, and other infrastructure is maintained in good working order and of adequate service level to address existing and future needs.
 - ◆ **A Resort Oriented Community** – Maintain and improve the opportunities for La Quinta to be recognized, both nationally and internationally, as a top resort and recreation destination.
 - ◆ **A Circulation Minded Community** – Promote and encourage a broad range of transportation opportunities, especially those that reduce the impact to our environment, as well as effectively moving people and goods. Continue to work closely with neighboring communities and regional agencies to address regional transportation issues.
 - ◆ **A Conservation Focused Community** – Promote and encourage the efficient use of energy and water; minimize air and water pollution; reduce noise and light pollution; preserve native habitat; reduce litter; and increase recycling programs.

ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This section of the General Plan provides background on the General Plan, its organization, the Plan's function and its relationship to other documents, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Subdivision Map Act, and the Zoning Ordinance. The processes required for review and amendment of the General Plan are also described below.

California Government Code (Section 65300) requires that incorporated communities and counties prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan. The General Plan must regulate the development of lands within a city's corporate boundary, and can also include the City's legally recognized Sphere of Influence.

This General Plan addresses lands within the City of La Quinta’s city limits, and its Sphere of Influence (please see Exhibit 1-1).

The General Plan and its various elements are required to function as an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies (Government Code Section 65300.5).

Government Code Section 65300.7 allows each city to consider local issues and conditions and tailor the General Plan to meet its needs. The General Plan must be responsive to the variations in density, land use and development issues, and the needs of each community's residents (Government Code Sections 65300.9, 65302).

Format

The La Quinta General Plan includes two documents: the General Plan, which provides background information, direction for future decisions, and goals, policies and programs to guide that direction; and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report, which analyses the impacts of the General Plan, and provides mitigation measures to reduce those impacts.

Goals, Policies and Programs

General Plan goals are broad statements reflecting the City’s values, aims and aspirations. These goals address the physical development of the City, the protection of people and property from environmental and man-made hazards, as well as the preservation of the City’s assets.

Policies have been developed to accomplish the goals of the General Plan. They present specific performance requirements for each goal.

Programs provide quantitative and qualitative targets to implement the policies in the General Plan.

Maps and Graphics

Maps and graphics are provided to illustrate all components of the General Plan. They include land use and circulation patterns, natural resources and hazards, and public infrastructure. These maps carry equal authority to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

General Plan Chapters and Elements

California Government Code Section 65302 establishes the seven (7) mandatory elements of the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise.

This General Plan includes all the required Elements, and has added elements specifically tailored to the City's needs. Each Element of the General Plan has equal legal authority. The Elements are grouped into Chapters, based on how they relate to each other. The General Plan includes the following Chapters:

Chapter II: Community Development

This Chapter groups those Elements that directly relate to the development and redevelopment of the City. The Elements included in this Chapter are:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Livable Community
- Economic Development
- Parks, Recreation and Trails
- Housing

Chapter III: Natural Resources

This Chapter describes the resources of the City's environment, including man-made and natural resources. The Natural Resources Chapter includes the following Elements:

- Air Quality
- Energy and Mineral Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Water Resources
- Open Space and Conservation

Chapter IV: Environmental Hazards

This Chapter describes the hazards of the physical environment, including man-made and natural hazards. The Environmental Hazards Chapter includes the following Elements:

- Noise
- Soils and Geology
- Flooding and Hydrology
- Hazardous Materials

Chapter IV: Public Infrastructure & Services

This Chapter describes the public facilities and services provided in the City, and how they will be addressed as the City grows. This Chapter includes the following Elements:

- Emergency Services
- Water, Sewer & Other Utilities
- Public Facilities

Using The General Plan

The General Plan is the foundation upon which all land use decisions are based. It is an information and planning guide that provides a framework for making informed decisions about the future of the City. The General Plan and its Environmental Impact Report provide the basis for a rational nexus to support development, mitigation measures and exactions.

All development proposals must be analyzed and tested for consistency with the goals, policies, and programs in every applicable element of the General Plan. Specific Plans and the Zoning Ordinance must be consistent with the General Plan. General Plan consistency is also a required criteria for determining significant impacts under CEQA.

Interpretation of the General Plan

When uncertainty exists regarding the location of boundaries of any land use category, proposed public facility symbol, circulation alignment, or other symbol or line found on the General Plan maps, the following procedures will be used to resolve the issue:

- Boundaries shown in the General Plan and on official maps as approximately following the limits of any other jurisdiction's limits are to be construed as following these limits.
- Boundaries shown as following or approximately following section lines, and half or quarter section lines, shall be construed as following such lines.
- Boundaries shown as following or approximately following the centerline of channels, streams, creeks, rivers, or other continuously or intermittently flowing water course are to be construed as following the centerline of these water courses taken at mean low water, and, in the event of natural change in the location of such streams or other water courses, the boundary is to be construed as moving with the channel centerline.

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- Where a land use category applied to a parcel is not mapped to include an adjacent street or alley, the category shall be considered to extend to the centerline of the right of way.
 - Boundaries shown as separated from, parallel, or approximately parallel to any of the features listed above shall be construed to be parallel to such features and at such distances therefrom as are shown on the map.
 - Symbols that indicate appropriate locations for proposed public facilities are not property specific. They indicate only the general area within which a specific facility should be established.

CEQA Review of Consistency

State CEQA Guidelines require that an initial study include "an examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning and plans." The State CEQA Guidelines further stipulate that, "A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located." If a determination is made by the Planning Commission or the City Council that the proposed action is inconsistent with the General Plan, no further action shall be taken without the completion and processing of an EIR which would support a finding of overriding consideration.

Zoning Consistency

California State law also mandates that the City's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. In the event that the Zoning Ordinance becomes inconsistent with the General Plan because of a General Plan Amendment, the Zoning Ordinance must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is made consistent with the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance cannot be amended if it causes an inconsistency with the General Plan.

Amending The General Plan

The General Plan is a multi-faceted document, which defines and addresses the changing needs of the City. It is also based on an on-going assessment and understanding of existing and projected needs. To assure that the General Plan is kept current, short-term programs and policies may be reviewed annually to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status. Long-term programs and implementation measures must also be given consideration to

assure timely funding and development of critical infrastructure and public services and facilities.

The City Council or any citizen may initiate a General Plan Amendment.

Application Procedures

Applications for the amendment of the General Plan are filed with the City Planning Department, along with the appropriate fees. An amendment to the General Plan constitutes a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and therefore is evaluated for its environmental effects and consistency with other elements of the General Plan. Final approval of General Plan amendments is the responsibility of the City Council.

Annual Review

The Government Code requires that the planning agency "render an annual report to the legislative body (City Council) on the status of the Plan and the progress in its implementation" (Section 65400(b)). State law further requires that the Housing Element be reviewed on a separate schedule, generally every eight years.

Exemptions

The State Legislature has recognized that occasions arise that require the City to have some flexibility in amending the General Plan. As set forth in the Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan amendment schedule:

- (1) Amendments requested and determined necessary for the development of a residential project, of which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of units will be available to persons of low or moderate income (Sections 65361(b) & 65358 (d)).
- (2) Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the General Plan (Sections 65361 and 65358 (d) (1)).

Specific Plans

A Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, applicable to a specific parcel of land or area of the City. Specific Plans provide detailed design and analysis of a parcel or area, and precise land use locations and design standards. Specific Plans contain text, exhibits, and diagrams indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses and the

necessary public and private urban support systems, including streets, utilities and drainage facilities.

Specific Plans also define the standards and criteria by which development and, where applicable, conservation will proceed on the property. It must also be consistent with all facets of the General Plan and in turn, zoning, subdivision, and public works projects must be consistent with an existing Specific Plan (Government Code Section 65455).

Specific Plans provide an opportunity to utilize creative and non-traditional techniques for development. The City encourages the preparation of Specific Plans that result in innovative projects, either on a single property, or across several parcels.

Specific Plans are prepared, adopted and amended in the same manner as a General Plan, may be adopted by resolution or ordinance, and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the City Council.

In areas where the Specific Plan encompasses more than one property, the plan must be completed and adopted prior to development on any affected property.

Capital Facilities

California incorporated towns, charter cities and counties are to “annually review the capital improvement program of the city or county and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan.” Also, pursuant to Government Code Section 65401, all departments within the City and all other local government agencies must submit a list of proposed projects to the City. The City is responsible for reviewing these projects for conformity with the General Plan.

Implementation of the General Plan

California Government Code Section 65103(c) requires that local jurisdictions implement the General Plan once it has been adopted. The La Quinta General Plan relies on programs as well as the related mitigation measures and monitoring programs set forth in the General Plan EIR, to serve as implementation measures. The City Zoning Ordinance also plays a critical role in implementing the goals and policies of the Plan, and Specific Plans provide detailed implementation programs for specific portions of the General Plan area.

Implementation Through the Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is an exercise of police powers granted to the City by the State, and is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use by distinct development zones and permitted uses. Text, maps, diagrams and other materials describe the distribution and intensity of land uses in all land use designations. Minimum development standards for each of the zones are also included, in a manner consistent with the General Plan. Permitting processes set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, including Conditional Use Permits, Variances, Site Development Permits and other land use permitting also implement the General Plan. The implementation of the General Plan is further regulated by Government Code Sections 65800 et. seq.

Implementation Through the Subdivision Ordinance

Like Zoning Ordinances, subdivision regulation is also an exercise of police powers and a principal instrument for implementing the General Plan. Establishing state-wide uniformity in local subdivision procedures, the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code Sections 66410 et seq.) leaves the standards for regulating the design and improvement of subdivision to local government.

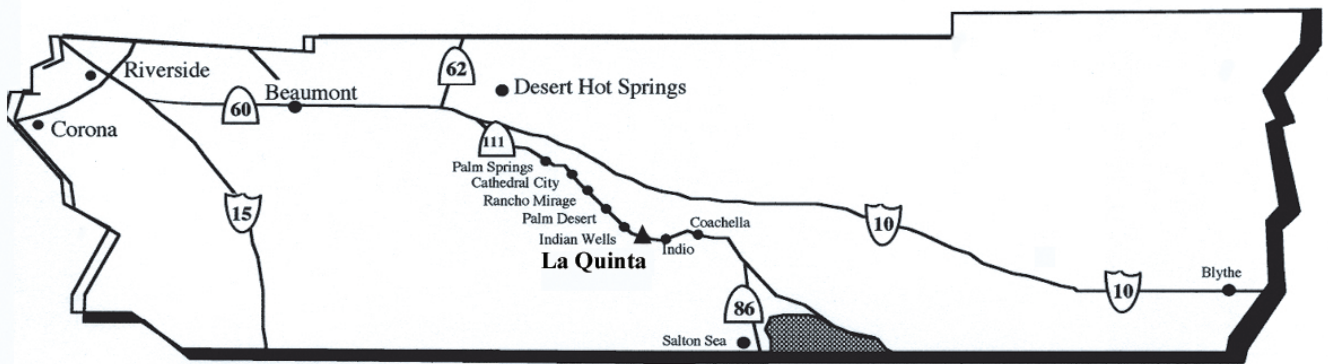
The broadest authority for regulating subdivisions lies in Government Code Sections 66473.5, 66474, 66474.60, and 66474.61, requiring findings that, among other things, the subdivision is consistent with the City General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan.

Development Agreements

State law provides for the adoption of development agreements between a project proponent and the City, in accordance with Government Code Section 65865 et seq. The purpose of development agreements is to provide developers with additional assurances that development approvals will not be nullified by some future local policy or regulation change. In exchange, the developer may be required to meet certain conditions or performance criteria that become part of the agreement.

As set forth in Government Code Section 65866, the City, unless otherwise provided by the development agreement, is not prevented from applying new rules, regulations, and policies which do not conflict with those rules, regulations, and policies applicable to that property. Neither is the City prevented from denying or conditionally approving any subsequent development project application on the basis of such existing or new rules, regulations or policies.

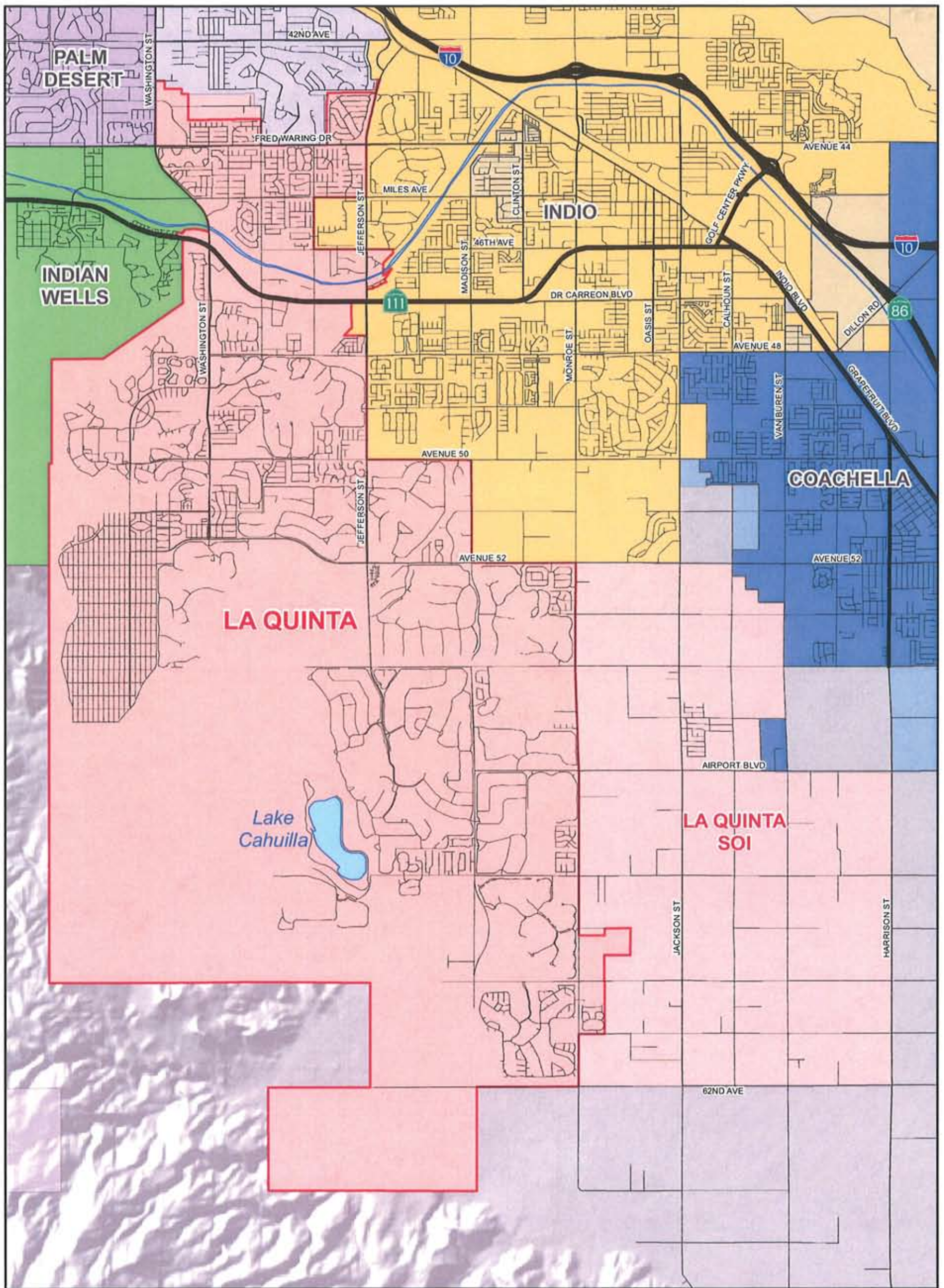
CALIFORNIA



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September 9, 2009



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Source: LAFCO, 9.09.2009



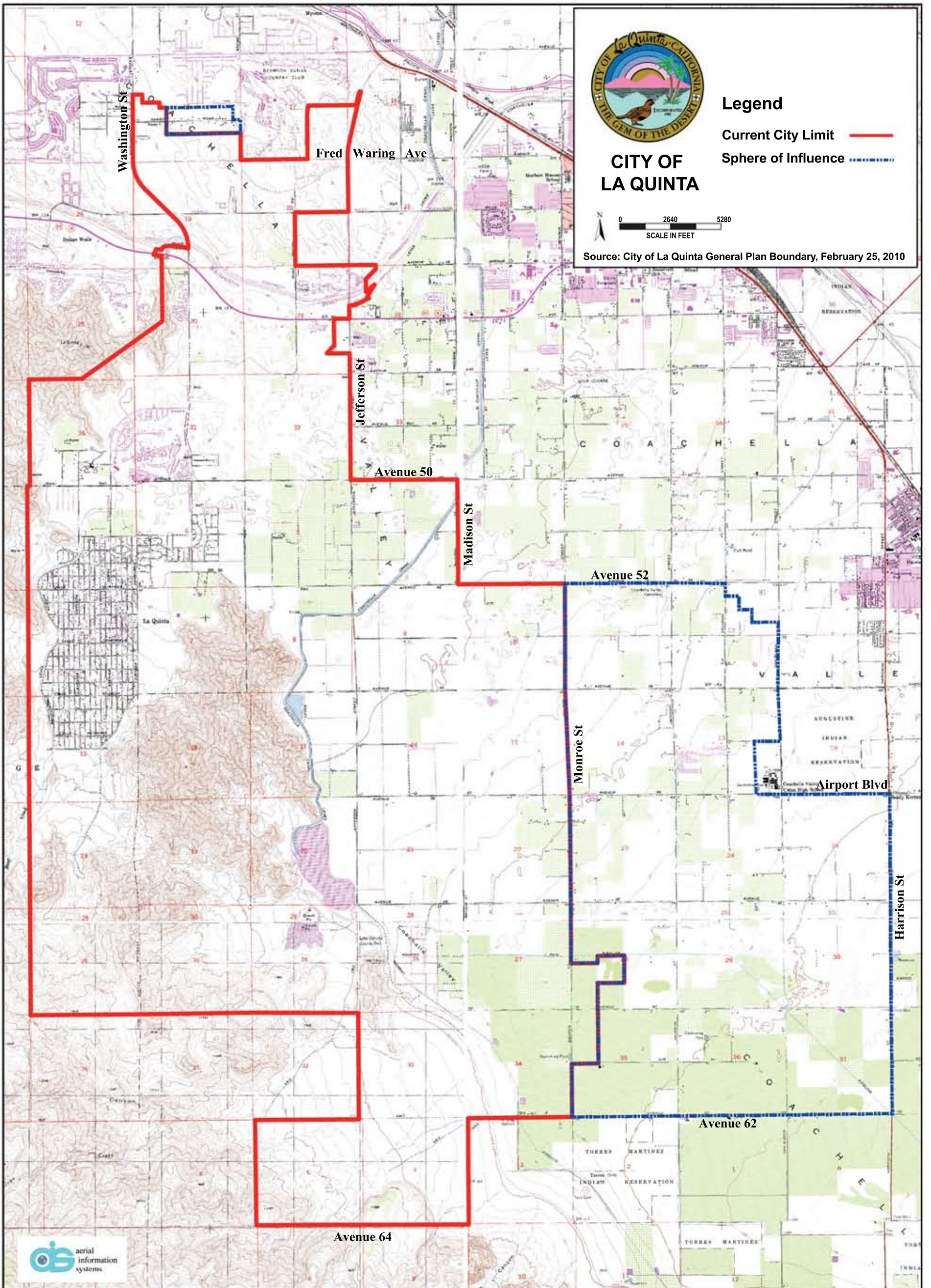
City of La Quinta General Plan
Vicinity Map
La Quinta, California



Exhibit

I-2

09.08.11



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Maps:
 La Quinta, CA 1959, Photorevised 1980
 Martinez Mtn., CA 1981, Photorevised 1988
 Indio, CA 1956, Photorevised 1972
 Valerie, CA 1956, Photorevised 1972

09.08.2011



City of La Quinta General Plan
 Planning Area Boundaries
 La Quinta, California

