

TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

This introductory chapter of the General Plan provides the broadest overview of the General Plan, what information it contains and how it should be used. The chapter also summarizes the Town's history and important features. The size of the planning area, the state of existing development and the community's valuable resources are also summarized, and maps of the region and Town boundaries are provided. The relationship of the General Plan to the Environmental Impact Report is explained. Finally, the chapter ends with a vision statement in the form of a poem dedicated to the Town.

INTRODUCTION

YUCCA VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

All incorporated towns and cities, and all counties are required by the California Government Code to prepare comprehensive, long-term general plans, which direct development of the community. As an official document of the Town of Yucca Valley, the General Plan provides the goals, policies, programs and implementation strategies to guide the development of the Town and to preserve its valued assets and resources. In addition to goals and policies, the General Plan includes issue discussions, diagrams and maps, tables and charts which provide direction for the prudent and conscientious management of future development.

This section of the General Plan describes the Town of Yucca Valley and its composition. It also describes the planning area which includes the Town limits, and the regional context and long-term perspective taken by the Town in developing this document. Finally, this brief chapter provides an overview of the General Plan and its role as the principal development guide for community development.

TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY

The Town of Yucca Valley comprises an important administrative, commercial and business center for the Morongo Basin and Lower Mojave Desert region. Located in the south-central portion of San Bernardino County and a transitional area between the high and low deserts of southeastern California, the Town also sits at a pivotal location in terms of the region's geology. Both resulting climate and geotechnical activity have shaped Yucca Valley.

It was not until the latter part of the 19th century that substantial settlement by Europeans took place. For millennium before that time, Native Indians of the Serrano and associated clans, and their ancestors, shared this region and its resources. It was not until the early 20th century that Yucca Valley began to expand into a town. Today, it is the center of business and the major provider of homes and services for the Morongo Basin, sharing its important role with those of the Joshua Tree National Park and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center and the demands they place on the community for residences, commercial and public services and tourist facilities.

Yucca Valley has served as a residential community and commercial center for many years. With the restructuring of the Southern California economy, the continued importance of Twentynine Palms military facilities, and the increasing appreciation and status of major adjoining federal desert lands, the Town is now poised to locally restructure its future. Reflecting a drive for a balanced and well integrated community, the Town also remains faithful to its commitment to a rural lifestyle it values and takes into consideration the natural resources of the area.

The Town of Yucca Valley encompasses 24,916± acres or over 38 square miles. Development over the past decades has focused along and been most intense adjacent to State Highway 62 (Twentynine Palms Highway), with progressively less dense and more scattered residential development north and south of Highway 62. Industrial land uses are found in a few scattered locations, and the Highway 62 corridor serves the Town and the region as an integrated mix of commercial businesses.

The Town has taken shape in an elevated high desert valley ranging from one to about six miles wide. The Little San Bernardino Mountains to the south and the hills and mountains on the Town's north have produced an east-west trending valley with its floor sloping to the east. The Town is also a geographically important location, where significantly differing wildlife habitat, landscape and geology meet.

This General Plan for Yucca Valley reflects the Town's appreciation for the best things the community has to offer and a determination to protect them. The Plan also reflects and acts on the new opportunities that arise from the new status and appreciation for our unique desert lands. Simply, the community's highest values go hand in hand; appreciating and protecting the rural and natural environments are both sides of the same coin.

THE GENERAL PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Comprehensive General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been developed to

serve as a framework for decision-making regarding the appropriate types, intensities and conditions by which development is to be permitted in the Town. The process of preparing these documents included thoughtful and extensive community consultation including the identification of issues, the development of goals, policies, and programs, the consideration of various alternatives and the selection of a preferred course of action, and finally, the development of strategies to implement the General Plan.

As required by state law, each jurisdiction must prepare and adopt a General Plan and supporting documentation to provide the basis for the community's development. The Town of Yucca Valley identifies the environmental, social and economic goals, and sets forth policies, standards, programs and implementation strategies for existing and future development. The General Plan also provides the framework to analyze and respond to changing circumstances as the Town evolves.

The background information and issues are summarized in the General Plan and are discussed in greater depth in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, both documents provide Town officials and the general public with vital information necessary to make informed decisions. The General Plan and the EIR also serve as the basis for subsequent planning efforts, including the preparation of Specific Plans and special environmental and planning studies.

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

This is the second Yucca Valley Draft Comprehensive General Plan. The first Draft was circulated in the Fall, 1994. At the conclusion of the public hearings, the Town Council directed staff to increase densities in approximately six (6) square miles and, re-draft and recirculate the General Plan and Environmental Impact Report, and bring the project back for public review.

This Draft Comprehensive General Plan has been amended to reflect the requested increase in densities, and the accompanying Environmental Impact Report has been amended to reflect the land use amendments.

As part of these amendments and analysis, computerized land use and socio-economic data was provided by the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG). (See Circulation Element Traffic Study for additional details.) As a result of the use of computerized land use data, the Draft Comprehensive General Plan and Environmental Impact Report reflect a total incorporated acreage of 24,916.

While this represents a slight increase over the commonly used 24,390, the analysis is based upon default factors with the computerized data base, and therefore the calculation and analysis throughout both Draft Comprehensive General Plan and Environmental Impact Report are based upon 24,916 total acres within the incorporated Town boundaries.

Terra Nova Planning & Research and numerous sub-consultants completed the first Draft Comprehensive General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report. The second draft of both documents has been completed by Town staff in conjunction with the firm Robert Kahn, John Kain and Associates. New Circulation, Traffic and Acoustical studies were provided by Robert Kahn, John Kain and Associates to analyze the changes and impacts resulting from the increased land use densities. No other significant modifications and amendments have been made in the second draft of either document.

The appendices in the Environmental Impact Report include the special studies from both the first and second drafts for analysis purposes. Copies of both the Draft General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report illustrating additions, modifications and deletions to the first draft documents are on file at the Yucca Valley Town Hall.

A VISION OF YUCCA VALLEY

What makes people move to the Town of Yucca Valley?
Is it our fine roads?
Is it our palatial housing?
Is it our great shops, tourist sights, award-winning restaurants?
No, you say? It is none of these things.

It is our valley, our desert, our air, our sky, our stars,
Our Joshua trees, our coyotes that draw us to this place.
Yet none of these....is ours

We have the choice to keep intact what makes
This valley unique for our seniors, our families, our animals,
Our rural way of life.

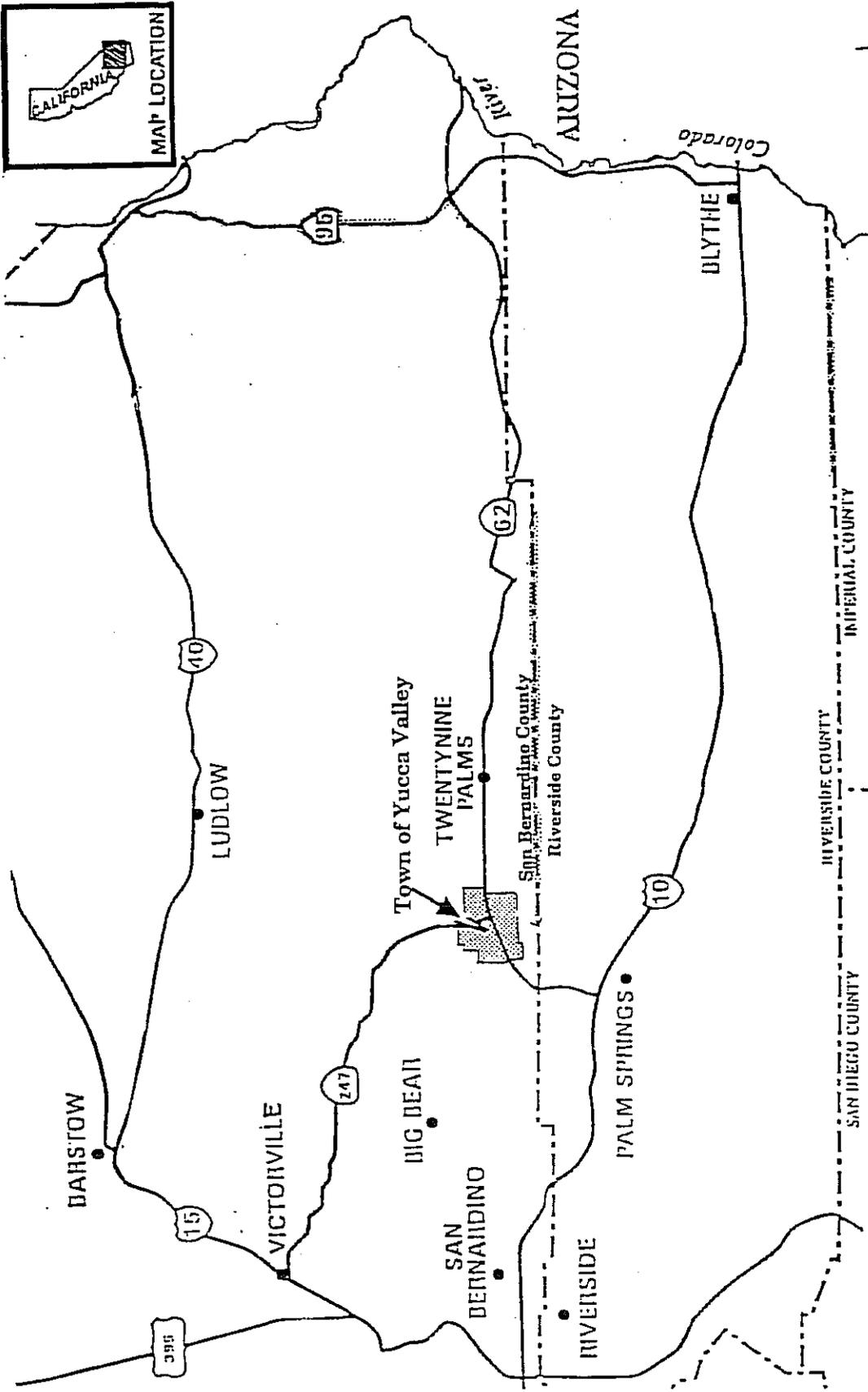
What we have is the peace that comes from feeling the wind,
The call of nature when we hear the howl of coyotes in the night,
The colorful shock of a carpet of tiny flowers locked in sand,
The irony of flamboyant blossoms protected by cactus spines,
The joy of beauty when a covey of quail takes flight,
The rush of fear that comes from rattles in our path.
What we have is a quiet walk through desert stillness,
The sense of freedom when we survey that far-reaching blue sky,
The awe we feel when we look into the dark night, unexplored and uncharted.

We opt for a valley filled with yuccas, Joshua trees, coyotes, quail
And a thousand other species around which we live our lives.
Our houses and places are tucked in, disturbing as little of land and nature as possible.
Our paved roads go only as far as needed.
We cluster to lessen our impact on Hi-Desert Habitat.

For while the valley-and all the life it contains-is not ours,
We are its caretakers, entrusted with keeping it in such state that
The Yuccas,
The Joshua trees,
The coyotes and
The quail still want to and can
Live amongst us.



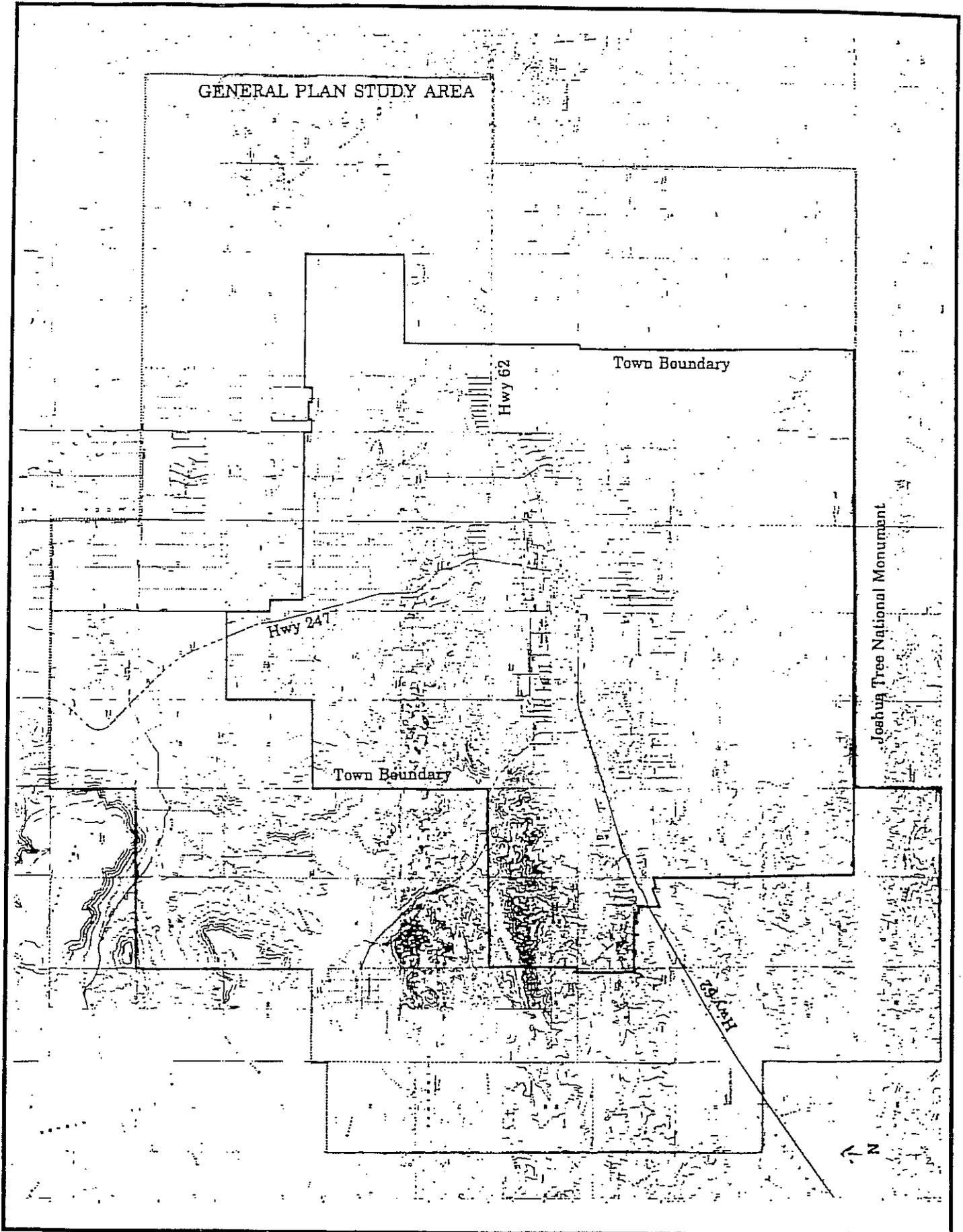
MAP LOCATION



Exhibit

L1

REGIONAL LOCATION MAP



I-5
TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
GENERAL PLAN STUDY AREA

Exhibit

I-2