# Section 3.0 Project Description



## 3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## 3.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

#### PROJECT LOCATION

Regionally, the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan Area (SPA) is located near the western end of Yucca Valley, within San Bernardino County, California; refer to Exhibit 3-1, Regional Vicinity. Yucca Valley is within the Mojave Desert in what is known as the Morongo Basin. The high desert community is 30 miles northwest of Palm Springs, and extends for seven miles along the State Route 62 (SR-62) highway north of Joshua Tree, to Pipes Canyon. The Specific Plan Area (SPA) is located in a valley that gently slopes to the south, from 3,320 to 3,340 feet above sea level (asl). Old Town Yucca Valley is the original commercial core of the Town of Yucca Valley. The SPA includes approximately 250 acres along SR-62, between Yucca Trail to the north, just beyond Santa Fe Trail to the south, Church Street to the east, and Kickapoo Trail to the west; refer to Exhibit 3-2, Project Vicinity.

#### **OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ON-SITE CONDITIONS**

The existing land uses within the SPA include residential, commercial, industrial, and civic; refer to Exhibit 3-3, Existing Land Use Map. Commercial land uses, which include retail, medical, restaurants, offices, and motels, are primarily located along SR-62; residential and service commercial uses bound the Project area on the north and south, and vacant land is located throughout. The northwest corner of the SPA contains a variety of industrial uses, including automobile repair shops and warehouses; refer to Exhibit 3-4, Aerial Map. The SPA includes a total of 129 residential units and 712,833 square feet (sf) of commercial/industrial uses. Various easements traverse the SPA, including storm drainage facilities and utility easements.

Immediately surrounding the SPA is a mixture of single-family residential, commercial mixed-use, service uses, golf courses, and vacant land.

## 3.2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Town of Yucca Valley has identified the need to improve the economic vitality and livability of the Old Town area by establishing a comprehensive strategy to attract and expand economic activity and commerce. The purpose of the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan is to identify key opportunities to enhance the Town's overall economic base and the historic Old Town area.

The planning process for the Specific Plan included a series of public workshops and meetings to provide opportunities for input by Town residents, business and property owners, developers, and other interested parties. The various workshops and meetings assisted in the development of the overall vision for the Old Town and policy framework for the Specific Plan. The overall visioning exercise provided community consensus and focus to the SPA. The planning process for the Old Town

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Yucca Valley Specific Plan comprised three distinct phases: Phase I (Information Gathering); Phase II (Concepts and Strategies); and Phase III (Preparation of Specific Plan).

The Vision and Specific Plan are based on a comprehensive community involvement process that included the following events:

- February 19, 2004 Town Council initiates process;
- ◆ March 30, 2004 Kickoff meeting with Town staff, Caltrans, and other partners:
- ♦ June 2-11, 2004 Community Immersion Program;
- ♦ July and August, 2004 Meetings with Caltrans and Town;
- ◆ September 2, 2004 Planning Commission and Town Council Workshop;
- ♦ November 18, 2004 Planning Commission and Town Council Workshop;
- ◆ December 10, 2004 Meeting with Caltrans at Town to introduce partnership;
- ◆ January 24, 2005 Meeting with Caltrans at Town to review project;
- March 24, 2005 Project Initiation Proposal prepared by Caltrans;
- ♦ May 19, 2005 Project Initiation Proposal approved by Caltrans; and
- ♦ May 25 and 26, 2005 Confirm New Directions: Old Town Yucca Valley.

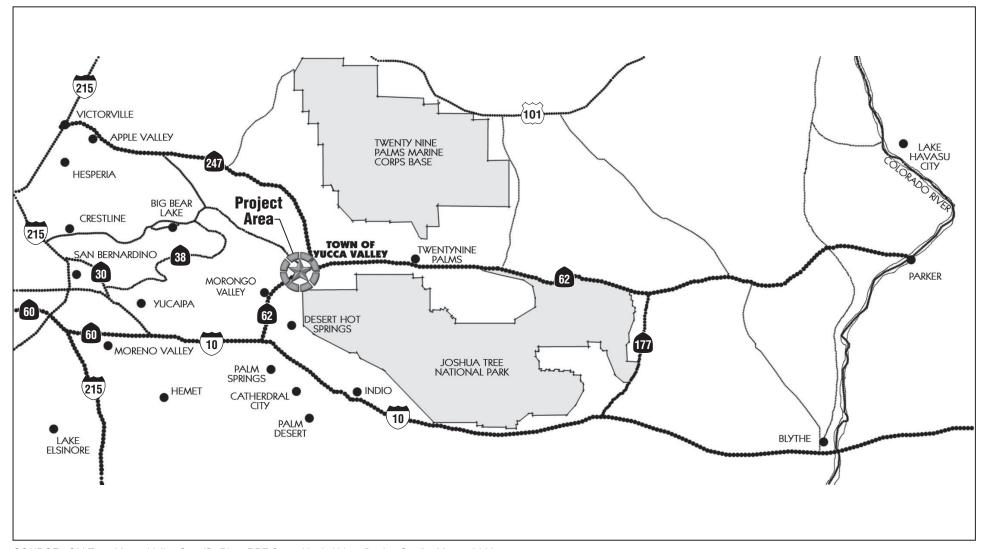
The vision was derived through an intensive public involvement process consisting of ten days of workshops with town staff, the community, and Caltrans District 8. Resulting recommendations, ideas, and efforts of all who attended the immersion week were then synthesized into four alternative concept plans for the SPA, ultimately refining those alternatives to the proposed Vision Plan; refer to Exhibit 3-5, Vision Plan.

## 3.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The Specific Plan serves as a planning and regulatory link between the Town of Yucca Valley General Plan and individual, project-level development within the Project area. The Specific Plan provides area-specific land use regulations and development guidelines. The Specific Plan provides a comprehensive set of plans, guidelines, and regulatory standards in addition to administrative and implementation provisions within the land use districts, and applies to residential, commercial, office, mixed-use, and light industrial uses; refer to <a href="Exhibit 3-6">Exhibit 3-6</a>, <a href="Proposed Land Use Map">Proposed Land Use Map</a>. Upon adoption by the Town, the Specific Plan provides the legal development requirements for the Project area.

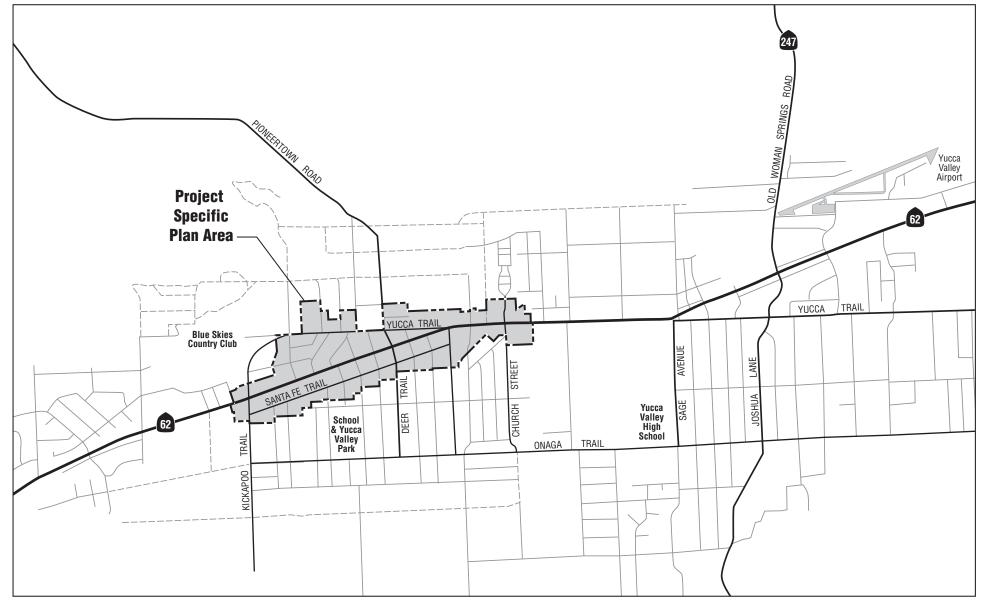
The Specific Plan contains flexible concepts, development standards, and design guidelines for the Old Town area that are intended to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the Town's General Plan.

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SOURCE: Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan, RBF Consulting's Urban Design Studio, May 5, 2006.

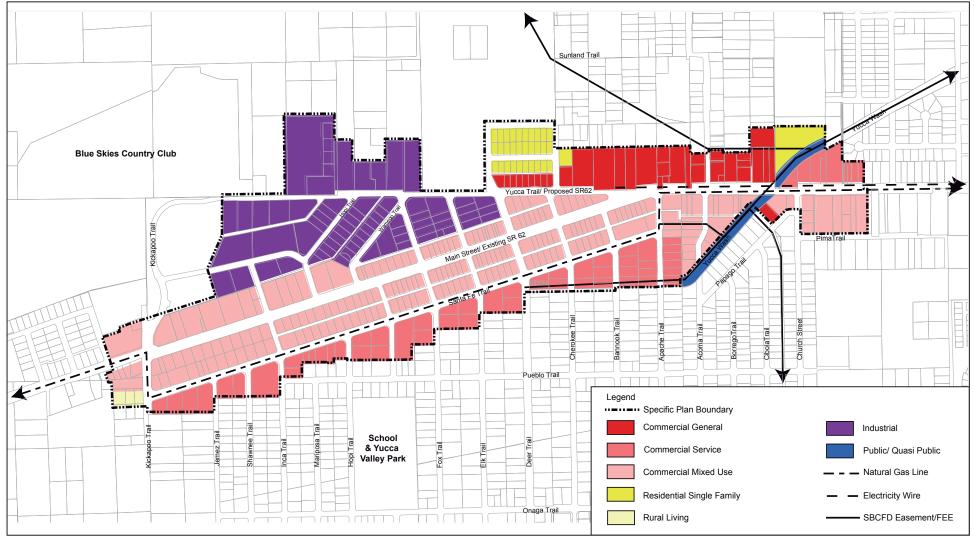






ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT OLD TOWN YUCCA VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN

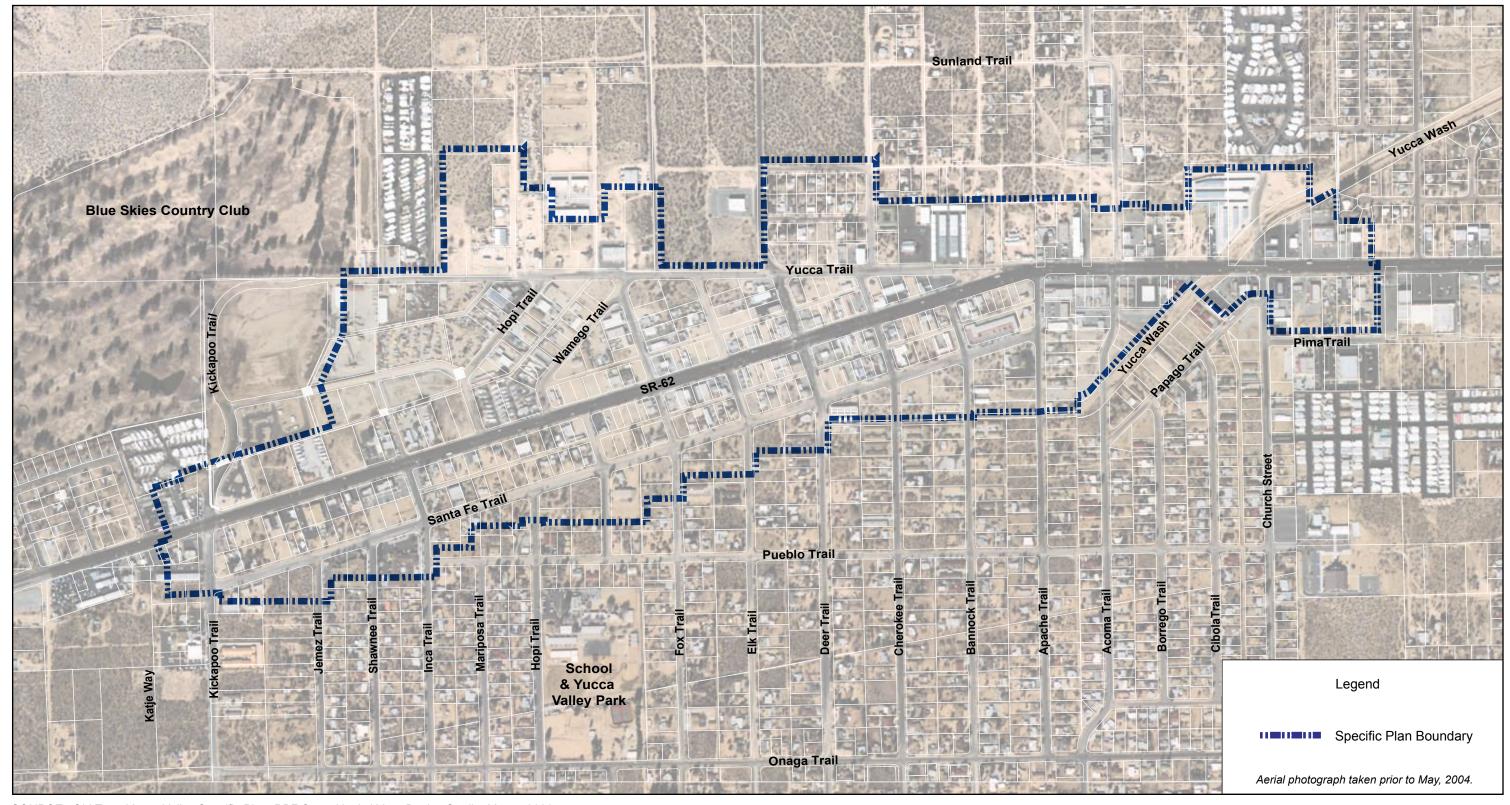
**Project Vicinity** 







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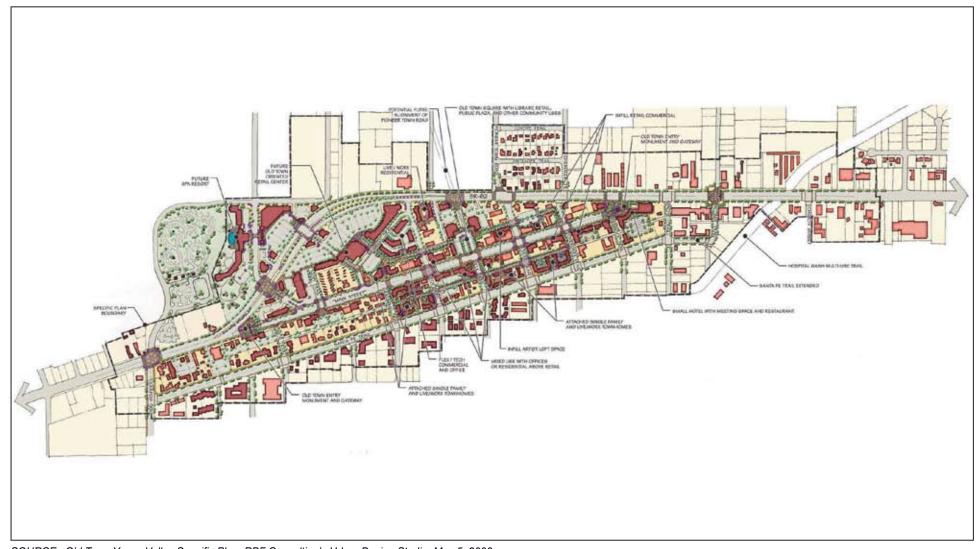


SOURCE: Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan, RBF Consulting's Urban Design Studio, May 5, 2006.

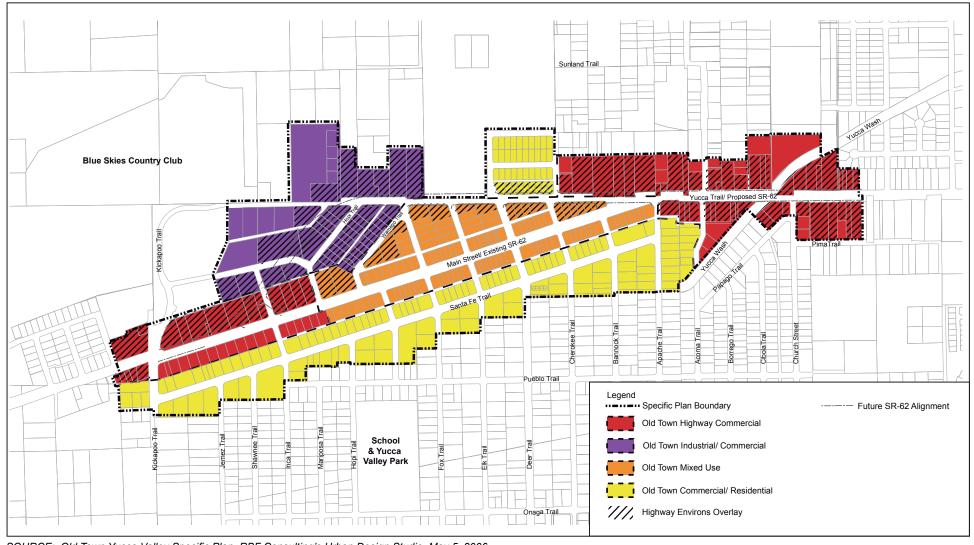
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#### **LAND USE**

The land use plan for the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan provides for the development of four planning districts: the Old Town Mixed-Use District, Old Town Commercial/Residential District, Old Town Industrial/Commercial District, and the Old Town Highway Commercial District. An additional overlay district, the Highway Environs Overlay, provides additional development requirements for those areas that may be affected by the potential realignment of SR-62 and require additional discretionary review. Exhibit 3-6 depicts the boundaries of the planning districts and potential realignment of SR-62 within the Project area. Table 3-1, Land Use Plan Buildout Summary, provides a statistical breakdown of each district within the 184 acres of buildable land within the SPA.

Table 3-1
Land Use Plan Buildout Summary

District and Land Use Type(s)	Existing General Plan		Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan Buildout		Specific Plan Buildout Net Change From General Plan		
		Square Feet	Dwelling Units	Square Feet	Dwelling Units	Square Feet	
Old Town Mixed-Use							
Commercial/Retail – up to 1.00 FAR; Residential – up to 40 du/ac	0	208,812	465	759,317	465	550,505	
Old Town Highway Commercial							
Commercial/Retail – up to 0.35 FAR; Residential – none	16	1,194,444	0	889,684	(16)	(304,760)	
Old Town Commercial/Residential	•						
Commercial/Retail – up to 0.40 FAR; Residential – up to 24 du/ac	11	1,113,542	413	699,769	402	(413,773)	
Old Town Industrial/Commercial							
Industrial/Commercial – up to 0.40 FAR; Residential – up to 30 du/ac	0	862,241	238	551,834	238	(310,407)	
TOTALS	27	3,379,039	1,115	2,900,604	1,088	(478,435)	
Source: Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan, RBF Consulting's Urban Design Studio, May 5, 2006.  Note: FAR = Floor Area Ratio; du/acre = Dwelling Units per Acre.							

As indicated in <u>Table 3-1</u>, the Specific Plan would allow a maximum of 1,115 residential units and up to 2,900,604 sf of a variety of uses, including commercial/retail, industrial/commercial, office, and civic. This would represent an increase of 1,088 dwelling units and a decrease of 478,435 sf of commercial/retail/industrial uses from the existing *Town of Yucca Valley General Plan*. Following is a description of the planning districts.

#### **Old Town Mixed-Use District**

The Old Town Mixed-Use District is the core downtown district of the Specific Plan, with the potential for development of 759,317 sf of commercial retail uses (at a maximum floor-to-area ratio [FAR] of 1.00) and 465 residential units (at a maximum of 40 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]). General features include:

- ♦ Establishes Core Downtown Area;
- Establishes compact, vertical mixed-use development;
- ♦ Mixes complimentary uses: higher-intensity residential, commercial, and smaller-scale retail development;

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- Expands housing opportunities;
- ◆ Provides street-oriented, pedestrian-oriented development; and
- Enhances streetscape.

## **Old Town Highway Commercial District**

The Highway Commercial District serves as the primary eastern and western gateways to the Old Town Specific Plan and provides SR-62-oriented commercial development with the potential for 889,684 sf of commercial and retail uses (FAR of 0.35). General features include:

- Enhances streetscape;
- Caters to the local and regional markets;
- Provides a wide range of retail sales, business, and personal services; and
- Orients primarily to the automobile customer.

#### **Old Town Commercial/Residential District**

The Downtown Commercial/Residential District provides a complementary mix of commercial and residential development with the potential for development of 699,769 sf of commercial retail uses (maximum FAR of 0.40) and 413 residential units (maximum of 24 du/ac). General features include:

- ♦ Buffers Old Town Mixed-Use District from residential areas;
- Offers development that respects adjacent residential development;
- Provides street-oriented, pedestrian-oriented development;
- ♦ Mixes commercial, office, and residential uses; and
- Enhances streetscape.

#### Old Town Industrial/Commercial District

The SR-62 Industrial District provides a variety of industrial/commercial and residential uses in the northwest portion of the SPA near SR-62, with the potential for development of 551,834 sf of industrial/commercial uses (maximum FAR of 0.40) and 238 residential units (maximum of 30 du/ac). General features include:

- Mixes light industrial, flex-tech, small-scale manufacturing, service commercial, and limited live-work residential development uses;
- Serves as a primary node for local commercial activity; and
- ♦ Enhances streetscape.

#### **Highway Environs Overlay District**

The Highway Environs Overlay District provides a heightened level of discretionary review for development proposals in areas where land use regulations may be changed, depending on the future realignment of SR-62. This district ensures that future development proposals are not adversely affected by the potential future realignment of SR-62.

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#### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The Specific Plan provides the Town with the opportunity to develop public facilities to enhance the Old Town area and provide a centralized community meeting place. Some of the public facilities envisioned within the general vicinity of the "Main Street" are a new Town hall and library, a cultural center, a museum, governmental service facilities, and a public square.

#### **CIRCULATION PLAN**

The Circulation Plan proposes a semi-grid system of roadways, emphasizing community and regional linkages to the Old Town area and addressing the potential realignment of SR-62; refer to Exhibit 3-7, Proposed Circulation Map. A "Main Street" is proposed (within the existing SR-62 alignment) that extends through the center of the Old Town. The "Main Street" design incorporates an enhanced gateway from SR-62 and traffic-calming measures to reduce traffic speeds, enhance pedestrian safety, and promote "walkability" of the area. In addition, many of the alleys adjacent to the Main Street are designed with pedestrian shoulders to be more pedestrian-friendly and to enhance alternative connections. The Circulation Plan also identifies the potential SR-62 realignment location and conceptual gateway lane configurations, currently being studied by Caltrans District 8.

#### Linkages

The Specific Plan has developed a system of linkages and connections to and between the Old Town area and other areas of the Town for bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobiles that would contribute to the Old Town revitalization; at the core of this issue are the potential SR-62 realignment and the local street system. The Circulation Plan articulates the envisioned network of roadways to optimize connections, identify gateways, and develop alternatives for moving around Old Town. With the SR-62 realignment, a more pedestrian-friendly "Main Street" environment would evolve through the center of the Old Town, enhancing community pedestrian and bicycle linkages.

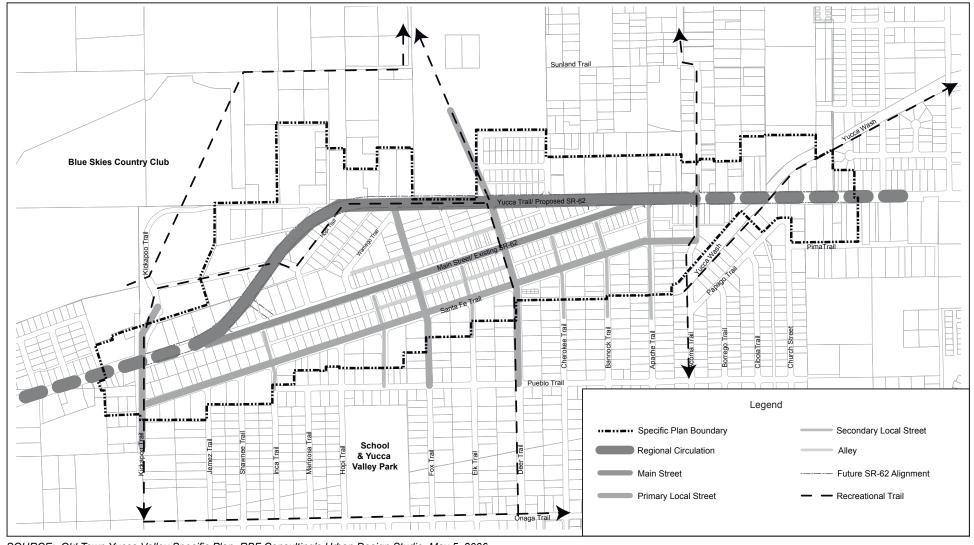
#### **Roadway Network**

The roadway network includes a variety of cross-sections to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Right-of-ways range from 110 to 134 feet and include from one to three lanes of travel.

#### SR-62 Realignment

The Specific Plan incorporates the proposed SR-62 realignment to allow east—west traffic to travel around (instead of through) the Town, allowing Old Town Yucca Valley to become more pedestrian-oriented. East of Kickapoo Trail, SR-62 would turn northerly and transition to Yucca Trail in the vicinity of Hopi Trail. The ultimate realignment of SR-62 would be determined upon further study by Caltrans and the Town of Yucca Valley; the preferred realignment identified in the Specific Plan is conceptual. As part of the traffic analysis for this Specific Plan and discussions with the community and Town Staff, Caltrans Alternative D was selected as the preferred SR-62 realignment alternative. The proposed SR-62 realignment will be discussed in a separate environmental study to be conducted by Caltrans.

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With the implementation of the proposed realignment of SR-62 (Alternative D), the existing alignment of SR-62 between Kickapoo Trail and Apache Trail would change classification to a two-lane divided industrial roadway and be redesignated as "Main Street." Yucca Trail would be classified as a six-lane divided highway and designated as SR-62; Santa Fe Trail would remain classified as a four-lane divided collector. With the forecast *General Plan* buildout and incorporation of the proposed SR-62 realignment (Alternative D), all of the study roadway segments are forecast to operate at an acceptable LOS.

#### **Traffic Calming**

The Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan provides traffic-calming measures in the Circulation Plan that would slow traffic, reduce traffic noise, and improve pedestrian safety. Traffic-calming methods have been incorporated in the Main Street design, including midblock and corner bump-outs, parallel and perpendicular parking areas, and enhanced intersection paving. Additional traffic-calming measures are encouraged to be utilized throughout the Specific Plan area, such as roundabouts, chokers, and raised medians.

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle/Equestrian Trails

The trails system includes a pedestrian-oriented street system encompassing wide sidewalks and public plazas that vary between 15 to 35 feet along Main Street. In addition, 4-foot and 10-foot accent pedestrian shoulders are incorporated along alleys adjacent to Main Street. On-street Class 1 bike paths are proposed to extend along SR-62/Yucca Trail and Santa Fe Trail, connecting the local street network. The proposed Yucca Wash multi-use trail would be a 10-foot decomposed granite trial for equestrian and pedestrian use, ultimately connecting to the regional California Riding and Hiking Trail System.

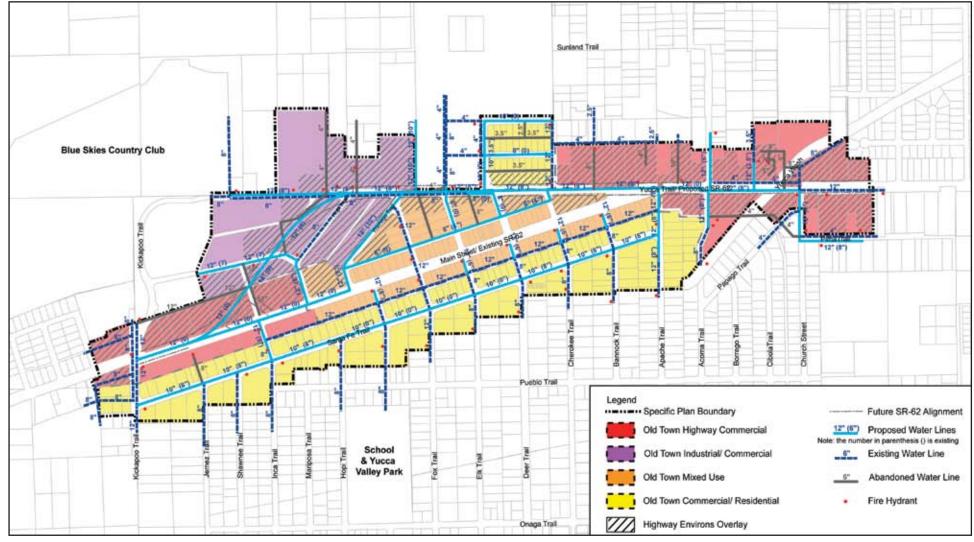
#### **INFRASTURCTURE PLAN**

The Specific Plan identifies the infrastructure improvements anticipated to meet the demands of the Land Use Plan. As the Specific Plan is a policy-level plan, the timing of all infrastructure improvements identified in the Specific Plan represent the ultimate buildout conditions of the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan. The proposed infrastructure improvements would involve domestic water, wastewater, and storm drainage systems.

#### **Domestic Water System**

The Yucca Valley Revitalization Project Draft Utility Plan was prepared for the Specific Plan (September 9, 2005) to identify the existing water demands and compare the needs based upon buildout of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan would result in the buildout of water infrastructure and presents an opportunity to upgrade and ensure the adequacy of fire hydrant coverage. The proposed water system improvements are outlined in <u>Table 3-2</u>, <u>Proposed Water Infrastructure Improvements</u>, and illustrated on <u>Exhibit 3-8</u>, <u>Proposed Water Plan</u>.

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## Table 3-2 Proposed Water Infrastructure Improvements (Hi-Desert Water District)

Proposed Improvement		Approximate Length (feet)
1	Replace existing 3.5" steel pipe with 8" PVC pipe	320
2	Replace existing 4" steel pipe with 8" PVC pipe	1,300
3	Replace existing 3.5" steel pipe with 10" PVC pipe	260
4	Replace existing 6" steel/PVC pipe with 10" PVC pipe	1,425
5	Replace existing 8" steel/PVC pipe with 10" PVC pipe	855
6	Replace existing 8" steel/PVC pipe with 12" PVC pipe	5,055
7	Replace existing 10" steel/PVC pipe with 12" PVC pipe	860
8	Replace existing unknown pipe with 12" PVC pipe	700
9	Install new 8" PVC Pipe	4,770
10	Install new 12" PVC Pipe	3,755
11	Abandon 2.5" steel pipe in ROW	160
12	Abandon 3.5" PVC/steel pipe in ROW	700
13	Abandon 4" steel pipe in ROW	2,495
14	Abandon 8" steel pipe in ROW	1,650
15	Abandon 10" steel pipe in ROW	905
16	Abandon 12" ACP pipe in ROW	1,150
17	Abandon "Unknown" PVC pipe in ROW	1,840

#### **Wastewater System**

It is anticipated that private septic systems will continue to be used for wastewater disposal until sufficient development has occurred to extend sewer system infrastructure to Yucca Valley.

The Hi-Desert Water District anticipates constructing a wastewater treatment plant in Yucca Valley, southeast of the SPA. Future wastewater improvements, including the elimination of private septic systems and the construction of new wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal systems, are anticipated.

#### **Storm Drainage System**

As indicated in the Town of Yucca Valley Master Plan of Drainage, most of the stormwater flows from the eastern portion of the SPA would be conveyed through Yucca Wash; storm flows from the southern portions would be conveyed through street flows within Santa Fe Trail, southwest to the intersection of Inca Trail/Santa Fe Trail. From that intersection, stormwater would be conveyed through a reinforced concrete pipe to the Blue Skies Country Club. Yucca Wash northeast of Apache Trail is proposed to be constructed of rock-revetted side slopes, and the southwest portion would be a concrete-lined channel. Stormwater flows would be conveyed via

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curb street systems. <u>Exhibit 5.3-3</u>, <u>Existing Drainage</u>, illustrates the proposed storm drainage system.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

The Specific Plan describes the public services provided in the Project area and their ability to meet the new demand in the ultimate buildout conditions of the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan. The proposed public services would involve schools, fire protection, law enforcement, library, communication systems, electricity, natural gas, and solid waste.

#### **DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

The Development Regulations presented in the Specific Plan establish the zoning districts for the SPA, the allowable uses (allowed and conditionally allowed) that apply within each zoning district, and the development and design standards that apply within each district. Together, the table of allowed uses and the development and design standards prescribe the allowed development for the area. The intent of the Development Regulations, together with the Design Guidelines, is to implement the goals of the Specific Plan. The proposed Development Regulations involve:

- ♦ General Provisions:
- ♦ Establishment of Land Use Subdistricts:
- Allowable Land Uses and Permit Requirements;
- Nonconforming Uses, Structures, and Parcels;
- Zoning Subdistrict Development Standards;
- Standards for Specific Land Uses;
- Off-Street Parking and Loading Standards;
- Landscaping, Walls, and Fences;
- ♦ Signs
- Auxiliary Structures, Equipment and Utilities;
- General Operating Standards;
- Development Incentives;
- Development Review Procedures; and
- ♦ Highway Environs Overlay Subdistrict.

#### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Design Guidelines are intended to promote quality design and to ensure that new development and rehabilitation promote a clear community identity and sense of place. The Design Guidelines encourage preservation of the Town's historic core, yet allow flexibility in new infill development that is compatible with the character of the area. The Design Guidelines establish the Town's design philosophy for Old Town and are one of the main elements used to evaluate development projects subject to discretionary review. The proposed Design Guidelines involve:

- ♦ Site Design:
- Architecture;

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- Development Details; and
- ♦ Commercial Signs.

#### **ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The Administration and Implementation provisions contained in the Specific Plan are applicable to development activity and land use within the boundary of the Specific Plan. The regulations, development standards, and guidelines as contained in the Specific Plan would apply in their entirety to the review of new development proposals. However, for review of proposals to modify existing development, existing site conditions may constrain the extent to which the Specific Plan development standards and guidelines can be met. These provisions identify the process and method for amendments to the *General Plan*, Zoning Code, and the Specific Plan. An implementation matrix, which identifies implementation stops and actions, timeframes for implementation, implementation leaders and teams, cost estimates for improvements and programs, and potential funding resources is also provided in the Specific Plan.

#### 3.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The purpose of preparing a Specific Plan is to ensure the orderly development of the Old Town Yucca Valley planning area. The Project goals and objectives include the following:

- Implement the General Plan policies by presenting more detailed direction for the Old Town area to improve its overall walkability, traffic circulation, and economic viability.
- Provide a diversity of housing opportunities that responds to a variety of local needs, incomes, and densities, and promote a vibrant Old Town area.
- ♦ Establish high-quality architectural design, in both scale and character, to address the future growth of the area.
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- Develop safe motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation systems, emphasizing the pedestrian experience along the "Main Street" within the Old Town area and mitigating potential future impacts at SR-62 intersections.
- Carry forward the Vision Plan, guiding principles, and community input and consensus generated during the community outreach program, through more detailed plans, guidelines, and regulations.

## 3.5 PHASING

The Specific Plan has been developed to provide as much flexibility as allowed by state law. The development and/or redevelopment of the Old Town Yucca Valley

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Specific Plan Project area would be a multi-year effort. The preferred land use development concept and associated improvements necessary are envisioned to occur over a 20-year period. However, future development and/or redevelopment in the Project area would be dependent on and responsive to prevailing market conditions.

## 3.6 AGREEMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS

The Town of Yucca Valley is the Lead Agency for the Project and has discretionary authority over the primary Project proposal, which includes the following:

- ♦ <u>Environmental Review</u>. The Program EIR requires a certification recommendation by the Planning Commission and then presentation to the Town Council for certification.
- ♦ <u>General Plan Amendment</u>. The *General Plan* would be amended concurrently with adoption of the Specific Plan, as follows:
  - The Land Use Element would be amended to designate the Project area as Specific Plan (SP); and
  - The Circulation Element would be amended to reflect the circulation proposed by the Specific Plan.
- Development Code and Zoning Map Amendment. The Development Code and Zoning Map would be amended to indicate the new Specific Plan zoning district SP (Specific Plan), including the proposed planning districts: Old Town Mixed-Use (OTMU); Old Town Highway Commercial (OTHC); Old Town Commercial/Residential (OTCR); and Old Town Industrial/Commercial (OTIC). Individual development projects within the SPA would be subject to review for consistency with the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan, the Town of Yucca Valley Development Code, and other applicable development regulations on a project-by-project basis.
- ◆ Tentative Parcel and Tract Subdivision Maps. Individual tentative parcel or tract subdivision maps are subject to the requirements of the Specific Plan, as well as the Town of Yucca Valley Subdivision Ordinance.
- Site/Development Plan Review. Future uses would be subject to review and approval by the Town, according to the Development Review Procedures outlined in Chapter 4.13 of the Specific Plan (e.g., Plan Review, Site Plan Review, Conditional Use Permit, and other discretionary actions), as required by the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan and the Development Code.
- ♦ <u>Grading Permits</u>. Future grading for development within the SPA would be subject to the review of plans and approval of grading permits by the Town.
- ♦ <u>Building Permits</u>. Future construction of structures within the SPA would be subject to the review of plans and approval of building permits by the Town.

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Approval of the Specific Plan is subject to actions set forth by the Town of Yucca Valley. Project construction is subject to review and/or approval by the following agencies:

- ◆ Town of Yucca Valley Town Manager's Office
- ◆ Town Council and Redevelopment Agency
- ♦ Town of Yucca Valley Planning Commission
- ◆ Town of Yucca Valley Community Development Department
- ♦ Town of Yucca Valley Administrative Services Department
- ♦ Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department
- ♦ Town of Yucca Valley Public Works/Engineering Department
- ♦ County of San Bernardino Fire Department
- ♦ County of San Bernardino Sheriff's Department
- ♦ County of San Bernardino, Advanced Planning Division
- County of San Bernardino, Department of Public Health
- ♦ County of San Bernardino, Department of Public Works
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board
- ♦ Hi-Desert Water District
- ♦ Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District

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