

A t t a c h m e n t H - 9

SAN DIEGO COUNTY
Growing a Community

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*Essential building blocks conducive to a
community's successful growth and a
qualitative analysis of how those building
blocks relate to the unincorporated
backcountry communities in
San Diego County*

Introduction and Overview

Background

San Diego County is in the later stages of updating its General Plan which was last comprehensively updated in 1979. The General Plan sets a direction for the future of the unincorporated area of the County by providing a clear, unified framework for community development and conservation. The updated General Plan supports the protection of the County's unique resources and character, and promotes environmentally sustainable and innovative solutions for shaping the type and location of new development.

Through the General Plan update process, the County has analyzed alternative land use/growth plans and suggested modifications to the County's Land Use Map. Future development in the updated General Plan is directed to areas within and adjacent to existing communities where existing or planned infrastructure and services can best support it. Most areas identified as appropriate for significant growth are located in the western portion of the County within the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) boundary. Given various constraints, reduced residential land use densities compared to the existing General Plan have been assigned to lands in some unincorporated community planning areas and subregions located outside the CWA boundary. Questions have been raised about the impact of the reduced densities on the ability of those communities to grow and corresponding economic effects.

Purpose of this Study

This study addresses the effects of the proposed change in planned densities to backcountry communities that would result from the General Plan Update. To do this, it provides a discussion of the essential building blocks that comprise a framework conducive to a community's successful growth, and a qualitative analysis of how those building blocks relate to the unincorporated communities located outside the CWA boundary.

Often, without the essential building blocks growth will naturally limit itself. This is simply because the market conditions are not consistently present to support the growth. However, market conditions fluctuate and occasionally at peaks and valleys businesses or developers looking for short term gains may be able to justify an investment. Unfortunately, growth that is not based on the essential building blocks is not sustainable. It will result in an imbalance within the community that will likely lead to future failures that degrade and blight a community, which in turn result in greater long-term public costs. The information contained herein is intended to serve as an additional resource for the County in analyzing its preferred land use plan.

This study includes the following three sections:

Seven Building Blocks of a Growing Community – Describes the building blocks that are conducive to a community’s successful growth along with the benefits of such growth.

Applying the Seven Building Blocks to San Diego County - Provides a discussion on how the seven building blocks apply to San Diego’s community planning areas and subregions located outside of the CWA boundary.

Case Studies/Relevant Examples – Provides an overview of two communities in eastern San Diego County: Julian, a community where components of the seven building blocks exist; and Ranchita, a community where most of the building blocks do not exist. Additionally, an overview is provided on a community located outside of San Diego County, and how it is struggling to grow because it does not contain all seven building blocks.

Executive Summary

- The creation of balanced, integrated, and sustainable communities is supported by the updated County General Plan, and provides numerous benefits ranging from: more efficient use of the land; reduced impacts on natural and agricultural resources; a more balanced range of jobs and housing; reduced vehicle miles traveled and associated impacts; lower infrastructure costs; more reliable economies and revenue streams, and improved quality of life.
- Opportunities for growth in the unincorporated communities located outside the CWA boundary are limited due to a number of constraints including rugged terrain, presence of floodplains, and limited road networks and public services. In response, the updated San Diego County General Plan directs a majority of the unincorporated County’s future development to communities within the CWA boundary, and reduces residential land use densities in some communities outside the CWA boundary.
- Past growth trends illustrate that, even with the higher land use densities that have been in place under the current General Plan, growth in most of the communities outside the CWA boundary has not materialized at the levels currently allowed. This is at least partially attributed to constraints found in these communities, as well as the absence of some of the seven building blocks.
- Most of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary in unincorporated San Diego County do not contain all seven building blocks of a growing community and, as a result, the future growth and the ultimate size of these communities will be constrained. If significant growth does occur, it will not be sustainable and will likely lead to future blight and increased public costs.

- In the community of Julian all seven building blocks of a growing community are either fully or partially present. Although Julian will experience modest growth in the future, land constraints could constrict the geographic limits that Julian could feasibly expand and grow. In addition, it is anticipated that if all allocated land uses are developed, the long term groundwater availability may be exceeded, ultimately constraining growth.
- In contrast, in the community of Ranchita most of the seven building blocks are not present. As a result, it will be difficult for the community to grow sustainably in the future.
- The seven building blocks necessary for growth are not unique to San Diego County, and also apply to other communities in the State.

The Building Blocks

There are numerous reasons why communities grow. These can vary from community to community, and ultimately influence the form, character and size of a community. On a very basic level, communities grow because residents and businesses are attracted by the assets of a location that supports their shared needs, well-being, and ideals about quality of life. The most successful communities present a combination of assets, or building blocks, that are not only attractive to growth, but contribute to the community's long-term viability – an economic, environmental, and socially sustainable future.

For the purposes of this study, seven building blocks have been identified that comprise a framework conducive to a community's successful growth. The seven building blocks are: (1) geographic location; (2) land suitability; (3) presence of an economic driver; (4) ability to provide quality housing choices; (5) access to services and amenities; (6) availability of public services and infrastructure; and (7) reliable economic resources. These building blocks represent a compilation of key development principles derived through review of numerous planning and economic studies, as well as the examination of actual communities and development projects.

These building blocks are interrelated and reinforce each other. All seven are needed in order for a community to support substantial long term growth. The more the building blocks are present, the greater the opportunity to create a balanced, integrated and sustainable community. A community's growth may ultimately be limited and its long-term viability challenged, if not all seven building blocks are not present. Beyond the building blocks, opportunities for successful growth are enhanced by a proactive local government and citizenry mobilized to implement a collective vision to foster investment in a community.

The seven building blocks for a growing community, and their relationship to each other, are illustrated on Figure 1, and described below. As a general rule, geographic location and land suitability, as well as the presence of an economic driver, are required for the other building blocks to form. In turn, the ability to provide quality housing choices, access to services and amenities, availability of public services and infrastructure, and reliable economic resources all contribute to the attractiveness of an area to potential economic drivers and residents.

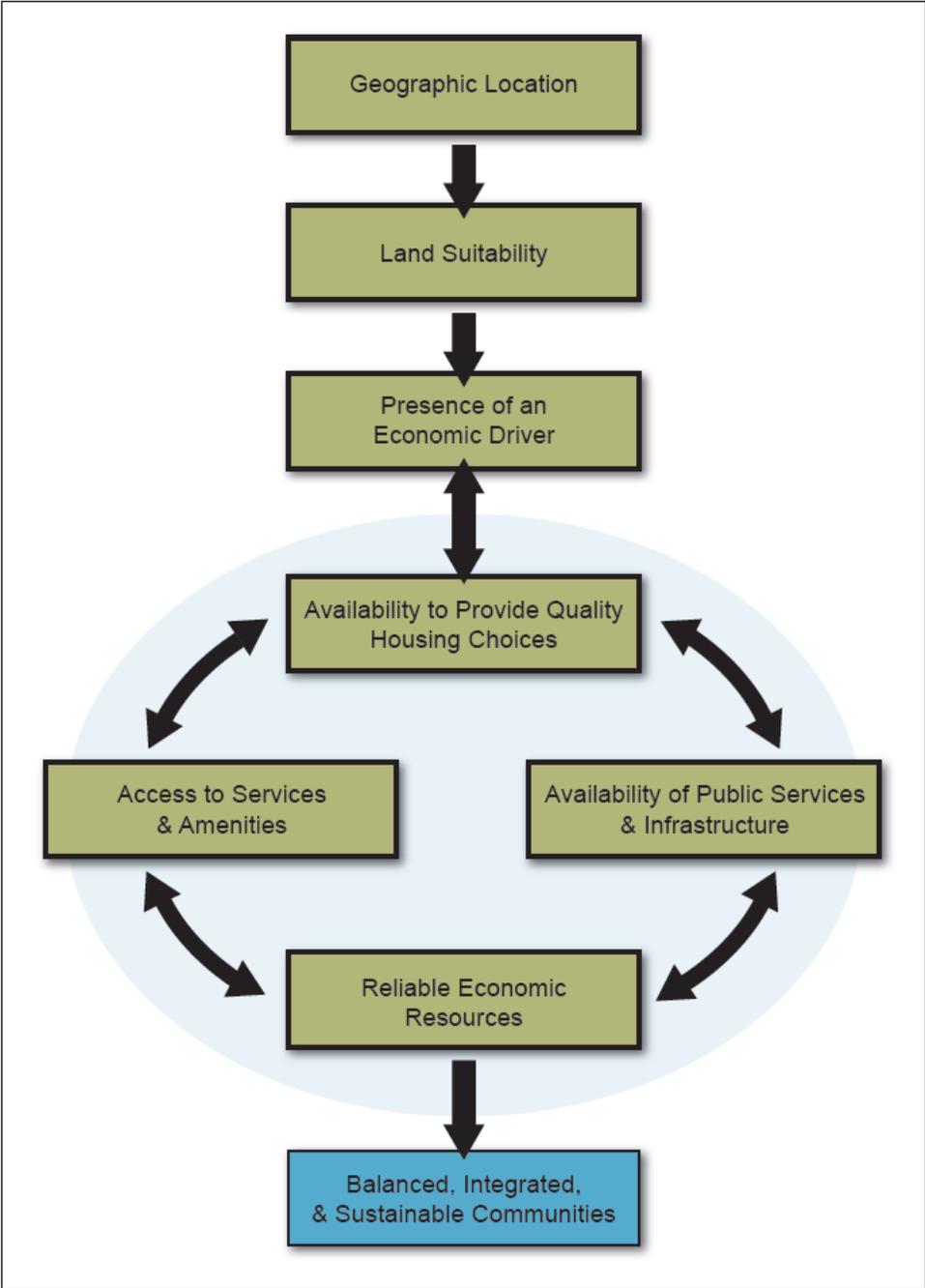


FIGURE 1: SEVEN BUILDING BLOCKS OF A GROWING COMMUNITY

1 Geographic Location

The location of a community is crucial to its future growth opportunities. A community typically needs to be positioned in a desirable and reasonably accessible geographic location in order to attract a broad variety of residents, businesses, visitors, and supporting uses. For employment growth in particular, direct and convenient access from major regional transportation routes to the local skilled labor pool, supply lines, and markets is essential to the operations of many industries.¹ It is, therefore, generally advantageous for jobs, retail, and services to be located within or in close proximity to each other. While residents are often willing to commute to jobs and certain retail and services, added travel distances and times increase mobility costs, gasoline consumption, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and time away from home and family. The ability of a community to attract residents and industries generally diminishes as commute times and distances lengthen, thereby limiting growth opportunities.

2 Land Suitability

Suitable land that can accommodate development is also essential for growth. Land constraints that can physically limit development include steep topography and location within a floodplain. Other land constraints that should be considered when determining where growth can occur, include the presence of significant habitats and resources, or existence of environmental hazards such as wildfires. Such constraints can limit growth opportunities by confining the geographic location that growth may occur, restricting the feasible types and intensities of development, adding to permitting and mitigation requirements, and increasing overall development costs. For example, developing housing or businesses on steep hillsides can limit building intensities; create challenges and additional costs relating to grading, building design, access, and the provision of utilities; result in visual and other impacts; and potentially expose residents and employees to the risks of unstable soils and/or wildland fires.

3 Presence of an Economic Driver

One of the more critical building blocks of a growing community is the presence of an economic driver to stimulate growth and generate high quality jobs. An economic driver may consist of a large employer that supplies a job base to the community and surrounding areas. It can also be an economic anchor or attraction supporting an industry focused on a community's unique assets such as agriculture, mining, tourism, or recreation. Many communities are able to attract growth because they have distinct resources such as an historic downtown, prominent cultural or heritage asset, proximity to a college campus, or other similar attractions.²

An economic driver provides a draw for residents, businesses, and visitors. It is essential to the growth of a community because it generates jobs, increases local income,

improves the local standard of living, and provides revenues to the community through sales and property taxes. Additionally, it can stimulate secondary growth by attracting other industries and businesses that build upon and/or support the economic driver. In general, the most effective economic drivers complement and enhance the existing assets, character, and local businesses of an area.^{3, 4}

4 Ability to Provide Quality Housing Choices

While an economic driver attracts jobs and residents to a community, businesses need quality housing in close proximity for their employees. The ability to support a range of housing choices enhances opportunities for growth by increasing the attractiveness and viability of a community to potential businesses and residents.

An adequate supply and range of housing densities, product types, and prices provides residents a choice, and the opportunity to match housing options with income levels and lifestyles.⁵ This is of special concern for people with low and moderate incomes, often teachers, entry level public safety personnel, retail and services workers, and other employees for whom finding housing close to work can be a challenge. The more limited the range of housing options available, the more limited the range of residents that the community can attract. As an example, reliance on large-lot residential development alone creates few opportunities for affordable housing, and limits the population living in the area.⁶ By providing for a diversity of housing choices, residents have the chance to both live and work within a community, thereby reducing commute times and the consumption of natural resources.

5 Access to Services and Amenities

Beyond the availability of jobs and housing, residents and businesses are drawn to communities that offer, or are in close proximity to, a variety of local services and amenities.⁷ These may include retail shops, personal services, restaurants, entertainment venues, theaters, recreation and cultural facilities. In addition to providing for the daily needs of local employees and residents, these services and amenities can act as economic attractors, provide jobs, generate sales tax revenue, and contribute to the viability, liveliness, and quality of life of a community. Supporting services and amenities need to be planned with residential growth to create a balance of uses and sustainable communities. When these services and amenities are located within or in close proximity to a community, residents and employees do not need to travel far to meet their daily needs. The result is a sustainable community that experiences reduced vehicle miles traveled, corresponding social and environmental benefits, and enhanced opportunities for growth.⁸

6 Availability of Public Services and Infrastructure

The availability of cost effective and efficient public services and infrastructure is a key to accommodating growth.⁹ It plays a major role in the ability to be competitive in attracting new uses, in particular commercial and employment opportunities.¹⁰ It is recognized that public services and infrastructure are generally provided at lower levels in rural versus urban communities, and can be supplied through public or private mechanisms and systems. No matter the approach, opportunities to grow, and the overall quality of life and well-being of a community, are enhanced by the ability to supply and maintain such services and infrastructure at levels appropriate to meet the demands and cost expectations of existing and future residents and businesses.

Quality law enforcement and fire protection services are essential to ensuring a safe community. Schools, parks, and libraries contribute to social and cultural enrichment and, when located within or in close proximity to a community, allow for convenient access to these basic public services without residents needing to drive long distances.¹¹ Water, wastewater, storm drainage, roads, solid waste disposal, energy, and telecommunications provided at reasonable rural standards support development and protect public health and safety. Without the ability to provide cost effective and efficient public services and infrastructure, the opportunities for growth that supports economic drivers, quality housing choices, and community services and amenities, can be severely hindered.

7 Reliable Economic Resources

Finally, a stable tax base and/or other revenue streams are required to provide and sustain in perpetuity the public services and infrastructure necessary to support growth. In addition to property and sales tax, revenue sources may include capital facilities and user fees, special service and assessment districts, community facilities districts, general obligation and revenue bonds, state and federal funding, and private financing. The development of balanced communities that include an economic driver and associated employment, retail, and residential uses can help to establish reliable economic resources. The current fiscal structure in California inherently depends upon revenues generated by employment and commercial activities to offset the service costs associated with residential development. In turn, residential development is needed in order to make employment and commercial uses viable. By creating communities that have a balance of uses, the opportunity to establish adequate and stable revenue streams is enhanced.

Support for Balanced, Integrated and Sustainable Communities

The seven building blocks establish a framework conducive to successful growth. They support the premise that communities should be strategically located and promote

efficient use of the land and natural resources; allow residents to live, work, play and meet their daily needs locally; and provide for the efficient and cost effective provision of infrastructure and services. In essence, the seven building blocks contribute to the development of communities that are balanced, integrated, and sustainable.

Updated San Diego County General Plan Direction

The basic principles identified above are consistent with and supported by the updated San Diego County General Plan. The core concept of the updated General Plan is to focus future development to areas where existing or planned infrastructure and services can support growth within or adjacent to existing communities. This promotes communities that maximize existing infrastructure and provide for efficient service delivery, while preserving the rural nature and lifestyle of the remainder of the County.

The updated General Plan promotes communities that offer residents with places to live, work, shop, be educated, and recreate in a rural setting. The General Plan Update Community Development Model envisions a series of small scale "Villages" that contain the broadest range of uses and highest intensities of development, surrounded by lesser intensity "Semi-Rural" and "Rural Lands" consisting of residences on large lots, agriculture, and open space. The "Villages" are intended to grow in compact development patterns to minimize intrusion into agricultural lands and open space; are to provide for housing near commercial services, employment centers, and amenities; and are to be supported by an efficient network of roads, infrastructure and services.

Based upon the above principles, the General Plan Update assigns specific land uses and residential densities on lands that are likely, and not likely to develop. This results in growth that is predictable, rather than designating blanket estate residential or other large lot residential designations in rural areas that allow for more growth than is projected.

Key Benefits

There are a number of benefits to promoting balanced, integrated and sustainable communities, and the seven building blocks that contribute to the establishment of such communities. These include:

- More efficient use of the land and compact land use patterns.
- Reduced impact of human activities on natural systems including the preservation of sensitive visual, natural and cultural resources.
- Reduced rates of farmland conversion.
- Strong integration of uses with more efficient and balanced relationship between jobs, quality housing options, services, and amenities.

- Reduced vehicle miles travelled resulting in improved air quality, lower greenhouse gas emissions, less reliance on oil and other fossil fuels, more efficient use of nonrenewable resources, and the ability for residents to spend more time with their families.
- Improved opportunity for the County to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets as required by AB 32.
- Healthier and safer communities.
- More efficient use of existing and future infrastructure, and more efficient delivery of public services, resulting in reduced costs to build and operate essential infrastructure and services.
- More resilient local economies and improved ability to establish reliable and sustainable revenue streams to fund services and infrastructure.
- Improved quality of life

Applying the Seven Building Blocks in San Diego County

Background

The updated General Plan directs future development to areas where existing or planned infrastructure and services can support growth within or adjacent to existing communities, allowing for the preservation of the rural nature and lifestyle of the remainder of the County. Most areas within the unincorporated County identified as appropriate for growth are located within the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) boundary which covers the western portion of the County. The majority of the unincorporated County's new development – approximately 80 percent – is planned within the CWA boundary. This coincides with the provision of imported water, and reflects the development pattern in the western areas of the County where the largest unincorporated communities are located and where the demand for new development has and will continue to be greatest.

Future growth is limited in areas outside of the CWA boundary - the eastern portion of the County - due to rugged terrain, presence of agricultural lands and sensitive environmental habitats, as well as limited road networks and public services. Community planning areas and subregions with limited growth potential include Pala/Pauma, North Mountain (Palomar Mountain), Julian, Central Mountain (Cuyamaca, Descanso, and Pine Valley), Jamul/Dulzura, Desert (Borrego Springs), and Mountain Empire (Jacumba, Boulevard, Campo/ Lake Morena, Potrero, and Tecate). Figure 2 illustrates the location of the County's community planning areas and subregions as well as the CWA boundary.

With few exceptions, the unincorporated communities outside the CWA boundary are sparsely populated and lack the infrastructure and employment opportunities to support anything more than limited population growth. They rely largely upon septic systems with the exception of some areas of sewer service in Julian and Borrego Springs. They are located outside of the CWA boundary and are not served with imported water and, thus, growth is also limited by groundwater availability. Further, these communities contain a substantial amount of public lands, tribal land, and land affected by the Forest Conservation Initiative; therefore, County land use control in these areas is somewhat limited. Residents in the affected communities generally want to preserve their existing rural setting and character.

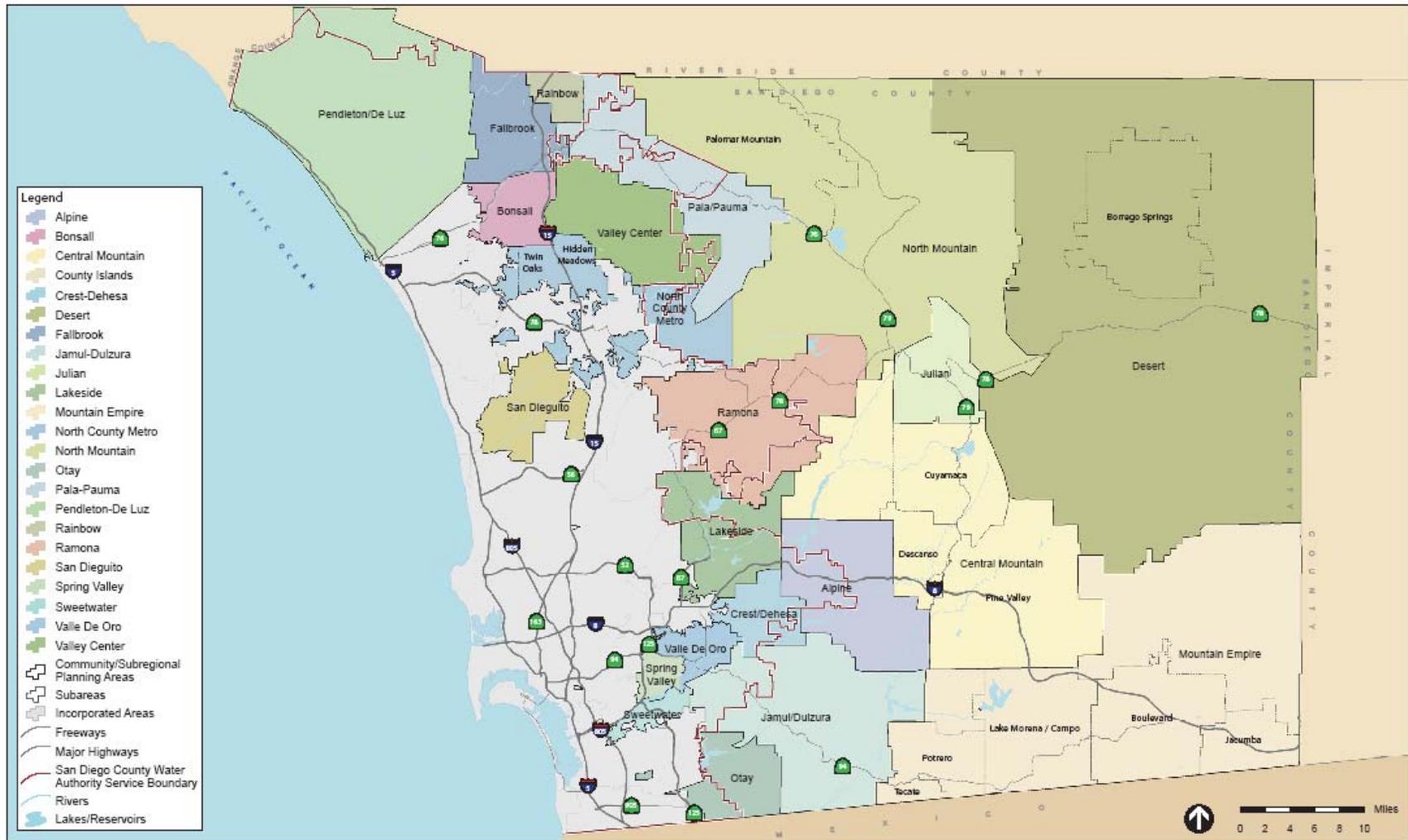
Given the above, the General Plan Update has reduced the residential land use densities in these communities from one dwelling unit per four acres down to one dwelling unit per 20-80 acres. Most of these communities also contain a small amount of commercial uses, envisioned to serve the local residential population.

Past Growth Trends

San Diego County’s existing General Plan allocates higher residential land use densities in the communities located outside of the CWA boundary than the General Plan Update. Even with higher residential densities in place under the current General Plan, residential development in the communities outside the CWA boundary has not materialized at the levels currently allowed. Although many of these communities experienced modest to high population growth from 1990 to 2000, half of them declined in population from 2000 to 2008, as shown below, however some of this decline could be attributed to the loss of homes in the 2003 and 2007 wildfires.

Community Planning Area/Subregion	Population Percent Change from 1990-2000	Population Percent Change from 2000-2008
Central Mountain	14	-5
Desert	6	8
Jamul/Dulzura	8	8
Julian	31	-2
Mountain Empire	19	1
North Mountain	2	-15
Pala/Pauma Valley	30	-9

San Diego County General Plan Update EIR, April 2, 2010.



COMMUNITY AND SUBREGIONAL PLANNING AREAS

FIGURE 2

Analysis of Communities Located Outside of the CWA Boundary

This section provides a discussion on how the seven building blocks of a growing community apply to San Diego's community planning areas and subregions located outside of the CWA boundary.

1 Geographic Location

A community generally needs to be positioned in a reasonably accessible geographic location in order to attract a broad range of residents, businesses, visitors, and supporting uses.¹² Some of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary, especially the ones in the eastern-most portion of the County, are a substantial distance from population centers. Many of these communities such as Potrero and Campo are located along rural two-lane highways that follow the topography of the mountains and valleys. Others, such as the community of Morena Village, do not have direct highway access to population centers. Due to the geographic location of some of these communities and their lack of direct and convenient access to regional transportation routes, the ability to grow and attract a variety of residents, employers, and supporting services could be limited.

2 Land Suitability

Land constraints to growth in many of the communities outside the CWA boundary include severe topography and location within a floodplain. Other land constraints that should be considered when determining where growth can occur include: presence of significant biological, agricultural, and groundwater resources; and hazards such as wildfires.

- Many of the communities are characterized by rugged terrain limiting potential building intensities, presenting challenges to providing adequate access and utilities, increasing development costs, and constraining potential growth and development. In fact, much of the area located outside of the CWA boundary is highly constrained with steep slopes 25 percent or greater, which include the North Mountain, Pala/Pauma, Central Mountain, and Jamul/Dulzura subareas, as well as the Julian Community Plan Area.
- Floodplains exist along rivers and water course in some communities outside the CWA boundary, such as in the Potrero area within the Mountain Empire Subregion. Growth within floodplain areas should be limited in order to protect residents, businesses, and visitors from the risk of flooding.
- San Diego County is home to more rare and endangered species and habitats than any other region in the continental United States. Some sensitive species

and biological resources found in the County, such as the California red-legged frog, oak forests, and wetlands, are protected by federal, State, and local regulations that can limit development potential and increase mitigation costs. The southwestern portion of San Diego County, including the communities of Jamul and Dulzura, is subject to a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), and any area set aside for protection by the MSCP must remain undeveloped. The County is currently preparing plans for the North County (which covers the Pala/Pauma Subregion) and East County (the remaining area located outside of the CWA boundary), and development in these areas will be required to be consistent with the MSCP.

- The presence of agricultural preserves and Williamson Act contracts comprise a large part of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary. For example, the communities of Palomar, Julian, and Pine Valley all contain agricultural preserves and Williamson Act contracts, which could be a consideration in determining of the appropriate type and intensity of development.
- Constrained groundwater aquifers underlay several communities in San Diego County including the communities of Borrego Springs, Guatay, Julian and Pine Valley. In order to maximize groundwater recharge potential, it is desirable to minimize development that would draw from the aquifers and limit impermeable surfaces in identified recharge areas.
- The vast majority of unincorporated San Diego County is located within areas that are considered to be at high risk for wildfires. Access to some communities may be difficult for fire protection personnel due to topography and/or existing roadway systems. These barriers can hinder adequate wildfire response, and are a consideration in determining the appropriate type and intensity of growth and development. All of the communities outside the CWA boundary, with the exception of a large part of the Desert Subregion (includes Borrego Springs) and parts of the Mountain Empire Subregion, fall within areas considered at very high risk for wildfires.

While the above provides only a general sense of the type of environmental constraints found in San Diego County, these constraints significantly impact the amount and location of land that is suitable for growth and development, as well as the type and intensity of that potential development, in communities outside the CWA boundary.

3 Presence of an Economic Driver

One of the key building blocks of a growing community is the presence of an economic driver to stimulate growth, generate jobs, and provide revenues. The community of Julian is a positive example of where an economic driver - a flourishing

tourism industry - has been built upon the community's unique assets - its Historic District and proximity to recreational amenities, agriculture, and wineries. In addition to growing the tourism industry, this economic driver has supported development of secondary businesses and jobs, attracted visitors and residents, increased local incomes, and provided revenues through property and sales taxes, all of which help sustain the community financially (See Julian Case Study).

Many of the remaining communities located outside of the CWA boundary either do not have an economic driver, or do not have an economic driver large enough to support the growth of a community. For example, there are eight operating casinos located on Tribal Lands in San Diego County, none of which are large enough or located prevalently to serve as a true economic driver for any one community. Specifically, Boulevard contains one casino and has another in close proximity – neither of which can sustain a large amount of growth in the area. Although these casinos attract outside visitors, the potential for other uses (e.g., commercial) to capture pass-through traffic is low because most repeat visitors are from the San Diego region and use convenience stops less than visitors from other regions. Many of these casinos have developed on-site hotels, but major constraints such as available infrastructure have restricted significant development of additional hotels or other accommodations. In general, destination development to complement casinos in remote locations is difficult to sustain. Other development opportunities such as commercial uses created by casinos, especially in remote locations, are not significant.¹³

For the communities without an economic driver, it is a challenge to attract residents, businesses, and visitors. Similarly, without a population base, it is a challenge to attract jobs, amenities and services. An economic analysis was prepared in 2005 for the rural communities in San Diego County, which concluded that that there was not a “critical mass” of demand in small communities to support development.¹⁴ Without this demand, it is difficult for a community to grow.

4 Ability to Provide Quality Housing Choices

The ability to support a range of housing choices enhances opportunities for growth by increasing the attractiveness and viability of a community to potential businesses and residents, and providing residents an opportunity to match housing options with their income levels and lifestyles. Most communities located outside of the CWA boundary do not offer a range of housing choices and the housing that is available does not necessarily match income levels. Residents in the very eastern part of San Diego County, specifically residing in the North Mountain, Desert, and Mountain Empire Subregions, tend to have a low median household income. The residents of Pala/Pauma and Central Mountain Subregions, as well as the Julian Community Plan Area, have moderate household incomes.

Single-family residential units, many on larger lots, dominate the landscape and tend to be more costly especially in communities such as Jamul, Dulzura and Julian. Many existing large-lots of one dwelling unit per four, eight, or 20 acres does not represent residential growth that serves existing communities or results in affordable housing choices. However, there is a higher percentage of mobile homes, 24 to 30 percent of total housing units, available in four of the subregions located outside of the CWA boundary when compared to the rest of the unincorporated County. These subregions include Desert, Mountain Empire, North Mountain, and Pala/Pauma, and offer a broader variety of housing choices than the remaining communities, and the opportunity for more affordable housing.¹⁵

New housing is also likely to be more expensive because of the price of land and the cost of construction. Higher prices for housing can limit residents to those with higher paying jobs, which are generally not readily available outside the CWA boundary. Without quality housing choices, the opportunity for residents to live and work within the same community is limited, which can increase commute times, have an adverse effect on the environment, and limit opportunities for growth.

5 Access to Services and Amenities

Residents and businesses are drawn to communities that offer, or are in close proximity to, a variety of local services and amenities. This reduces the need for residents and businesses to travel far to meet their daily needs. Additionally, most retail and services need a large population base located within an easily accessible distance in order to generate an adequate customer base and associated revenue stream to support the businesses. The less frequent a product is needed (e.g., a new car versus daily groceries), the larger the population base required to support the business.

Many of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary have limited services and amenities available, and may not feasibly support many uses because of a small population base. For example, neighborhoods located within the North Mountain Subregion such as Ranchita, Palomar Mountain, Mesa Grande, San Felipe, Sunshine Summit, and Oak Grove contain very small, isolated areas of rural commercial uses to serve local residents and pass through traffic. Although these uses may provide for some of the very basic daily needs of residents, they do not offer a selection of services to meet all of their needs. Without convenient access to a variety of local services and amenities that include grocery, drug, hardware and clothing stores, it can be a challenge to attract residents and businesses, all of which affect revenues and a community's ability to grow.

6 Availability of Public Services and Infrastructure

Opportunities to grow are enhanced by the ability to supply and maintain public services and infrastructure at levels appropriate to meet the demands and cost expectations of existing and future residents and businesses. Although public services and infrastructure are provided at lower levels in the communities located outside of the CWA boundary, similar to other rural areas, their availability is essential to ensuring a safe community and being competitive in attracting new uses. As an example, many industrial and commercial operators will only locate in areas where infrastructure already exists or can be easily expanded, and where there is proximity or direct access to regional highways/roads.

Law enforcement and fire protection services are available for all of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary. However, similar to other rural areas with dispersed development patterns, communities located outside of the CWA boundary tend to experience longer response times for law enforcement and fire protection services when compared to urbanized or built out areas.¹⁶ For example, generally consistent with the updated General Plan, the existing General Plan requires maximum fire response times within town to be 5 minutes, 10 minutes for estate uses, and 20 minutes for rural areas. Topography and other natural barriers, lack of public roads and highways, prevalence of private roads that do not connect or permit through-access, and large distances between law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical facilities, all combine to lengthen the response times. Other public services such as schools, parks, and libraries are available to most communities but not necessarily within the community itself. Resident, employees, and visitors may have to travel a far distance to access some of these public services. Longer response times for law enforcement and fire protection services, as well as having to travel to obtain basic public services such as schools or parks, could be a deterrent for some residents and businesses to relocate to these communities.

Infrastructure is limited in the communities located outside of the CWA boundary. These communities are served by groundwater wells, and rely primarily on septic systems, with the exception of Julian and Borrego Springs. With sole reliance on groundwater, communities located outside of the CWA boundary must rely on the availability, quality, and sustainability of groundwater. It is anticipated that 11 of the groundwater hydrologic subareas will not have enough groundwater supply to serve buildout of the General Plan, which ultimately limits the future growth in communities such as Pine Valley and Julian. With limited financial resources and a small base of users, as well as steep topography and other natural barriers, it is not economically feasible to construct a wastewater treatment plant or significant collection infrastructure. If a master developer were to come into a relatively unconstrained rural area, community wells and a package treatment plant could potentially be constructed, assuming that the

development was large enough to fund the construction and operations of such facilities.

Other infrastructure constraints in these areas include proximity and direct access to major highways and roads. As previously discussed, many of the communities located outside of the CWA boundary are situated a long distance from population centers, which can only be accessed from mountainous rural highways. Exceptions include the communities of Jacumba and Pine Valley, which are located along Interstate 8. Service and amenities are less likely to locate in an area with a small population base (less customers), and not easily accessible from a major highway.

Although a lower level of public services and infrastructure is provided to rural areas, the total per capita cost of supplying local services to support development in unincorporated San Diego County is about 23 percent higher than in the incorporated cities.¹⁷ This is because dispersed development patterns, typical in unincorporated areas, are costly to serve. Dispersed development patterns affect costs for building and maintaining roads and other infrastructure, drainage facilities, as well as law enforcement, fire protection, and medical emergency services.¹⁸ Thus, these communities will generally have lower service levels, or need to pay higher taxes or other funding contributions to pay for increased services.

7 Reliable Economic Resources

A stable tax base and/or other revenue streams are required to provide and sustain in perpetuity the public services and infrastructure necessary to support growth. As noted above, even at reduced service levels the total per capita cost of supplying services to support development in the incorporated County is substantially higher than in incorporated cities. With the exception of Julian and Borrego Springs, the remaining communities outside the CWA boundary do not have a substantial tax base or the ability to create a substantial tax base or other revenue streams to support the public services and infrastructure necessary to serve growth.

California's fiscal structure depends upon revenues generated by employment and commercial activities to offset the service costs associated with residential development. Studies have shown that residential development does not pay for itself. National statistics indicate that residential development requires \$1.24 in public expenditures for every dollar it generates in tax revenues.¹⁹ Rural residential development in California typically requires \$1.29 in public expenditures for every dollar it generates in tax revenues.²⁰ Thus, it is difficult for San Diego County to keep pace with the costs to build and operate the essential public services and infrastructure that support population growth. The presence of an economic driver and a balance of uses in addition to residential are required to generate the revenues necessary to sustain and grow a community.²¹

By creating communities that have a balance of uses, the opportunity to establish adequate and stable revenue streams is enhanced. Given the identified locational and land suitability constraints; lack of economic drivers, varied housing choices, and access to services and amenities; and difficulty/costs to provide efficient and cost effective public services, it would be extremely challenging to grow communities with a balanced mix of land uses in most of the communities in San Diego County outside of the CWA boundary.

Case Studies/Relevant Examples

This section of the study provides an overview of two communities in eastern San Diego County: Julian, a community where components of the seven building blocks fully or partially exist; and Ranchita, a community where most of the building blocks do not exist. Lastly, an example of a community located outside of San Diego County that does not contain all seven building blocks is provided.

Julian

Julian is located within the Julian Community Planning Area in eastern San Diego County, between the northern end of the Cuyamaca Mountains and the southern slope of Volcan Mountain, west of the Anza Borrego desert (see Figure 2). An historic gold mining town, Julian has become a key visitor destination and is home to approximately 300 full and part time residents in the town with an additional 3,000 residents in the surrounding hill and desert areas that comprise the Julian Community Planning Area. The town of Julian - consisting of the historic downtown and immediately surrounding area - contains components of all seven building blocks of a growing community as discussed below.

1 Geographic Location

Julian is bisected by State Highway 78/79, which also serves as its Main Street. Highway 79 is the primary north-south rural highway in eastern San Diego County, and Highway 78 a primary east/west travel route to the desert from the San Diego metropolitan area. Being located at the crossroads of two of the County's key rural highways provides Julian with relatively direct and convenient highway access to other population centers in the County, contributing to its ability to attract businesses, visitors, and residents. Julian is within approximately one hour from the City of San Diego. At the same time, because Highway 78/79 is somewhat mountainous, and Julian is not located on or in close proximity to a major regional highway or interstate, the ability to attract large employment users or commercial uses could be limited.

2 Land Suitability

Julian is located at an elevation of approximately 4,200 feet in a relatively flat location, immediately surrounded by rugged terrain, most of which consists of large parcels of publicly owned land. As a result, Julian is located within one of the highest wildfire hazard areas in the County. Other land constraints surrounding Julian include the presence of wildlife species that are known to have depleted or declining populations. These land constraints, in particular the surrounding rugged terrain, could constrict the geographic limits that Julian could feasibly expand and grow beyond the current town area. Growth in hillside, fire hazard, and resource areas could face numerous challenges that limit the type and intensity of development and increase construction costs.

3 Presence of an Economic Driver

Many forms of tourism provide a flourishing economic driver for Julian. Julian's Historic District, a thriving commercial area, serves as the main tourist attraction. Other attractions in the area are recreational based such as hiking, biking, and camping in the surrounding mountains, as well as boating and fishing. There are several county and State-owned recreational facilities and parks within close proximity to the community. Julian also contains an agricultural industry, mostly associated with cattle grazing and fruit growing (apples). There are several wineries and vineyards in the area that also serve as attractions. Secondary businesses that support these economic attractions are also located in Julian and include restaurants, art galleries, and facilities for overnight accommodations such as Bed and Breakfasts, hotels, and inns. The presence of a diversity of economic drivers generates jobs, increases local incomes, improves the standard of living, and provides revenues to Julian through sales and property taxes.

4 Ability to Provide Quality Housing Choices

Julian contains relatively diverse housing choices for a small rural community. There are single-family residences, mixed-use buildings that accommodate both housing and commercial uses, apartments, bed and breakfast inns, and a mobile home area. Other quality housing choices consisting primarily of low density residential units on larger lots (1 to 10 acres) are available outside of the historic downtown area. With the ability to provide quality housing choices, residents with a range of income levels have the opportunity to live and work within or near the community of Julian.

5 Access to Services and Amenities

While relatively small in scale, Julian has a variety of local services and amenities. These include a number of specialty shops, markets, art galleries, restaurants, bakeries, business and professional services, a farmers market, churches, schools, and a library.

These services and amenities act as an economic driver, provide jobs, generate sales tax revenues, and improve the quality of life in Julian. With the services and amenities available, residents and employees do not have to travel far to meet many of their daily needs, although residents do need to travel to secure some services and products not available in Julian.

6 Availability of Public Services and Infrastructure

Julian is served by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, which has five deputy sheriffs in Julian's sheriff station. A volunteer staff at the Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District provides structural fire protection in Julian, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the U.S. Forest Service provide protection against wildfires. Since both the Sheriff's station and the Fire Protection District station are located within or immediately outside of the downtown area of Julian, response times are generally lower when compared to the rest of the Community Plan Area and many other rural communities.

Julian is serviced by three school districts, a county public library, a post office, a town hall, and several regional and community parks. Other recreational facilities including church camps, YMCA, Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, and private campgrounds open to the public are located in or near the community. With convenient access to these basic public services, residents do not need to drive long distances to obtain them.

Julian is served by San Diego Gas & Electric, Cable USA, a public sewer system, and water districts whose supply is dependent on groundwater wells. Groundwater in Julian is a limited resource and if all allocated land uses are developed, the long term groundwater availability in some of these locations may be exceeded. Therefore, the community of Julian can accommodate additional growth, but the amount of growth that can occur will eventually be constrained by the availability of groundwater.

7 Reliable Economic Resources

With the presence of multiple economic drivers and the associated mix of employment, retail and housing, a stable property/sales tax base and revenue stream is created in Julian. These revenues contribute to sustaining the public services and infrastructure necessary to support existing development and future growth.

Ranchita

Ranchita is located within the North Mountain Subregion in eastern San Diego County, generally halfway between Lake Henshaw and Borrego Springs (see Figure 2). As much as one-quarter of the land within the subregion is in public or semi-public ownership, and a substantial amount of land is under the Pauma, Yuima, Los Coyotes, Mesa Grande, or Santa Ysabel Indian Reservations. The community of Ranchita does not contain most of the seven building blocks as discussed below:

1 Geographic Location

The community of Ranchita is located along County Highway 2 (Montezuma Valley Road), which is a mountainous and rural highway, approximately nine miles from Highway 79. Highway 79 is the primary north-south rural highway in eastern San Diego County. Ranchita does not have convenient and direct access to a major transportation route and population center, which makes it more difficult to attract industries to the area and increases commute times to jobs for residents and some services.

2 Land Suitability

Ranchita is located in a relatively flat valley at an elevation of approximately 4,100 feet surrounded on the north by the San Ysidro Mountains and on the south by the San Felipe Hills. Growth beyond the currently-developed community is limited by the surrounding topography, although development within the town is feasible. Another consideration to growth is that the community is located within a high fire hazard area.

3 Presence of an Economic Driver

Ranchita does not contain an economic driver or anchor, and therefore, does not have a large job base or an attraction for visitors and other businesses.

4 Ability to Provide Quality Housing Choices

Sparsely developed, the community of Ranchita primarily contains single-family houses on large lots. There is not a range of housing choices that can accommodate residents with various income levels.

5 Access to Services and Amenities

The community of Ranchita has a small, isolated area of rural commercial uses that serve some of the needs of local residents. These commercial uses do not provide a broad range of services, and require residents to travel to obtain additional services and products not available in Ranchita.

6 Availability of Public Services and Infrastructure

Ranchita is served by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department but there are no sheriff stations located within the community; thus, response times for law enforcement are generally higher when compared to other communities with a sheriff station. A volunteer staff at the Montezuma Valley Fire Company provides structural fire protection in Ranchita, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the U.S. Forest Service provide protection against wildfires. With a fire station located within town, response times are generally lower when compared to other rural areas. Other public services such as schools, libraries, and parks are not present in the community, which require residents to leave Ranchita to obtain basic public services.

Ranchita is served entirely by septic systems and groundwater wells, and the groundwater subregion serving the community has adequate long-term groundwater availability. Therefore, wastewater service and groundwater could be provided to serve additional growth within the community.

7 Reliable Economic Resources

With no economic drivers, limited commercial uses, and a small amount of housing, there is a limited property and sales tax base and revenue stream. With a limited revenue stream, it would be difficult to expand the public services and infrastructure necessary to support future growth.

Robbins

Requiring the seven building blocks to sustain future growth is not unique to San Diego County. These building blocks for growth also apply to other communities in California. This section provides a discussion on the community of Robbins, located in Sutter County, approximately 30 miles northwest of the City of Sacramento. Robbins contains some but not all seven building blocks, which curbs its potential for sustainable growth in the future. As described below, the two most limiting factors to growth are its location within a floodplain and lack of adequate water supply and wastewater collection and treatment systems. Even if Robbins were able to overcome these obstacles, growth would not be sustainable in the long-term as the land uses present are not balanced. There is simply not enough supporting services and amenities, or a complete range of public services to serve the community's residents.

1 Geographic Location

Robbins is located along Highway 113, which provides access to two population centers: Yuba City located approximately 22 miles to the north, and the City of Sacramento located about 30 miles to the south. In addition, Highway 113 connects to the two primary transportation/trade routes in the Sacramento/Sutter County region, Interstate 5 and Highway 99. With direct highway access and proximity to population centers and key transportation routes, Robbins has been successful in attracting some limited industries.

2 Land Suitability

The community of Robbins is located on flat land within a 100-year floodplain and has experienced flooding events in the past. Robbins and the surrounding area can be subject to flooding depths greater than three feet. Thus, growth in this community is limited by the potential for flooding.

3 Presence of an Economic Driver

There are some limited agriculturally based industrial uses in Robbins that are not sizable enough to supply a large job base to stimulate additional growth in the community or support secondary growth of supporting businesses. Robbins does not have any other economic anchors or attractions.

4 Ability to Provide Quality Housing Choices

Primarily containing single-family housing, some on large lots, there is not a range of housing choices that can accommodate residents with various income levels in

Robbins. Combined with the lack of an economic driver, there are limited opportunities for residents to live and work within the community.

5 Access to Services and Amenities

Limited rural commercial uses exist in to serve the needs of local residents and pass by traffic. These commercial uses do not provide a broad range of services, and require residents to travel primarily to Yuba City or Sacramento to secure additional services and products not available in Robbins.

6 Availability of Public Services and Infrastructure

The Sutter County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to Robbins but the nearest station is located in Yuba City, approximately 22 miles away. As a result, response times for law enforcement are higher than the average response times for other communities located in proximity to the station. The Robbins-Sutter Basin Fire Station, located in Robbins, has a volunteer staff that serves the community. An elementary school, post office, and athletic fields are available, but residents are required to leave Robbins for all other public services.

Robbins is served by two groundwater wells, one of which can only be used 15 days/year because of higher than acceptable levels of arsenic and other contaminants. The second well meets all water standards and has adequate supply to serve existing uses. For wastewater, Robbins is served by wastewater treatment and collection system operated by the County. The water supply system and the wastewater collection and treatment systems for Robbins are operating at capacity and are in need of rehabilitation. The water and sewer rates collected from the community do not cover the costs of operation and maintenance of these facilities; consequently, adequate funds are not available to plan, design, or construct the required improvements. In addition, local residents are opposed to higher service fees and taxes to fund such improvements. Thus, future growth in the community is limited by a lack of adequate water and wastewater systems.

7 Reliable Economic Resources

With a small amount of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, there is a limited property and sales tax base and corresponding revenue stream. With a limited revenue stream, Robbins does not have adequate local funds to support its existing growth and services, and it would be difficult to expand the public services and infrastructure necessary to attract and support future growth.

Endnotes

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