



2018 AEP State Conference

Awards Program



2018 AEP Awards Program Article

A key strategic goal of the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) is to provide statewide recognition of environmental professionals' best works which contributes to the "enhancement, maintenance and protection of the quality of the natural and human environment." Each year AEP conducts an awards competition where we celebrate the best-of-the-best environmental documents, professional achievements, and services to environmental profession.

Award winners continually advance state-of-the-art environmental analysis and the presentation of this analysis to the public and to decision makers in an attractive and public friendly format. Please join your professional colleagues in congratulating the 2018 AEP award recipients as we review their achievements and distribute the prestigious awards.

2018 AWARDS PROGRAM

The Awards Reception will be held on **Monday, May 26th from 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM in Ambassador 1-4**, followed by the **Awards Ceremony from 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM**. Our special guest Brian Mooney, FAICP, will be serving as our Master of Ceremonies for the awards program for the second year in a row. Stop by the Exhibit Area, and grab a glass and a bite, then come into the Ballroom for the awards presentation. We invite and encourage you to attend and join us in congratulating the hard work and effort put forth by the award winners as they receive their trophy.

AEP wishes to express its sincere thanks to the volunteer AEP Awards Jury and to AECOM our Gold Sponsor, for their support and for the production of the videos highlighting this year's award winners.



2018 Awards Chair

Ricky Caperton Planner III, City of Fresno

2018 Awards Jury

Claudia Garcia Associate, PlaceWorks

Nicole Morse, Esq. Associate Principal, PlaceWorks

Anne Surdzial, AICP Director of CEQA/NEPA Services, ECORP Consulting, Inc.

Seth Meyers Air Quality & Noise Analyst, ECORP Consulting, Inc.

Geoffrey Reilly, AICP Senior Associate Environmental Planner, WRA

Jonathan Hidalgo, AICP Senior Associate Environmental Planner, WRA

Antoinette Romeo Senior Associate Planner, Santa Clara County Parks

Curtis E. Alling, AICP Principal, Ascent Environmental

Doug T. Feremenga, PhD., AICP CEP, LEED AP Manager, Environmental Planning, Transportation Corridor Agencies

Elizabeth Meyerhoff Environmental Specialist, Coachella Valley Water District

Jessie Barkley Senior Managing Associate, ESA

Kristin Blackson Senior Managing Associate, ESA

Stephanie S. Oslick, AICP, ENV SP Environmental Services, Moffatt & Nichol



Environmental Analysis Document

Outstanding Award

Monterey County USDA APHIS-WS IWDM Program and Agreement Renewal Draft EIR

Prepared for: **County of Monterey**

Prepared by: **Michael Baker International**

■ **Summary:** The US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS-WS) Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program and Agreement Renewal Draft EIR evaluate the impacts of Monterey County's renewal of a five-year cost-share agreement with USDA so that it can continue to provide services to residents and resource owners in the county. Other counties in the state have similar agreements. The federal program is not without controversy and close public scrutiny because it may sometimes involve killing common wildlife such as coyote, mountain lion, bobcat, smaller mammals, and avian species. USDA has prepared NEPA documents for its activities, but the Monterey County Draft EIR is the first EIR that has been Prepared for: a local lead agency considering the agreement renewal. The Draft EIR needed to be crafted with utmost objectivity and sensitivity to the topic. A critical part of the analysis was establishing baseline conditions and the extent to which past activities may have affected the target species populations so that project impacts could be evaluated. Developing a reasonable range of project alternatives presented challenges from a CEQA perspective because no significant impacts were identified. To be as responsive as possible to public concern, however, the Draft EIR included detailed evaluations of nonlethal options for wildlife damage management.

Outstanding Award

Commercial Cannabis Cultivation and Manufacturing Regulations and Licensing Program Environmental Impact Report

Prepared by: **Amec Foster Wheeler/Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions for the County of Santa Cruz**

■ **Summary:** The EIR for the Commercial Cannabis Cultivation and Manufacturing Regulations and Licensing Program Prepared by: Amec Foster Wheeler/Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions for Santa Cruz County evaluated the impacts of licensed cannabis activities under a comprehensive

regulatory program. The EIR provided detailed assessment of direct and indirect effects of licensed cannabis activities, as well as the effects of the Program on unlicensed activities constituting an ongoing “black market” for cannabis in the County. Amec Foster Wheeler/Wood conducted a thorough investigation of the fundamental features of the local cannabis industry and provided detailed documentation of a cannabis environmental baseline unlike any other environmental review conducted for a cannabis program in the state. As noted by Jim Coffis, the Deputy Director of Green Trade Santa Cruz, the EIR presents “the most quantitative analysis...of what the existing cannabis industry or trade looks like” to date in the County. The EIR team developed an unprecedented impact assessment methodology to ensure impacts from both licensed and unlicensed cannabis activities are considered by decision-makers, including odor nuisances, wildlife impacts from pesticides, and demand for energy and water, and completed a robust alternatives analysis to disclose the environmental tradeoffs of differing regulatory frameworks considered by the County.

Outstanding Award

Silicon Valley Clean Water Wastewater Conveyance System and Treatment Plant Reliability Improvement Project

Prepared by: **David J. Powers & Associates for Silicon Valley Clean Water**

■ **Summary:** In April 2017, the Silicon Valley Clean Water (SVCW) Commission approved the ‘Wastewater Conveyance System and Treatment Plant Reliability Improvement Project’ which is made up of 17 components, each consisting of specific improvements and upgrades to nearly all components of the existing conveyance system, including pipelines and pump stations within the cities of Belmont, Menlo Park, Redwood City and San Carlos, anticipated to cost \$537M. For a complex infrastructure project to be built over multiple years involving multiple components in multiple jurisdictions, the environmental analysis was concise and not overly technical. Overall, the SVCW project’s best features are its community-driven process, incorporation of context-sensitive design (in particular construction using a tunneling option) that responded to community and private sector interests for minimal disruption to the public as compared to alternatives located in a levee or roadway, and extensive collaboration efforts focused on reducing impacts put forth by the entire project team. These efforts resulted in feasible, effective mitigation of challenging environmental conditions including sensitive baylands species, cultural resources, and multiple years of construction-related noise impacts. Due to design and considerate approaches to construction, the EIR concluded the project would result in no significant and unavoidable impacts.

Merit Award

CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing Program

Prepared by: **Horizon Water and Environment for the California Department of Food and Agriculture**

With support from: **Blankinship and Associates, Inc.; Enercon Services, Inc.; Ardea Consulting; and Baker Botts, LLP**

■ **Summary:** The CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing Program is the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s program for regulating commercial cannabis cultivation in California. This program has been established in compliance with recent legislation and voter-approved initiatives to allow medical and adult use of cannabis. Unregulated cannabis cultivation has led to substantial environmental impacts on water supply, water quality, fisheries, timber conversion, public safety, and other concerns. The CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing Program establishes a regulatory framework that allows for commercial cultivation operations to be conducted in a manner that protects the general public, cannabis cultivation workers, and the environment.

The Program Environmental Impact Report Prepared by: Horizon Water and Environment provides a comprehensive evaluation of CDFA’s proposed regulations and the activities that would occur in compliance with the regulations. Written in clear, plain language and organized with a clear structure that follows the State’s CEQA requirements, the PEIR strikes an appropriate balance between technical rigor and public accessibility. The PEIR provides CDFA with an efficient vehicle for minimizing environmental impacts associated with cannabis cultivation, avoids duplication with other cannabis regulatory programs, allows flexibility for local jurisdictions, and streamlines future CEQA compliance through use of an innovative tiering strategy.

Merit Award

CEQA Document for San Jose International Airport Entrance Signs

Prepared by: **David J. Powers & Associates for the City of San Jose**

■ **Summary:** This project consisted of modifying the San Jose Municipal Code to allow the installation of large changeable message signs at the entrances to Mineta San Jose International Airport. Although such signage is typically exempt from CEQA, the proximity of the lighted signs to the adjacent riparian corridor of the Guadalupe River required analysis.

David J Powers & Associates prepared a 7-page analysis to document the project's use of a Categorical Exemption and the fact that none of the exceptions were present.

It is acknowledged that the submittal of a Documented Categorical Exemption as an example of an Outstanding Environmental Analysis Document is unusual. Its author believes, however, the document's organization, succinctness, and clarity of analysis is precisely why it is outstanding. In fact, it is exactly the type of document the Legislature envisioned when they enacted CEQA in 1970 when they stated: "The Legislature further finds and declares that it is the policy of the state that...documents prepared pursuant to this division be organized and written in a manner that will be meaningful and useful to decision makers and to the public."

Merit Award

Certified Environmental Impact Report for the CV LINK Multi-Modal Transportation Project

Prepared for: **Coachella Valley Association of Governments**

Prepared by: **By Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc.**

With Support from: **Urban Crossroads, Amec Foster Wheeler, CRM Tech**

■ **Summary:** CV Link is a ±49-mile multi-modal transportation path that will extend from the City of Palm Springs on the west to the City of Coachella on the east in the Coachella Valley providing access and connectivity between residential, commercial, recreational, institutional land uses and provide new health and recreational opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists and Low Speed Electric Vehicles. The Project will contribute to reductions in traffic volumes and reduce pollutant emissions, resulting in improved air quality. The path largely follows the levees of the valley's principal watercourses, including Chino Wash, Tahquitz Creek, and the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel.

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments in Riverside County, California was the Lead Agency for the CV Link project. Terra Nova Planning & Research prepared the CV Link Environmental Impact Report which provides a comprehensive assessment of the potential environmental effects of the Project. Primary issues of concern were traveler safety and effects on roadways, impacts to biological and cultural resources, land use compatibility, visual impacts, environmental justice, noise and air quality. The Final EIR was certified on May 15, 2017.

Public outreach included 155 community events, including 25 workshops, information booths at 39 community events, and 91 presentations to interested parties.

Merit Award

San Diego Bay and Imperial Beach Oceanfront Fireworks Display Events Project EIR

Prepared for: **the Port of San Diego**

Prepared by: **ICF**

■ **Summary:** The San Diego Bay and Imperial Beach Oceanfront Fireworks Display Events Project consists of (1) an ordinance establishing a District Code section to govern existing and proposed new fireworks display events that occur within San Diego Bay and the Imperial Beach Oceanfront that require a discretionary action by the District or that are operated by the District's tenants, and (2) four proposed new fireworks display events that would be located adjacent to the National City and Chula Vista Bayfronts. The ordinance establishes a defined set of requirements and procedures for existing and future fireworks display events that occur in and around San Diego Bay and the Imperial Beach Oceanfront to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people, property, and the environment.

The Fireworks EIR excels in its originality and uniqueness for several reasons. The District was the first to analyze the environmental impacts of multiple fireworks displays and, therefore, had to blaze a new trail, creating a template that will be followed for future projects. Because this was the first EIR for a fireworks display event in California, the technical analysis for the EIR required an innovative and first of its kind approach.

Merit Award

Railyards Specific Plan Update, KP Medical Center, MLS Stadium, & Stormwater Outfall Environmental Impact Report

Prepared for: **the City of Sacramento**

Prepared by: **Environmental Science Associates (ESA)**

■ **Summary:** The Sacramento Railyards Specific Plan Update will transform a 240-acre former railyard that will double the size of downtown Sacramento and bring in major anchor tenants that will serve as a catalyst for the largest infill development in the U.S. The Subsequent EIR (SEIR) built upon the previously approved 2007 Railyards Specific Plan EIR (2007 RSP EIR), but expanded its environmental analysis by evaluating four separate, but interrelated projects: The Railyards Specific Plan Update, a new Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, a new Major League Soccer Stadium, and a new Stormwater Outfall that collects runoff from the entire plan area and discharges it to the Sacramento River.

The SEIR environmental setting carefully wove relevant portions of the 2007 RSP EIR with updated information to provide a comparative analysis of changed conditions and severity of impacts. The SEIR combined programmatic and project-specific assessments for the various aspects of the proposal, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of a large plan area and focused environmental analysis of detailed project elements.

The impact analyses addressed unique characteristics including modeling anticipated noise propagation resulting from amplified sound speakers and crowd noise at the MLS Stadium; preservation, restoration, and activation of the historically significant Central Shops; and development of a regional medical center in an urban setting.

Merit Award

6250 Sunset Project

Prepared for: **the City of Los Angeles**

Prepared by: **Essex Property Trust, Inc., ESA PCR, JMBM, Crain and Associates, and Harley Ellis Devereaux**

■ **Summary:** Hollywood is unique and iconic community. Besides being one of the most famous cities in the world and a symbol of the entertainment industry, Hollywood can be one of the most challenging places to construct new development in Los Angeles. The interface between the community, historical preservation groups, and housing advocates has led to a tremendous amount of community conflict and litigation over new projects.

The 6250 Sunset EIR is an excellent example of how the CEQA process can help to balance community concerns and result in an unanimously adopted project that ultimately receives a tremendous amount of community support. The EIR involved intensive historical investigations and research on the historic Earl Carroll Theatre building located immediately adjacent to a new proposed seven story mixed-use project. The EIR also incorporated extensive outreach and discussions with local historical organizations, such as the LA Historic Theatre Foundation, Hollywood Heritage, LA Conservancy, and Art Deco Society of LA which allowed the EIR team to craft effective project design features and mitigation measures for the long-term preservation and future use of the historic Earl Carroll Theatre while also creating a compatible mixed-use project.

Merit Award

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Plan Bay Area 2040 RTP/SCS EIR

Prepared for: **the Metropolitan Transportation Commission**

Prepared by: **Ascent Environmental, in association with Tschudin Consulting Group and Thomas Law Group**

■ **Summary:** On July 26, 2017, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and ABAG Executive Board certified the RTP/SCS EIR and adopted Plan Bay Area 2040. The Plan approval capped a three-year process of development and intensive public outreach. Plan Bay Area 2040 is a long-range blueprint to guide transportation investments and land-use decisions through 2040, while meeting the requirements of SB 375 to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Plan includes projected population and housing levels for the Bay Area's nine counties and 101 cities. It shines a spotlight on the region's housing crisis, while setting up a policy framework and incentives to work toward an equitable outcome. The EIR evaluated and reported impacts on three levels, including region-wide, by County, and by Transit Priority Areas to help facilitate future CEQA streamlining afforded by SB 375 for Transit Priority Projects. It used extensive GIS analysis to identify potential impacts from transportation projects and projected urban growth. Through the efforts of MTC's public outreach staff, thousands of people participated in a comprehensive public involvement program that included 27 open houses in the nine Bay Area counties to develop the Plan and six public hearings to gather input on the EIR.

Environmental Resource Document

Outstanding Award

Ontario International Airport Historic Context Statement

Prepared for: **the City of Ontario**

Prepared by: **ASM Affiliates**

■ **Summary:** The transfer of Ontario International Airport (ONT) ownership from Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) to the City, managed by the Ontario International Airport Authority (OIAA), took place on November 1, 2016. The goals of the OIAA encouraged planning for the highest and best use of all airport property and facilities, consistent with surrounding infrastructure and land uses, and the ability to respond to market opportunities. As the need and opportunity arise for redevelopment of the airport and surrounding areas, the City recognized that potential historic resources may be threatened. For this reason, the City contracted with ASM to develop a historic context statement to guide identification and evaluation of historic resources and to support future planning, environmental analysis, and development of ONT. In addition, ASM conducted oral histories, to be archived at the Ontario Public Library, through interviews with five people associated with ONT, in collaboration with the local non-profit historic advocacy group, Ontario Heritage, and produced a short video documentary of the history of the airport. This video is an effective way to educate the public about the City's aviation history with hopes for future installation at kiosks at the public library and the ONT passenger terminal.

Outstanding Award

The Statewide Advance Mitigation Funding and Financial Strategies (SAMFFS) Study and Publications

Prepared for: **the California Department of Transportation**

Prepared by: **the University of California-Davis Institute of Transportation Studies**

With Support from: **Conservation Clarity, UCLA, and The University of Texas at Austin**

■ **Summary:** The Statewide Advance Mitigation Funding and Financial Strategies (SAMFFS) study was completed in 2015 by the University of California-Davis Institute of Transportation Studies and its partners for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The study and associated research

articles published through 2017 document national experiences with advance mitigation; analyze its costs and benefits; and discuss how mitigation could be funded, planned, and implemented ahead of typical project schedules.

Caltrans, like all transportation agencies, must address its environmental impacts through avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation. Transportation agencies traditionally plan and implement mitigation project-by-project, late in project development. Advance mitigation, however, addresses impacts of one or more projects before or during project planning. The SAMFFS study develops in-depth guidance about this new approach.

Study documents have been an important resource as Caltrans began its own advance mitigation program in the 2014 and 2016 State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The study also likely informed recent California legislature deliberations about advance mitigation; the April 2017 Road Repair and Accountability Act dedicated \$30 million annually for advance mitigation for the next 4 years.

Today, the SAMFFS study is downloadable online, available to environmental and transportation practitioners in California and beyond. Its findings are also reported in respected journals like *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*.

Merit Award

Carlsbad Tribal, Cultural, and Paleontological Resources Guidelines

Prepared for: **the City of Carlsbad**

Prepared by: **ECORP Consulting, Inc.**

■ **Summary:** In 1990, the City developed its first set of guidelines for the treatment of cultural resources to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act that, by today's standards, were narrowly scoped to address archaeological sites. Since that time, a number of changes have occurred in the regulatory context within which the City operates. Tribal Cultural Resources, paleontological resources, and compliance with Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18 needed to be incorporated into the City's updated guidelines and procedures.

The guidelines were developed through consultation with tribes, industry professionals, elected officials, and the public to include a standardized set of procedures by which the City takes into account the impacts of projects to cultural, tribal, and paleontological resources in a manner that weaves together all of the various regulatory and legal requirements within which the City operates. The Guidelines are written so that both technical and non-

technical staff, including consultants, tribes, planners, and developers, can gain a clear understanding of cultural requirements. The Guidelines include a list of standardized mitigation and treatment measures that have been mutually agreed upon by the City, stakeholders, tribe, and the public through an intensive review process.

Merit Award

SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit: Planning for Healthy Communities

Prepared by: **the California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks**

■ **Summary:** The SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit was created to help local governments, planners, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders implement SB 1000, the *Planning for Healthy Communities Act*. Effective as of January 1, 2018, SB 1000 requires cities and counties with disadvantaged communities to adopt an Environmental Justice (EJ) Element or to integrate EJ policies throughout their General Plan. This requirement is initiated upon the revision of two or more General Plan elements.

Recognizing the importance of SB 1000 for planning and environmental justice, the California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks created the SB 1000 Toolkit to facilitate the implementation of the law's statutes and ensure effective policies and planning efforts for disadvantaged and EJ communities.

As an outstanding environmental resource document, the Toolkit:

Clarifies SB 1000's statutes for local governments and planners.

Creatively proposes an EJ-oriented planning process for achieving compliance with SB 1000 and an environmentally-just General Plan.

Provides tools, methods, and resources for analyzing EJ issues and developing EJ policies, usable by any community in California.

Seeks to empower communities through user-friendly information that supports participation of non-planners in the General Plan process.

The toolkit can be downloaded at <http://caleja.org/sb1000-toolkit>.

Merit Award

Butte Utility-Scale Solar Guide

Prepared by: **Butte County**

With Support from: **PlaceWorks, EES Consulting, and Ben Noble Planning**

■ **Summary:** Over the past few years, solar facility development has been increasing in Butte County as property owners realize the benefits related to renewable energy, cost savings, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Butte Utility-Scale Solar Guide is a tool and resource to anyone interested in utility-scale solar facilities within unincorporated Butte County, including landowners, developers, community members, County staff, and decision-makers.

The Guide compiles extensive research, mapping, and analysis into a single user-friendly and graphic-rich document that informs the community about the regulatory and technical context for large-scale solar, how it can be developed in ways to minimize impacts and in consideration of site opportunities and constraints, the permitting process, and possible future approaches and trends.

As solar facility development, and the renewable energy industry in general, are increasing nationwide and across the globe, many jurisdictions are developing regulations and guidance on utility-scale solar facility development. The Guide's methodology of content structure, analysis, and presentation of information can be adapted to other jurisdictions so that they can create their own solar facility development resource, tailored to its own community and jurisdictional processes.

Merit Award

San Diego County, Regional Storm Water Resources Plan

Prepared for: **for the County of San Diego**

Prepared by: **Environmental Science Associates (ESA)**

■ **Summary:** ESA assisted the County of San Diego in preparing the San Diego County Regional Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) to provide the tools and guidance to support the region in developing multi-benefit storm water or dry-weather runoff projects to achieve watershed and regional planning goals. The SWRP provides eligible project sponsors the tools to submit multi-benefit projects for integrated analyses, prioritization, and listing in the SWRP, which will aid in regional planning and allow the projects to be eligible for grant funding under Proposition 1. ESA and the County developed the analysis and prioritization tools to assist in developing projects that enhance utilization

of storm water as a resource to achieve regional and watershed goals more effectively and to have a greater opportunity for funding. The objective of the SWRP is to identify and prioritize projects to “bring to the top” those multi-benefit projects that can best meet the identified priorities and goals on a watershed basis, and which will also be more competitive for statewide grant funding.

Merit Award

Del Mar Coastal Hazards, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessment

Prepared for: **for the City of Del Mar**

Prepared by: **Environmental Science Associates (ESA)**

■ **Summary:** The City of Del Mar is preparing a Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCPA) to address sea-level rise, storm surge, and coastal flooding. ESA prepared a Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment to assess the future vulnerability of the city of Del Mar and the Del Mar Fairgrounds to projected sea-level rise, flooding, and erosion.

Given that Del Mar is already vulnerable to coastal flooding, ESA used a unique approach that focused on how the frequency of damaging flood events is projected to increase in the future, rather than how much worse these events will be.

This assessment also used preliminary results from the initial release of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Coastal Storm Modeling System (CoSMoS) 3.0, which provides an indication of the intensity of extreme coastal flooding (1% chance or 100-year event) without considering the effects of future beach erosion. The CoSMoS results also provide future projections of beach width and cliff retreat in 2100 for a range of sea-level rise scenarios. ESA was one of the first in the region to interpret and apply the CoSMoS results in a vulnerability assessment.

Planning Document

Outstanding Award

PLAN Hermosa

Prepared by: **the City of Hermosa Beach**

With support from: **Raimi + Associates, Fehr & Peers, and Michael Baker International**

■ **Summary:** In 2013, the City of Hermosa Beach initiated the process of updating and integrating the General Plan and Local Coastal Program, collectively referred to as PLAN Hermosa. Adopted unanimously in August 2017, PLAN Hermosa includes revisions to all elements of the General Plan, providing the City with the first comprehensive update in nearly forty years.

With a clear community vision to “be the small town others aspire to be; a place where our beach culture, strong sense of community, and commitment to sustainability intersect”, PLAN Hermosa carries out that vision through carefully crafted policy to simultaneously address General Plan elements and the California Coastal Act and connects the dots between sustainability and the built environment by implementing land use and mobility strategies to focus growth and reduce VMT, creating a governance structure that seeks to create a healthy community, and identifying measurable actions to reduce greenhouse gases and adapt to a changing climate.

PLAN Hermosa attempts to raise the bar for General Plan updates by addressing new and emerging topics, thoughtfully engaging the community through diverse outreach methods, and setting a consistent graphic style and tone that contributes to the long-term utility of PLAN Hermosa.

catching a bus, taking a train, or driving a car.” By including mobility, open space and affordable housing solutions the Plan assures that the ingredients for community and quality of life are combined with a flexible regulatory framework for successful development.

Merit Award

Downtown Murrieta Specific Plan

Prepared for: **for the City of Murrieta**

Prepared by: **RICK Community Planning and Sustainable Development**

■ **Summary:** The Downtown Murrieta Specific Plan, adopted in March 2017, rethinks the framework for development into an environmentally focused, pedestrian oriented and economically feasible Master Plan. An extensive public outreach process, consisting of well attended workshops, a booth at the City's annual birthday bash, and close coordination with the Planning Commission and City Council, led to the creation of an updated vision for the area which also focuses on how to best accommodate the City's projected population increase. By linking development incentives to community priorities, the plan has received unanimous support from the City's Planning Commission and City Council. Sustainable development was cited as a high priority and thus a proactive program was developed to encourage environmentally conscious activity through measures such as:

- The creation of a linear park plan focusing on the preservation of Murrieta Creek and limiting biological impacts while creating linkages to a new Heritage Park and the Downtown;
- Raising building heights allowed by-right to 3 stories (i.e., up to 50 feet), and up to 4 stories (i.e., up to 60 feet) with the provision of community benefits;
- Raising the allowed densities from 18 dwelling units to 24 dwelling units per acre for mixed use development and creating a new residential multi-family designation that allows up to 30 dwelling units per acre; this concentrated increase in density encourages more efficient land use and greater pedestrian activity;
- The inclusion of diverse housing options that range from single family to multi-family to mixed use (live-work) units that support opportunities for people to live and work close by or within the same neighborhood;
- The development of a complete streets program which includes a street hierarchy in order to encourage and maintain a clear flow for bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular movement throughout the Downtown area thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- The development of a series of paseos that are intended to help maintain a walkable scale, break up large blocks, provide space to incorporate pocket parks, and support pedestrian activity;
- The recognition of alleys as an opportunity to incorporate green design and infrastructure that will improve stormwater quality and drainage; said alleys also provide safe and comfortable alternative spaces for pedestrians;

- The implementation of new parking management strategies which address issues related to mobility and parking as they relate to the future growth of the Downtown; new parking standards also further support pedestrian activity by prioritizing the street level uses and prohibiting parking spaces located between the public sidewalk and storefronts;
 - Providing updated design guidelines that better meet the desired community character; and
 - Allowing the Development Services Director broader discretion and approval authority for projects within the plan area.
-

Merit Award

City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Update

Prepared for: **the City of Rancho Mirage**

Prepared by: **Rincon Consultants, Inc.**

With Support from: **Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc.; Urban Crossroads, Inc.; and RRM Design Group**

■ **Summary:** The Rancho Mirage General Plan Update was a technical update aimed at bringing the plan into compliance with current requirements and modernizing the look and user-friendliness of the plan. Elements that underwent substantial updates include Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Air Quality, Community Design, and Safety. An Arts and Culture Element was incorporated to guide the development of partnerships and set forth creative strategies to achieve associated economic, social, environmental and community goals. The General Plan Update also included policies and incentives to provide more affordable housing throughout the City and develop a balanced residential environment with access to jobs, community facilities, and services. An interactive online GIS mapping tool was also created to accompany the General Plan. This mapping tool is a one-stop resource that allows the City and public to overlay and customize key data from the General Plan. It provides direct links to other important resources such as the municipal code, specific plans, school district information, and hazard zones. The modernization of the plan illustrates Rancho Mirage's goal of a growing and balanced economic base that serves the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors while maintaining the City's high standards of development and environmental protection.

Public Involvement and Education Program

Outstanding Award

Southwest Fresno Specific Plan and EIR

Prepared for: **the City of Fresno**

Prepared by: **PlaceWorks**

With Support from: **Shared Spaces, Centro La Familia, Pop Up Design & Development, Fehr & Peers, Blair, Church & Flynn, H.T. Harvey & Associates, and Sierra Valley Cultural Planning**

■ **Summary:** The Southwest Fresno Specific Plan and EIR marks a historic milestone for its community. For many years, Southwest Fresno residents have advocated for equitable consideration in citywide development. The Plan acts as a key step to initiate positive change for the community, guiding future development to transform Southwest Fresno into a vibrant, attractive, and increasingly valuable area.

The Plan's success can be attributed to the committed and continual involvement of the community, Steering Committee, and the City Council office representative, who extensively contributed, developed, reviewed, and tailored ideas and measures for the Plan. As a result, the Plan specifically promotes environmental justice through its overarching guiding principles, goals, policies, and implementation action plan that center around providing a natural and built environment of high quality development, accessibility to parks, and removing incompatible uses such as industrial uses and truck routes.

The Plan was unanimously supported by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council with overwhelming support from the community. The development of the Plan was truly a community-driven process and reflects the community's desires. It is the first Plan of its scale for the area that has been officially approved and adopted by the City.