



CONSERVATION/ OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

E I C E N T R O G E N E R A L P L A N

This Implementation Program provides actions to implement the adopted policies and plans identified in the Conservation/Open Space Element. The Conservation/Open Space Element Implementation Program is a series of actions, procedures and techniques that includes a description of the responsible agency/department, funding source, time frame and related policies in the Conservation/Open Space Element.

Agricultural and Soils Conservation

COS-1: Agricultural Preservation: Use development incentives such as priority project processing, density bonuses, and infrastructure improvements to encourage redevelopment and infill projects that reduce development pressure on agricultural lands.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, County of Imperial

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 1.1, 1.5

COS-2: Agricultural Buffers: Encourage the provision and maintenance of buffers, such as roadways, topographic features, and open space, to prevent incompatibilities between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses. During the development review process, a number of factors shall be used to determine the appropriate buffer, including the type of agricultural use, topography, and pesticide and machinery use.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, County of Imperial

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 1.1, 1.5

Water Conservation

COS-3: Promote Water Conservation: Work with the Imperial Irrigation District to encourage water conservation throughout El Centro in the following ways:

- Require the use of drought resistant plant species in landscaping for private and public areas, including parks;
- Utilize xeriscape principles in all new parks, recreation facilities, public buildings and private developments.
- Work with the City and the El Centro Unified School District to establish water conservation educational programs; and
- Require the incorporation of water conservation devices (including low-flush toilets, flow restriction devices and water conservation appliances) in new development, public projects and rehabilitation projects.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Imperial Irrigation District, El Centro Elementary School District, Central Union High School District, McCabe Union Elementary School District

Funding Source: General Fund, project proponent

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5

COS-4: 4.4 Plan: Support California's "4.4 Plan"; an ongoing effort to reduce California's use of Colorado River water to 4.4 million acre-feet per year, California's entitled amount.

Responsible Agency/Department: Development Services, Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 2.1, 2.2

COS-5: Water Recycling: Implement water recycling in El Centro in the following ways:

- Apply for funding for a Recycled Water Feasibility Study from the State Water Resources Control Board;
- Conduct Feasibility Study;
- Implement recommendations through the CIP process, a new recycled water use ordinance (if appropriate) and requirements for new development.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: Water/Wastewater Enterprise Fund, SWRCB Grants
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 2.4

Open Space and Natural Resources

COS-6: Subdivision Ordinance: Continue to implement and enforce the subdivision ordinance that contains provisions for the dedication of land for park and recreational purposes. The ordinance requires a land dedication calculated on a basis of a ratio of five acres of park for each 1,000 residents generated by the project. A fee can be paid in lieu of land dedication and the collection of these and fees and other funds can be used to set up a revolving fund to be used for the acquisition of park and open space lands.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreation, Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees, project proponent
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.1

COS-7: Zoning Ordinance: Continue to promote the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provision in the Zoning Ordinance. PUDs are a way to encourage the development of residential environments containing more usable open space than provided under traditional development standards.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreation
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.1, 3.3, 3.4

COS-8: Protect Natural Resources: Assess development proposals for potential impacts to significant natural and aesthetic resources pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and associated federal regulations. Require appropriate mitigation for all significant impacts if impact avoidance is not possible.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreation
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies 3.2

COS-9: “Embrace the Desert”: Invest in the City programs and facilities that highlight the unique value of the landscape and appropriate use of materials. City investments should include an Environmental Education Program and a Desert Demonstration Garden.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreation, Finance.

Funding Source: General Fund, Development Impact Fees, Water Enterprise Fund.

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 4.1, 4.2

Community and Historic Resources

COS-10: California Environmental Quality Act: Continue to assess development proposals for potential impacts to sensitive historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Require appropriate mitigation for all significant impacts if impact avoidance is not possible.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning

Funding Source: General Fund, development fees

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 5.1

COS-11: Downtown Business District: Continue to implement and update as necessary the recommendations of the Downtown Business District Study as one method of maintaining and enhancing the downtown area to retain the character of the central area, with its arcades and store fronts, and to create a more lively and vibrant city center.

Responsible Agency/Department: Redevelopment, Planning and Zoning

Funding Source: Redevelopment funds, General Fund, private business investment

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 5.2

COS-12: Local Awareness of Community Heritage: Foster local awareness of El Centro’s heritage by:

- Implementing a program of recognition, for example, the placement of plaques or markers to highlight the significance of a building or place;
- Investigating the eligibility of local buildings for listing in the national, State, or local register of historic places;

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- Designating historic landmarks, recognizing a building, structure, site or collection of buildings or sites which are found by the City Council to have historic, cultural, or architectural significance;
- Purchasing development rights to important buildings or property so as to provide protection from alteration or destruction; and
- Purchasing and re-selling important buildings or property with a covenant and reverter clause in the deed, restricting changes in the structure of the place.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Redevelopment, Finance

Funding Source: General Fund, redevelopment funds

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 5.1

Air Quality

COS-13: Participation in Regional Air Quality Programs: Work with the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to implement the Air Quality Management Plan and meet federal and State air quality standards for all pollutants. Participate in future amendments and updates of the AQMP to ensure that new measures can be practically enforced in the region.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, SCAG

Funding Source: General Fund, state and federal funds

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 6.1, 6.2

COS-14: Minimize Impacts of New Development: Review development proposals for potential air quality impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Reduce impacts using available land use and transportation planning techniques such as:

- Incorporation of public transit stops;
- Pedestrian and bicycle linkage to commercial centers, employment centers, schools and parks;
- Preferential parking for car pools;
- Traffic flow improvements; and
- Employer trip reduction programs.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Planning and Zoning, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, SCAG
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees, project proponent, state and federal funds
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 6.3

COS-15: Control Dust and Particulate Matter: To reduce dust and particulate matter levels, support the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District in the implementation of its regulations, including ICAPCD Rule 800 to control agricultural operations.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District
Funding Source: General Fund, state and federal funds
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 6.1, 6.2

Health and Safety

COS-16: Irrigation Canal System: Develop controls to restrict access to the existing irrigation canal system from residential areas where unsupervised children currently have easy access. Require developers to underground the canals and laterals as new development occurs adjacent to existing open drainage facilities, as allowed by the Imperial Irrigation District.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Imperial Irrigation District
Funding Source: General Fund, water usage fees, state and federal funds
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 7.1, 7.2

COS-17: Pesticides and Crop Dusting: To the extent allowed by law, restrict the type and method of spraying activities related to agricultural use of pesticides and crop dusting within the City's area of influence to reduce the adverse effect from airborne drift of chemicals into adjacent residential areas.

Responsible Agency/Department: Community Development, County Agriculture Commission
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 7.3

Geothermal Resources

COS-18: Regulate Geothermal Activity: Regulate any geothermal activity within the City with the goal of:

- Ensuring that the loss of productive agricultural lands due to geothermal development is minimized;
- Preventing geothermally-induced subsidence or seismicity; and
- Ensuring that local goals and concerns are taken into account in the formation of geothermal production policies and that the public is well informed about the effects of resource extraction and use.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

COS-19: Promote Benefits of Geothermal Resources: In an effort to educate the public and promote the use of geothermal resources, the City shall:

- Promote the varied and experimental application of direct geothermal energy to activities within the City area;
- Support the development of a skills center for training local residents specific geothermal related skills required in local resource production;
- Encourage local business and industry to consider how direct geothermal energy could be applied to their energy needs;
- Continue to search out funding sources for experimental and demonstration projects adapting geothermal direct energy to industrial processing and to space heating and cooling; and
- Encourage factories and businesses that utilize geothermal energy to maintain an "open shop," allowing visitors to tour the facilities, in order to gain an understanding of the resource and its use.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 8.4, 8.5, 9.4

Energy Conservation

COS-20: Implement State Energy Performance Requirements: Continue to implement building code requirements for energy performance according to Title 24 Energy Regulations to meet State energy conservation requirements. Encourage project proponents to incorporate energy conservation techniques in proposed projects. Provide brochures with information on energy efficient building and site design at the public counter.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund, project proponent

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 9.1, 9.2, 9.3

COS-21: Energy Efficient Public Buildings: Implement energy conservation measures in public buildings through the following actions:

- Promote energy efficient building and site design for all new public buildings during the site development permit process; and install energy saving devices in new public buildings and retrofit existing public buildings.
- Utilize light colored asphalt and light colored resin pavements which minimize the "heat island" effect caused by darker pavements.
- Utilize passive solar techniques; trees, architectural shading devices, etc.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning, Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 9.1, 9.2, 9.3

COS-22: Promote Energy Retrofit Programs: Promote retrofit programs by the City to reduce energy usage and consequently reduce emissions from energy consumption. Provide informational literature about available retrofit programs at City offices. Inform property owners of retrofit programs when plans for remodeling and rehabilitation projects are submitted.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 9.1

COS-23: Coordination with Suppliers: Require project proponents to coordinate with IID and the Southern California Gas Company early in the development of development plans.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning and Zoning
Funding Source: General Fund, developer fees, user fees
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 9

COS-24: Local Resource Recycling: Remain compliant with AB 939 and increase recycling activities to maintain the mandated 50 percent waste diversion goal. Specifically, encourage the recycling of waste resources including aluminum, glass, and newspaper.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 9.1