

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 **BACKGROUND ON THE CITY OF EL CENTRO**

The City of El Centro (City) is located in the south-central portion of the County of Imperial (County), State of California (State). The City is located along Interstate Route 8 (I-8) between San Diego, California and Yuma, Arizona, and is situated approximately 10 miles north of the United States-Mexico border. State Route 86 (SR-86) traverses the City in a north-south direction. Rail lines of the Southern Pacific Railroad traverse the city in a northwest-southeast direction.

The City is home to nearly 38,000 residents and serves as the center of commercial, administrative, recreational, and cultural activities for much of the surrounding Imperial Valley region. Land within City boundaries comprises approximately 12 square miles. The City's SOI contains land outside the existing boundaries of the City that is currently in the jurisdiction of the County but that is planned for incorporation into the City boundaries at some time in the future. The City and the City's SOI encompass approximately 25 square miles, or about 16,000 acres of land.

The existing General Plan provides a structure for development and planning within the City and the City's SOI. To guide planning within the area, the Land Use Element includes four major land use groupings: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Community Facilities. While the General Plan does not contain a specific agricultural land use designation, the City shares in the rich agricultural heritage of the surrounding region, and much of the land within the City's SOI is still used for various agricultural purposes. The maintenance of agricultural uses is allowed within the General Plan's Rural Residential land use designation. The General Plan does not foresee the permanent retention of large-scale agricultural operations within City limits, but the City generally maintains a policy of allowing continued agricultural activity on certain land as it is transitioned from agricultural uses to other urban uses.

The City provides many public facilities and services to residents and businesses within its boundaries. The General Plan Public Facilities Element outlines the existing systems and future plans for public provision of such facilities and services as parks, schools, libraries, fire protection, law enforcement, water and wastewater, and administrative facilities for City government. The General Plan Circulation Element discusses the system of public roadways maintained by the City and outlines future plans for the expansion and improvement of such system.

### 2.2 **PURPOSE OF THE SERVICE AREA PLAN**

This SAP has been prepared for the City in accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, which requires that such a plan identifying the existing and projected demand for public facilities and services be prepared by all incorporated cities and special districts within the State. The 2000 legislation is specifically implemented by Imperial County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), whose policy states that an SAP must be implemented by a city within its jurisdiction in order for any formal annexation of land into that city's boundaries to take place.

### 2.3 **ORGANIZATION AND USE OF THE SERVICE AREA PLAN**

This SAP outlines the City's existing public services and facilities, estimates the current and future anticipated demand for such facilities and services, and describes how necessary

facilities and services will or may be developed and extended to meet demands. The SAP is intended to demonstrate the City's intent and ability to provide adequate services to the SOI boundaries at the time of annexation. An approximately 20-year planning horizon is used to forecast growth, and the estimated demands and provision to meet demands are based on population projections in five-year increments until 2025. The population projections used in this document were provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Projected population growth was placed into the structure and policies of the land use plan presented in the General Plan.

The document is organized into the following six chapters that satisfy the requirements set forth in the LAFCO guidelines.

**Chapter 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** provides a brief summary of the SAP, highlighting key information regarding demand and financing.

**Chapter 2.0 INTRODUCTION:** outlines the purpose and intent of the SAP and presents the layout of the SAP to help the reader use the document. This chapter also gives a background of the City and of the planning documents that enabled the preparation of the SAP.

**Chapter 3.0 GROWTH PROJECTIONS:** provides general information about projected population, current and future land use trends in the City and the City's SOI, and the implications of these trends for the development of City services and facilities.

**Chapter 4.0 FACILITIES AND SERVICES:** details the current and planned facilities and services, their current and projected adequacy, measures to ensure adequacy, and how such measures will be achieved and financed. An analysis of the following facilities and services are provided:

- Administration
- Drainage
- Fire
- Law Enforcement
- Library
- Parks and Recreation
- Circulation
- Wastewater
- Water

Analysis for each public service and facilities area in the SAP is based on the standards developed by LAFCO. Each subchapter of Chapter 4 contains the following four sections:

- **Performance Standard:** A description of any standards or goals that have been adopted by the City to the review of the adequacy of service within the existing and future timeframes.
- **Facility Planning and Adequacy Analysis:** An inventory of the existing facilities, the adequacy of the facilities when compared to existing demands, the anticipated demand for facilities pursuant to growth of the City, and the phasing of the demand for facilities.
- **Financing:** An explanation and identification of how services and facilities are currently being funded, including a per capita cost where available and applicable, and how future services and facilities may be funded.

- **Mitigation:** A series of recommendations to ensure that adequate facilities will be provided and that proper levels of service will be maintained.

Figures are often provided within the various sections of Chapter 4 that show City maps and the relationship of existing and planned facilities to anticipated growth within City boundaries and the SOI. Figures for each service and facilities area are presented at the end of each section.

**Chapter 5.0 FINANCING:** identifies all of the potential funding mechanisms for public services and facilities provision that are available to the City. This section presents potential funding sources and then identifies how each service or facility sector is currently funded and appropriate future funding opportunities, as well as cost saving opportunities.

**Chapter 6.0 APPENDICES:** provides the technical material used in the preparation of this SAP as appendices.

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