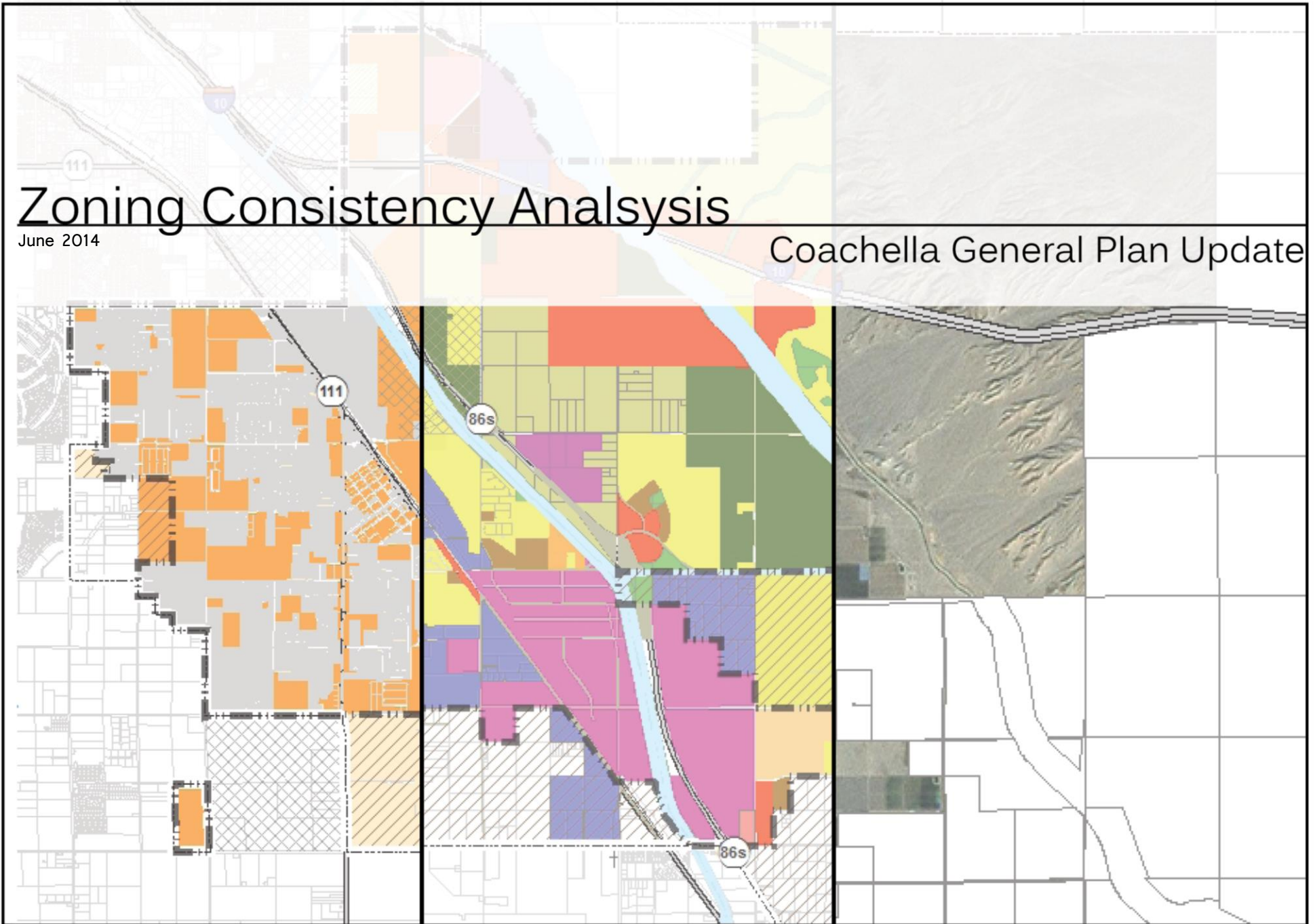


# Zoning Consistency Analysis

June 2014

Coachella General Plan Update



## INTRODUCTION

To help clarify the extent to which the existing zones of the Coachella Zoning Code are capable of implementing the planning and urban design vision and intentions of the Public Draft General Plan Update, the consultant team has prepared this comparison of those existing zones to the new General Plan Update land use designations. This comparison addresses both quantitative and qualitative characteristics described and defined in the General Plan designations.

**Table 1** provides a high level summary of the findings, identifying the degree to which each of the existing zones in the Coachella Zoning Ordinance can play a significant role in shaping development as described in each of the General Plan Update land use designations. Then **Table 2** compares the basic quantitative characteristics defined in each General Plan Designation – such as density in dwelling units per acre (du/acre), intensity through Floor Area Ratio (FAR), use, setbacks, lot coverage, height, building types, and required pedestrian and vehicle access – to those defined in each of the existing zones, again to identify how each zone may or may not contribute to implementing the General Plan Update land use designation.

The General Plan Update has added a number of new “layers” of qualitative information to the more quantitatively oriented framework of the previous General Plan, describing more completely and in more physical detail the community’s vision for the future of Coachella’s many neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. Because the new General Plan Designations have added information or emphasis on topics not explicitly addressed in the existing zones, those zones tend to be “incomplete” in their ability to describe development standards capable of routinely delivering the General Plan vision. In most cases the existing zones are not “wrong” in relation to the General Plan Designations, but rather incomplete. The primary differences in emphasis include:

1. **Urban Form and Character:** The General Plan Land Use Designations are based primarily on the community’s vision for Coachella’s future urban form and character: how multi-modal circulation networks are connected through neighborhoods, how neighborhood services and amenities are distributed near neighborhoods, how blocks are organized, how buildings relate to streets, how buildings are accessed by both pedestrians and vehicles, and in many cases how uses may be mixed within neighborhoods and within buildings. The existing zones are based on the suburban model of land uses separated from one another by distance and by car trips, and emphasize simple quantitative metrics such as building density and height.

Contrarily, the General Plan Update is based on a California town model that organizes a diverse mixture of land uses so that one can comfortably move between the activities of daily life on foot, by bicycle, by transit – and by car – along tree-lined streets, multi-modal roads between human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented buildings. Thus, in all cases the existing zones lack the ability to describe many of the functional and qualitative attributes of place that are central to the General Plan Update land use designations.

**2. Mixing Uses and Development Types:** Because many of the General Plan Update land use designations describe places in which densities and intensities vary and uses are mixed – within carefully specified ranges – many of the existing single-use zones describe a portion, but not all, of the use types and development types that are allowable within a given General Plan Designation. The General Plan envisions neighborhood and centers that include a broader palette of development types than the existing zones describe, including town-scale duplexes/triplexes/quadplexes, rowhouses/townhouses, garden apartments, urban apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings.

## EXISTING ZONES

The existing zones can be broken down into three categories: 1) those that are generally consistent with the proposed General Plan land use designations, 2) those that just need some minor adjustments, and 3) those that would need to be substantially overhauled or completely replaced with new ones to meet the intent of the General Plan Update.

1. **Zones that are generally consistent.** A number of existing zones – particularly those describing relatively low development intensities and single land uses – are generally consistent with a number of the proposed land use designations. These zones can either remain unchanged or be made more complete with the addition of development standards to ensure that new development within these existing zones conforms to the urban form and character vision described by the General Plan Update land use designations. Such zones include the Residential Single Family (R-S), 6000 Overlay (R-O-6000), Mobile Home (R-MH), Manufacturing Service (M-S) zones, **Medium Residential (R-M)**, **Commercial Tourist (C-T)**, and **Senior Housing Overlay (SHO)**.
2. **Zones that need minor adjustment.** There are a couple of zones that would require only minor height, density, or use adjustments to be brought into closer conformance with the General Plan Update vision. These zones are:
  - Multiple Family (R-M) zone: increasing the maximum residential density from 14 du/acre to 25 du/acre.
  - General Commercial (C-G) zone: allowing residential uses. Alternatively, the zoning of certain parcels that are zoned C-G could be changed to one of the new zones described below (such as the new Urban Neighborhood or new Urban Employment Center zones).

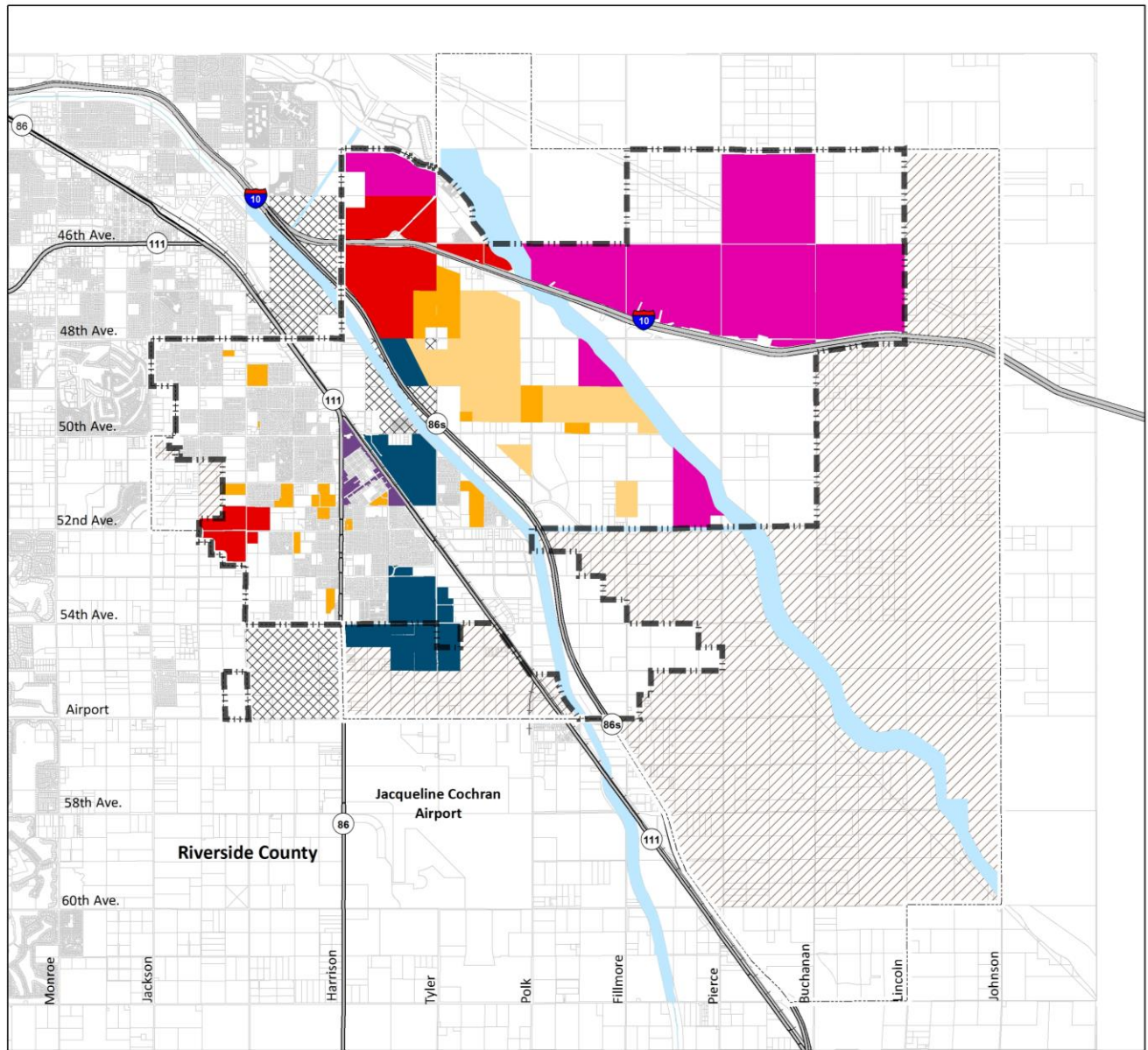
3. **Zones that need significant overhaul or should be replaced.** There are a number of zones that would need more substantial adjustments to conform to the vision and intent of the General Plan Update. These zones are:
  - Agriculture Reserve (A-S) zone: raising the height limit from 2 stories to 2.5 stories and the decreasing the minimum lot size from 60 acres to 40 acres.
  - Agriculture Transition (A-T) zone: raising the height limit from 2 stories to 2.5 stories and increasing the density from 1 unit/5 acres to 1 unit/2.5 acres.
  - Residential Estate (R-E) zone: raising the height limit from 2 stories to 2.5 stories and decreasing the density from 2.0 du/acre to 1.0 du/acre.
  - Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) zone: increasing the height limit from 2 stories to 3 stories, allowing ground floor residential uses at the edge of the zone when the C-N zone abuts single family residential neighborhoods, and increasing the residential density to as high as 40 du/acre.
  - Tourist Commercial (C-T) zone: does not permit residential uses or the diverse, downtown use mix envisioned by the General Plan (retail uses must be tourist-oriented). Recommend that this zone be replaced with a new Downtown Center zone (see below).
  - Commercial General (CG) zone in Downtown: the height limit would need to be increased and residential uses would need to be introduced. Recommend rezoning parcels within Downtown that are zoned C-G with the new Downtown Center zone.

## NEW ZONES

Many of the land use designations recommend a broader range of residential densities within a single, walkable neighborhood. In many cases this includes a higher maximum residential density than is allowed by the existing zoning, but mixed with lower densities to foster a more diverse range of housing choices within each part of the City. Also, the average density is similar to what existing zoning would deliver, but with greater variation and diversity. Most of the proposed land use designations also provide a more diverse set of uses – such as residential, or ground floor retail, or entertainment uses – than the most applicable existing zone allows, bringing everyday necessities closer to households, thereby reducing dependence on automobile use. To further enhance the pedestrian environments of Coachella's neighborhoods, the General Plan Designations direct that narrower lots be served by alleys, so that sidewalks are not dominated by driveways and streetscapes are not dominated by garages. Accordingly, new zones should eventually be introduced to better implement these land use designations (see **Figure 1**). In the interim period before the City updates its Zoning Code, there are two additional options for implementing these land use designations: Specific Plans and Planned Development. Specific Plans are planning tools that provide agencies and developers with the flexibility of created custom development standards that are independent of the Zoning Code. Planned Development is a zoning district that can be applied to projects with custom development standards, as well. Both options could be used to implement General Plan Land Use Designations that do not yet have corresponding zoning districts. These new zones would include:

- a. **Neighborhood General.** Residential densities range between 2 – 8 du/acre with an average density of 5 du/acre. Building heights are generally one and two stories, and in some cases 2 ½ stories with a partial third floor under the roof (i.e., within the attic space) on larger lots. Buildings have generous front, rear, and side yards. The main entrance to the residences are located within the front façade and accessed directly from the street through porches and stoops. Alleys are recommended for lots less than 60 feet wide to minimize street-facing garages from dominating street frontages. Driveways from the street are as narrow as practical.
- b. **Urban Neighborhood.** Residential densities range between 7 – 25 du/acre with an average density of 12 du/acre and commercial intensities range up to 0.5 FAR. Buildings are one and two stories tall, with some three-story buildings near Neighborhood Centers. Building types include Single-Family Houses, Duplex/Triplex/Quadplexes, Multiplex/Efficiency Dwellings, Rowhouses/Townhouses, Garden Apartments, and Urban Apartments. Buildings, except rowhouses, have front, rear and side yards. The main entrance to the residences are located within the front facade and accessed directly from the street through porches and stoops. Vehicular access is provided through an alley at the rear of the lot or a narrow driveway to the street.

FIGURE 1: New Zones



**City of Coachella**  
**General Plan Update 2035**

**New Zones**

**Legend**

- Coachella City Limits
- General Plan Planning Area
- White Water River
- Sphere of Influence
- Tribal Land

**New Zones**

- Central District Zone
- Neighborhood General Zone
- Regional Retail Zone
- Resort Zone
- Urban Employment Zone
- Urban Neighborhood Zone



Source: City of Coachella and Riverside County  
Date: November 2013

- c. Downtown Center.** Residential densities range from 20 – 65 du/acre and commercial intensities range from 0.5 – 3.0 FAR. Buildings are two to five stories tall, with taller buildings toward the Downtown core. Building types include Rowhouses/Townhouses, Garden Apartments, Urban Apartments, and Main Street/Mixed Use buildings. Building entrances are directly from the sidewalk, via shopfronts, arcades, galleries, and forecourts for shops and restaurants, and via stoops, dooryards or porches for residences. Vehicle access is designed to minimize impact on the pedestrian environment with parking lots located internally to blocks and accessed via side streets, alleys, or with a minimal number of intrusions in the sidewalk. Services and trash are located behind the buildings in alleys or rear parking areas.
- d. Urban Employment Center.** Residential densities range from 30-65 du/acre and commercial intensities range from 0.5 – 2.0 FAR. Buildings are two to five stories tall. Primary building types include Office/R&D buildings, Mixed Use/Main Street buildings, as well as Garden Apartments and Urban Apartments. Rowhouses/ Townhouses are allowed in limited circumstances to serve as a transition to lower density residential uses. Buildings with ground-floor shopfronts are generally built to the sidewalk and office or R&D buildings may be set back behind shallow front yards or forecourts. Building entrances are directly from the sidewalk, via forecourts, shopfronts, dooryards, stoops, and porches. Vehicular access is provided to parking lots or structures by alleys and driveways. Services and trash is located behind the buildings in alleys or rear parking areas.
- e. Regional Retail District.** Residential densities range from 10-15 du/acre and commercial intensities range from 0.35 – 2.0 FAR. Buildings are generally one and two stories tall, but may be up to four stories, particularly for mixed use projects. Exceptions for taller buildings may be made in special circumstances, such as hotels and iconic buildings or structures. The primary building type is Suburban Retail. Other allowed building types include Main Street/Mixed Use buildings, Urban Apartments, and Rowhouses/Townhouses. Buildings with ground-floor shopfronts are generally built to the sidewalk and are attached, with no side yards. Vehicular access is provided to parking lots via public and private streets (e.g., common drives detailed as small streets), by driveways from adjacent neighborhood streets, by service alleys, and from the primary roadway. Service functions such as loading and trash pickup are located at the rear of the lot.
- f. Resort District.** Residential densities are up to 8 du/acre and commercial intensities are up to 0.1 FAR. A range of building types are allowed to suit the needs of the resort developer and expected clientele and types other than these are allowed so long as there is no negative visual or aesthetic impact to areas outside of the resort. Building heights should generally be between one and four stories, but higher limits may be allowed in certain circumstances such as larger hotels or other structures

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Table 1: Existing Zones and New Land Use Designation compatibility

		Existing Zones					New	Existing		New	Existing			New Zones				Existing			
		Agriculture Reserve (A-R)	Agriculture Transition (A-T)	Residential Estate (R-E)	Residential Single Family (R-S)	6000 Overlay (R-O-6000)	Neighborhood General	Mobile Home (R-MH)	Residential Multiple Family (R-M)	Urban Neighborhood Zone	Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)	Tourist Commercial (C-T)	General Commercial (C-G)	Central Downtown Zone	Urban Employment Zone	Regional Retail Zone	Resort Zone	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	Heavy Industrial (M-H)	Industrial Park Overlay	Wrecking Yard (M-W)
Ranchos	Agricultural Rancho	●																			
	Rural Rancho		●	●																	
Neighborhoods	Suburban Neighborhood				●	●	□														
	General Neighborhood							●													
	Urban Neighborhood							△	□												
Centers	Neighborhood Center							△		●											
	Downtown Center								□		△	△	□								
	Urban Employment Center								□			△		□							
Districts	Suburban Retail District											●									
	Regional Retail District								□		△	△			□						
	Industrial District						□										●	△	△	△	
	Resort District								□							□					
Specific Plans	Specific Plans																				
Public	Parks and Open Spaces																				
	Schools																				
	Public Facilities and Buildings																				

Existing Zone has no role in implementing proposed Land Use Designation

- Existing Zone can play role in implementing proposed Land use Designation with only minor quantitative changes
- △ Existing Zone can play role in implementing proposed Land Use Designation only with significant changes to basic land use and/or density parameters
- New Zone to implement proposed Land use Designation
- New Land Use Designation to accommodate Existing Zone
- Orange Highlighted Zoning types indicate new designation needed

Table 2: Quantitative characteristics of New Land Use Designations

			Density (du/acre)	Min. Lot Size	Building Height	Use Mix
Existing Zones	Agriculture Reserve (A-R)	Existing		60 acres	2 story	
		Proposed		40+	2.5 story	
	Agriculture Transition (A-T)	Existing	1 unit/5 acres	5 acres	2 story	
		Proposed	1 unit/2.5 acres	Not specified	2.5 story	
	Residential Estate (R-E)	Existing	2.0	20,000 sf	2 story	
		Proposed	1.0	Not specified	2.5 story	
	Residential Single Family (R-S)	Existing	4.6	7200 sf	2 story	
		Proposed	No change	No change	No change	No change
	6000 Overlay (R-O-6000)	Existing	5.4	6,000 sf	2 story	
		Proposed	No change	No change	No change	No change
New Zone	Neighborhood General Zone		5.0 average/8.0 max	5,000 sf	2.5 story	
Existing Zones	Mobile Home (R-MH)	Existing	No change			
		Proposed	No change			
	Residential Multiple Family (R-M)	Existing	14.0	4,000 - 7,000 sf	3 story/45 feet	
		Proposed	7.0 - 25.0	2,000 - 22,500 sf	No change	
New Zone	Urban General Zone		20.0 - 38.0	2,000 - 22,500 sf	3 story	Mixed-use
Existing Zones	Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)	Existing	n/a	5,000 sf	2 story	Ground floor residential not allowed
		Proposed	15.0 - 40.0	2,000 - 22,500 sf	3 story	Allow ground floor retail at edge of center
	Tourist Commercial (C-T)	Existing	No Change;			
		Proposed	Consider Eliminating Zone			
	General Commercial (C-G)	Existing	n/a	5 acres	3 story/50 ft.	
		Proposed	n/a		1-2 story	
New Zones	Central Downtown Zone		20.0 - 65.0		2-5 story	Mixed-use
	Urban Employment Zone		30.0 - 65.0		2-5 story	Mixed-use
	Regional Retail Zone		10.0-15.0		1-4 story	Retail, Lodging, Entertainment, Residential
	Resort Zone		8.0		1-4+ story	Residential, lodging, recreational and support retail and commercial services, theme parks, sports venues and specialized entertainment uses
Existing Zones	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	Existing			10,000 sf	
		Proposed			No change	
	Heavy Industrial (M-H)	Existing			10,000 sf	
		Proposed			No change	
	Industrial Park Overlay	Existing			10,000 sf	
		Proposed			No change	
	Wrecking Yard (M-W)	Existing			10,000 sf	
		Proposed			No change	

Orange Highlighted Zoning types indicate new designation needed

## Zoning Code Update Process

To update the zoning code, it is recommended that the City undergo the following process:

1. Review the existing structure of the zoning ordinance – including procedures and administration – with the intent of the proposed land use designations in mind. Identify structural and organizational streamlining as well as procedures that need to be added or amplified in order to coordinate the development types envisioned by the General Plan, including better integration with the subdivision ordinance. The result of this stage is an updated table of contents and an outline describing how the information from the existing code is incorporated into the new one.
2. Confirm and expand on the key adjustments and additions that are needed in each of the existing zones. As described above, some zones –especially the single family zones – need very little adjustment and could stay as and continue to regulate existing housing tracts.
3. Create the new zones that are needed to implement the urban form and character envisioned by the proposed land use designations.
4. Undergo the consistency rezoning process, whereby new/updated zones get applied to real parcels. For existing patchwork areas between existing housing tracts and strip malls that are partially or largely undeveloped, a neighborhood master plan process

should be developed to ensure that a vision for these areas is generated prior to creating zones.

5. Update the City's subdivision ordinance, subdivision standards, and the City's standard drawings for streets, sidewalks, and other public improvements so that they predictably make streets, blocks, and lots that can be developed in accordance with the new General Plan vision.

## Neighborhood Master Plans

Zoning is a parcel level phenomenon, whereas place-making – as described throughout the General Plan Update – is not a parcel level phenomenon. Accordingly, for areas in which development is still fragmentary – such as the areas east of the Highway 86 Expressway and virtually all areas west of the Highway 86 Expressway – a “neighborhood master plan” should be prepared before any new or updated zoning is applied to the property. The new zoning code should identify:

- Project size thresholds for master planning,
- guidance on small scale master planning, such as reciprocal access and parking agreements, to avoid piecemeal development,
- guidance on large scale master planning expectations to ensure the General Plan goals are achieved, and
- the areas where these master plans are required in order to alert land owners and developers at the time of entitlement that their land will need to be rezoned to bring them into General Plan consistency.

## Summary and Zoning Consistency

This analysis has identified three tiers of changes that need to occur to provide consistency with the General Plan Update. The tiers are organized as follows:

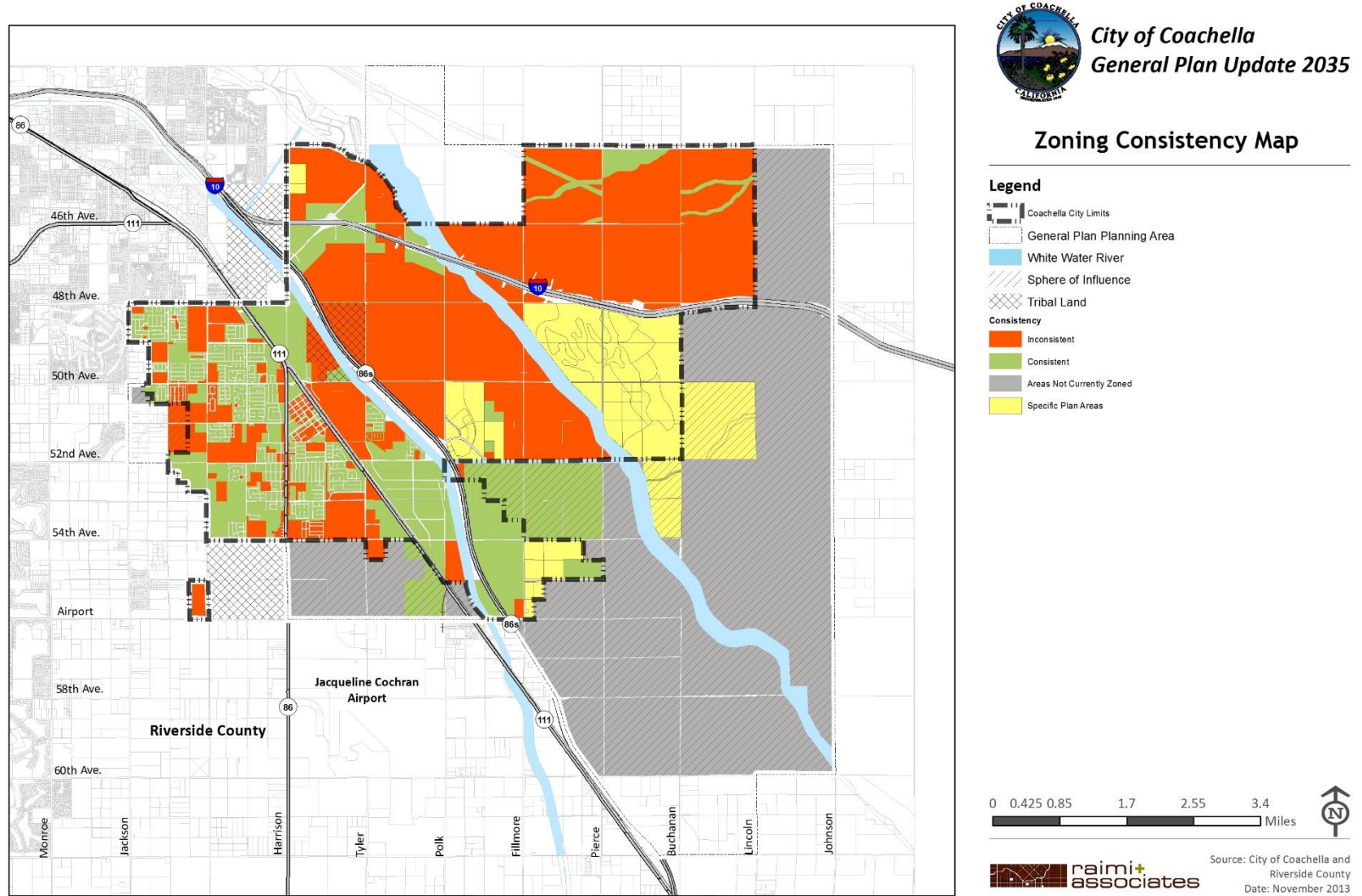
- 1) Zones that are to remain substantially unchanged
  - a. Commercial Tourist, Plan Unit Development (C-T, PUD)
  - b. Manufacturing Service (M-S)
  - c. Open Space (O-S)
  - d. Residential Medium, Plan Unit Development (R-M, PUD)
  - e. Mobile Home ( R-MH)
  - f. 6000 Overlay (R-O-6000)
  - g. Residential (R-PUD)
  - h. Residential Single Family (R-S)
  - i. Senior Housing Overlay (SHO)
  - j. Transportation (T)
- 2) Zones that will require minor changes
  - a. General Commercial (C-G), except where the Downtown Center is located
  - b. Multiple Family Residential (R-M)
  - c. Residential Medium Density (R-M-4300)
- 3) Zones that need to be changed or replaced
  - a. Agriculture Reserve (A-R)
  - b. Agriculture Transition (A-T) – Change
  - c. Commercial Entertainment (C-S)
  - d. Commercial General (C-G) – Replace

- e. Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) – Change or Replace
- f. Tourist Commercial (C-T) – Replace
- g. Residential Estate (R-E) – Change

## Zoning Consistency

The zoning consistency map (**Figure 2**) highlights areas where existing zoning uses conflict with uses permitted by the Coachella General Plan Update Land Uses. The four categories include Consistent, Inconsistent, Specific Plan areas, and New Zones. Consistent areas are zones that existing zoning and allowed uses would still be permitted upon adoption of the General Plan Update, and General Plan Land Use Map. The Inconsistent areas are highlighted as conflicting zones and will require a change or replacement in allowed uses in order to be consistent with the new land use zones outlined by the General Plan Update. Specific Plan designations show areas where specific plans will allocated special zoning that meets the uses with the specific plan area. Lastly, New Land Use Designations in Figure 8 are areas where there is currently no zoning. However, new land use designations may result in early zoning allocations to these areas based on the General Plan Update Land Use Map. A majority of land within the City boundaries is shown as inconsistent and will require extensive zoning updates to ensure new zoning is consistent with allowed uses allocated by the General Plan Land Use Map. Complete zoning consistency will better assist the City to reach the goals and guiding vision of the General Plan Update 2035.

FIGURE 4: Zoning Consistency Map



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