10.0

URBAN BOUNDARY ELEMENT

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Introduction

Since it was originally incorporated in 1979, Avenal has grown to an estimated 2005 population of approximately 9,486 persons. The General Plan includes an assumption of relatively high population growth, to about 16,039 persons, by the year 2025. The City's growth has been located within the present City boundary and concentrated in a northwest to southeast direction. Future growth is also planned for the northwest and southeast areas of town.

Purpose of the Urban Boundary Element

The purpose of the Urban Boundary Element is to define the limits for extending City services and infrastructure so as to accommodate new development anticipated within the time frame of this General Plan. The element includes 10-year growth rings (boundaries) starting with the year 2015, 2025 (Sphere of Influence), 2035, and the outer boundary which is the Planning Area. Reference the map pocket for the Land Use and Urban Boundaries map.

Scope and Content of the Urban Boundary Element

The Urban Boundary Element is not a state-mandated element. It is, however, an important element because it limits leap-frog development and provides for an orderly transition from rural to urban land uses. The element comprises five sections: the Introduction; Purpose of the Urban Boundary Element; Scope and Content of the Urban Boundary Element; Objectives, Policies and Standards; and the Urban Boundary Map. The Policies and Standards section establishes boundaries for new development over the next 30 years. LAFCo's guidelines for Spheres of Influence and Planning Areas is also included.

10.1 Urban Boundaries

Objective

A. Provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land uses.

B. Minimize urban sprawl and leap-frog development.

C. Designate growth areas that can be served by logical infrastructure extensions.

Policies and Standards

1. First priority shall be given to development of vacant, underdeveloped, and/or redevelopable land where urban services are or can be made available.

2. Identify and use natural and man-made edges, such as local roadways, as urban development limits for growth phasing lines.

3. Utilize low density and rural residential land uses as a buffer and transition between long-term agricultural uses and higher density urban development.

4. Prohibit the premature conversion of agricultural lands where agricultural preserves are present.

5. Encourage the use of parks and open space to enhance gateways to the City.

6. Discourage new or expanded urban development outside of the city's Sphere of Influence.

10.2 Growth Policies

Objective

A. Implement growth policies, which will guide the timing, type, and location of growth, preserve resource lands, protect natural features and open space, and encourage techniques which encourage energy conservation.

Policies and Standards

1. Establish a Planning Area Boundary around the City to represent a potential 50-year growth boundary with an additional appropriate buffer and/or greenbelt area. This area should include any "areas or communities of interest" that may affect the City.

2. Establish growth phasing boundaries for the logical, sequential development of the community over the next 30 years. These boundaries shall be established based on the following factors:

   a. Adequate residential, commercial and industrial capacity for the planning period.

   b. Inclusion of a 30 percent vacancy factor ("flexibility factor") for residential land; that is, at least 30 percent additional land shall be provided than needed.

   c. Inclusion of at least a 50 percent vacancy factor ("flexibility factor") for non-residential land; that is, at least 50 percent additional land than needed.

d. Adequacy of infrastructure including existing and planned capacity of sewerage system, treatment plant, water system, schools, roadways, and other urban services and facilities.

3. Amendment of the growth boundaries shall be accomplished by a General Plan Amendment.

4. Provide for orderly growth and development patterns through the designation of growth boundaries to be phased over time. The growth boundary may be expanded through a General Plan Amendment upon the following findings:

   a. That at least 80 percent of the residential area within the boundary has been developed, or that undeveloped land within the boundary provides less than a ten-year supply of residential, or less than a 20-year supply of commercial, industrial or public land uses.

   b. That adequate infrastructure exists in the expansion area, or will exist upon development.

   c. That the expansion area is not larger than the area necessary to provide an adequate supply of residential, commercial, public and industrial land uses, plus an adequate vacancy factor.

5. Expansions of the growth boundary shall be substantially contiguous to existing development in the community. To be "substantially contiguous," boundary expansions shall have at least 35 percent of the boundary expansion area contiguous to the existing boundary.