

General Plan Annual Progress Report 2022

County of Inyo



Prepared by the Inyo County Planning Department

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I. Introduction

This report has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of Government Code Section 65400. Guidance for preparation of the report is provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)¹.

The purpose of the document is to report on Inyo County's progress in implementing its General Plan. The document will be provided to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for their review and submitted to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Background

The County adopted a comprehensive update to the General Plan on December 11, 2001, and has amended the Plan on several occasions since. The planning process for the update took over four years, many public hearings and meetings, and substantial effort on the part of staff, the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, local organizations and interest groups, and the general public.

The Plan replaced, reformatted, and/or updated a number of older General Plan Elements and other planning documents that had been adopted over the years. In addition to the many working documents, staff reports, and outreach materials, the Plan resulted in the following major documents that are utilized on a day-to-basis in the County's planning processes:

- General Plan Summary
- Background Report
- Goals and Policies Report
- Land Use and Circulation Diagrams
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The Inyo County General Plan received awards of excellence from local chapters of the American Planning Association in 2001. The policy document and diagrams are available on the Planning Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2020-02/GP%20Goals%20and%20Policy%20Report%2012.2001.pdf>

Informational Document

This document is a reporting document, and does not create or alter policy. The content is provided for informational purposes only, and is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guidelines Section 15306.

¹ General Plan Annual Progress Report Guidance. State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit. Revised July 11, 2007. Refer to https://www.opr.ca.gov/s_planningassistance.php

Organization

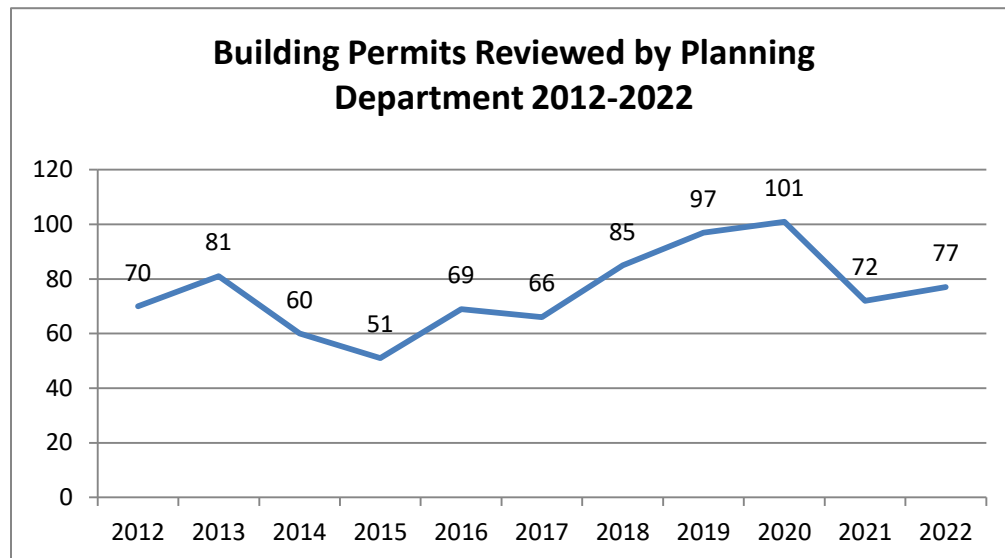
After this introduction, a summary of projects and issues addressed over the last year is provided, and then each General Plan element is addressed. Following these topics, the County’s planned General Plan and Zoning Ordinance update are addressed. Appendix A includes Government Code Section 65400. Appendix B includes the HCD reporting forms.

II. Plans, Projects, and Accomplishments

During 2022 the County processed numerous projects and participated in a variety of planning programs. The following summaries provide a brief overview of these projects and programs and are not intended to be exhaustive.

Building Permits

The total number of building permits received by the County in 2022 is unknown; however, seventy-seven building permits were reviewed by the Planning Department for zoning consistency issues in 2022. This is five more than were reviewed in 2021. Sixteen of these permits were for new housing units, 3 more than in 2021. Building permits were applied for 4 new single-family homes (2 less than in 2021), and 3 new manufactured homes (1 more than 2021) and 9 accessory dwelling units (ADU) (4 more than 2021). Six of the ADU applications were for conversions of garages and storage units to ADUs. Three Certificates of Occupancy (completed projects) were reported to have been granted by the Building and Safety Department in 2022 for residential projects. Two were for single family homes and 1 was for a shop conversion to an apartment (ADU).



Planning Permits

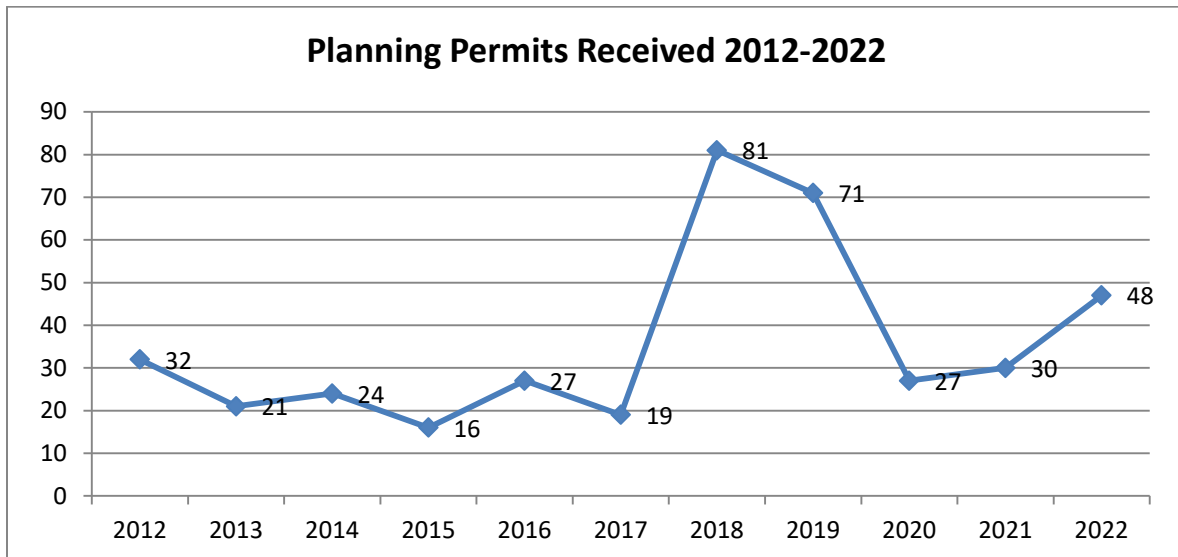
The Planning Department also processed a variety of landuse permits during 2022, including conditional use permits (CUP), variances, subdivisions, and associated environmental reviews. The breakdown in applications received is as follows:

- 3 Conditional Use Permits

- 1 General Plan Amendment
- 1 Zoning Reclassifications
- 4 Variances
- 22 Hosted Short Term Rental Permits (11 approved)
- 4 Zone Text Amendments
- 2 Renewable Energy Permits (solar)
- 1 Vested Mining Rights
- 1 Idle Mining Plan
- 5 Parcel Mergers
- 3 Lot Line Adjustments

During the past year, the Planning Commission agendas included the following application types:

- 4 Condition Use Permits – 1 Amendment
- 3 Zone Text Amendments
- 6 Variances
- 1 Mining Reclamation Plan
- 1 Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (MND/IS) (Laws Railroad Museum)
- 1 CUP Amendment
- 1 Tentative Parcel Map



Of the projects reviewed by the Planning Commission, 3 projects were also presented to the Board of Supervisors. Thirteen less applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2022 than were in 2021 (17 in 2022 and 30 in 2021). Most of the decline is due to a slowdown in cannabis CUP requests. None were submitted in 2022.

Projects Reviewed by the Planning Commission During 2022

In addition to the Ordinances reviewed by the Planning Commission, the following applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors during the past year:

Conditional Use Permit-2021-09/Coso Store - The applicant applied for a CUP to continue to operate a non-conforming truck stop at the property located at 20 Gills Station Road, at Coso Junction. The truck stop has been operating at the site for many years. The applicant has demolished the gas station and store to rebuild a larger facility with a store and food outlets. The truck parking area is also being expanded on the site and will allow for overnight parking. This project was exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission approved the project.

Variance-2021-05/Nano Farms Cannabis - The applicant applied for a fence height variance for up to 10-feet on a property zoned Open Space (OS) that is located at 377 Rosemary Lane, in the community of Sandy Valley. The applicant is requesting the fence height variance to provide extra security for a cannabis cultivation business located on the property. This project was exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission approved the project.

Variance 2022-01/Cassell - The applicant Aaron Cassell applied for a variance to remodel an existing garage into a single family residence for a property zoned Rural Residential (RR) that is located at 1520 Indian Springs Drive in the community of Lone Pine. The side setback requirement is 20-feet and the applicant is asking for a 5'2" encroachment. This project was Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Amendment to Conditional Use Permit 1985-07/ Brown's Supply - The applicant applied for an amendment to their original CUP to expand the area of their salvage yard located on land leased by LADWP. The applicant has an existing 4.87-acre decomposed granite pit that the salvage yard has encroached upon. This amendment would bring the existing nonconforming salvage yard into compliance, allowing the entire 18.37-acre property to be used as a salvage yard, and change the end use for the 4.87-acre DG pit to be part of the salvage yard. The project was Exempt from CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Conditional Use Permit-2021-03/Glacier Fed Farms - Variance-2021-03/Glacier Fed Farms - Variance-2021-08/Glacier Fed Farms - The applicant requested a CUP for the cultivation of 5,000-square-feet or less of cannabis. The project included growing and drying cannabis on a 12-acre parcel located at 3080 Glacier Lodge Road near the community of Big Pine. The applicant concurrently applied for 2 variances, one for a side yard setback encroachment of 200-feet on the west side of the property and the other for a fence height variance for up to 8-feet for security. This project was a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact under CEQA. The

Planning Commission approved the project.

Variance 2022-02/Valero - The applicant requested a sign variance to exceed the 50-square-foot maximum sign size for an existing Port of Subs sign to 80-square-feet. The property is zoned Central Business (CB) and is located at 130 S. Edwards Street in the community of Independence. This project was Categorically Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Conditional Use Permit-2022-01/Valero - The applicant is requesting a CUP to remove and replace an existing gas station sign that will include an electronic price reader. The project is proposed on a property located at 130 S. Edwards Street, in the community of Independence. A gas station, mini-mart and a Port of Subs restaurant are currently operating at the site. The applicant has applied for the CUP to change the current Chevron sign into a Valero sign and to include the electronic component to display gas prices. All other proposed signage changes on the site are compliant with the Central Business zone, in which the gas station is located. This project was Categorically Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Conditional Use Permit-2022-02/Coso Signs - The applicant requested a CUP for two gas station signs to include electronic price readers. The property is zoned Highway Services and Tourist Commercial (C-2) and is located at 20 Gills Station Road, in the community of Coso Junction. A gas station and mini mart have been operating on the site for many years prior to current new development. The applicant has applied for the CUP to change an existing Chevron sign to include the electronic component to display gas prices; and to update a high rise pole sign to include an electronic component to display gas prices. This project was Categorically Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Variance 2022-03/Coso Signs - The applicant is requesting a sign height and size variance to exceed the 50-square-foot maximum size for an electronic price reader sign to 84-square-feet; and to exceed the 25-foot sign height maximum to 50-feet. The property is zoned Highway Services and Tourist Commercial (C-2) and is located at 20 Gills Station Road, in the community of Coso Junction. This project was Categorically Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Zone Text Amendment-2022-05/ Outdoor Seating - Staff drafted a proposed ordinance to amend the Inyo County Zoning Code Chapters 18.44 - Central Business; 18.48 - Highway Services and Tourist Commercial; 18.45 – General Commercial and Retail; and, 18.54 - Commercial Recreation of the Inyo County Code to allow outdoor seating as an accessory use. This project was Categorically Exempt under CEQA. The Planning Commission approved a resolution recommending the Board of Supervisors approve the project, which they did.

Variance 2022-04/ Scott - The applicant, Randy Scott, applied for a variance for a non-conforming accessory building consisting of a garage, to encroach 2-feet into the required 5-foot side yard setback as the result of a pending Lot Line Adjustment. The property is zoned One-Family Residence (R1), located at 2812 Sierra Vista Way in the community of Bishop. The project was Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Laws Railroad Track Expansion Project Mitigated Negative Declaration - As the Environmental Review Board for the County, the Inyo County Planning Commission was asked to consider and certify the Laws Railroad Expansion Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) of Environmental Impact, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project proposes to expand the visitor use railcar rides by 0.7-miles. The Planning Commission approved and certified the MND.

Reclamation Plan 2020-01/Makayla II – Southwest Pumice LLC - Southwest Global Pumice was awarded a pumice materials sales contract from the Bureau of Land Management and applied for a reclamation plan as required by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act. The proposal consists of a previously approved 12.23 exploratory drilling project that transitions into an active open-pit pumice mine. The applicant was also proposing to expand an additional 11.98 acres for a total disturbance of 25 acres. Approximately 700,000 cubic yards of material will be extracted from the site over seven years. A Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact was been prepared and publicly noticed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Tentative Parcel Map 422 - The applicant re-applied for a previously approved Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) 422/Olancha Lake to combine seven separate parcels into one. The request is part of a greater business plan for a commercial RV and camping business. The Planning Commission approved the project.

Zone Text Amendment-2022-02/Inyo County-Zoning Code Updates - Staff has prepared a draft ordinance updating Title 18 of the County Code to reflect: the General Plan Housing Element update; new state housing laws; and/or where the California Department of Housing and Community Development required specific policies in the Housing Element. The Planning Commission considered providing a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to adopt these proposed changes. This project was exempt from CEQA by the ‘Common Sense Rule’ found in 14 CCR Section 15061(b)(3). The Planning Commission approved a resolution recommending the Board of Supervisors approve the project, which they did.

Zone Text Amendment-2022-03/Inyo County-Reasonable Accommodation – Staff prepared a draft Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance to remove land use, zoning and building constraints to the development of housing for individuals with disabilities to ensure equal access to housing. The Planning Commission considered providing a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to adopt these proposed changes. This project was exempt from CEQA by the ‘Common Sense Rule’ found in 14 CCR Section 15061(b)(3). The Planning Commission approved a resolution recommending the Board of Supervisors approve the project, which they did.

Other Plans and Projects

The following discussion summarizes other projects which the County expended substantial efforts in 2021.

2021 Housing Element Update

The County's General Plan Housing Element was due for an update in 2021. The County began preliminary work on the update during the fall of 2020. This included securing a Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant from the State. The County expended a tremendous amount of time and effort in updating its Housing Element to meet all of the new requirements. With virtually no help, or guidance from HCD (besides references to statutes), the County addressed the new legislation and struggled through the required new Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) section. Once substantive comments and edits were received from HCD the Update was completed and approved in August 2022.

Zoning Code/General Plan Update Housing Element

Once the Housing Element Update was completed, updates to County's Zoning Code were made to begin implementing the changes set forth in the Update. This included adding multi-family housing as a by right use in the County's Central Business Zone and eliminating the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit for multi-family housing with over 15-units.

Senate Bill 2 (SB-2) Planning Grant for Affordable Housing - SB2

SB2 was adopted by the State Legislature in 2017 to provide a permanent source of funding to help local jurisdictions provide affordable housing. In 2019, funding was directed at planning assistance that helps to achieve affordable housing goals. The grant funding was allocated by an "over the counter" non-competitive means to all eligible jurisdictions in the State. The county submitted an application for this funding. Since Inyo County is considered a 'small county' with regard to the SB2 funding allocations, the award was \$160,000. The County secured the SB2 grant and a contractor and began working on the project in fall 2020. The contractor and County identified parcels in the County that may be appropriate for re-designating for higher density residential use and the Draft Ad Min EIR was prepared and went through a 45-day review and comment period. This project is scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing in March 2023 and a Board of Supervisor's hearing at the end of April 2023.

Cannabis

In 2016, the California voters enacted Proposition 64, which permits and regulates recreational use of marijuana in California. Several statutes to regulate medical marijuana were passed in the 2015 legislative session – Assembly Bill (AB) 266 (Bonta, 2015), AB 243 (Wood, 2015), and Senate Bill (SB) 643 (McGuire, 2015) – becoming effective January 1, 2016. The County also included Advisory Ballot Measures G, H, and I in the 2016 election: Measure G inquired whether the voters support medical commercial cannabis businesses, H inquired whether the voters support recreational cannabis businesses, and I was for a tax on cannabis businesses. All three measures were decided in favor cannabis businesses and taxation. The County continues to monitor implementation of the legislation. The County worked throughout 2017 on cannabis regulations and adopted them in January 2018. In December 2018 the first Cannabis Business Licenses were awarded in Inyo County and subsequent CUPs began being processed in 2019 and continued into 2022.

Short-term Rentals

In 2006 the County determined that short-term vacation rentals are not permitted within the Residential Zoning Districts. The County began to investigate if this decision should be revisited,

and if so, how it might proceed. During 2016, the Board conducted several workshops, and directed staff to begin public outreach. Public workshops were conducted in 2017 and Draft regulations were prepared. In February 2018 an ordinance was approved by the Board of Supervisors allowing for the short term rental of residential properties with proper permitting. The County began approving permits for short term rentals in April 2018. During 2019 staff reviewed the successes and issues related to short-term rental permitting. The results of this review were presented to the Board of Supervisors, along with suggestions to update the short-term rental ordinance at 3 workshops. Based on public input and recommendations from the Board, updates to the short-term rental ordinance were prepared by staff and subsequently adopted by the Board. These changes included removing the availability of non-hosted short term rental permits. Currently the short-term rental ordinance is being reviewed again for possible changes.

Dark Skies – Lighting

In the 2002 update of the County’s General Plan a policy relating to lighting was include, under the Conservation and Open Space Element - Visual Resources 1.6 Control of Light and Glare. It states: *The County shall require that all outdoor light fixtures including street lighting, externally illuminated signs, advertising displays, and billboards use low-energy, shielded light fixtures which direct light downward (i.e., lighting shall not emit higher than a horizontal level) and which are fully shielded. Where public safety would not be compromised, the County shall encourage the use of low-pressure sodium lighting for all outdoor light fixtures.* This policy was never implemented through the zoning code as language was never included in the County’s zoning code for it. Due to interest from the community and members of the Board of Supervisors, County staff began a process to evaluate a possible lighting ordinance for the County. Three public outreach meetings and two Board workshops were held on the subject in 2018. The project continued into 2020, but with minimal attention due to Covid and lack of staff. This project was picked back up in 2021 and a Draft Ordinance has been completed. A recommendation from the Planning Commission was obtained and the Board approved it in April 2022.

Community Plans for Charleston View/Tecopa

Based on interest from local residents, the County embarked on preparation of Community Plans for Tecopa and Charleston View in Southeast Inyo County in 2015. Public meetings were conducted in both Charleston View and Tecopa in 2016 to kick-off the project and vision the Plan. In addition, background reports were developed for each planning area. Work continued on the plans in 2017 with visioning work. In December 2018 Draft Community Plans were presented to the communities of Charleston View and Tecopa. The Plans were well received with a few suggestions for minor changes. The County continued to try to identify and pursue grants for environmental analysis and implementation of the Plans during 2022.

Olancha Cartago Corridor Study – The County was awarded a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to study a section of U.S. 395 that is currently planned to be bypassed as part of the Caltrans US 395 Olancha-Cartago four lane project. The Olancha Bypass Corridor Study (OBCS) will include both 1) a portion of US 395 from the current intersection of SR 190 northward to just past Cartago that is proposed to be relinquished to the County and 2) the portion of US 395 from the current intersection with SR 190 south to the southern end of the

bypass that will become part of SR 190. Work began on the study in 2018 that included the first public outreach meeting. This project continued through and was completed in 2019. The county has continued to research grants and various programs to implement the opportunities identified in the Study.

West-wide Energy Corridors

This project, approved in 2009, involves numerous federal agencies led by the BLM. Pursuant to a settlement agreement, the federal agencies are conducting reviews of the approved corridors. In 2016, a Corridor Study and regional reviews were released. The County provided input regarding the Region 1 Review and continues to monitor the program. In 2019, the Region 5 Review took place. The county provided numerous comments on Region 5 as it spans the length of Inyo County along the I-395 corridor. The Region 5 review continued into 2020 and the County participated in stakeholder meetings and providing comments. At the end of 2020 the Draft Report was released. The County has prepared draft comments and sent them to the Agencies in early 2021. The County will continue to monitor and comment on the Regional Reports as they go through the process to adoption.

Haiwee Geothermal Leasing Area (HGLA)

A DEIS for the HGLA was submitted by the BLM for comments beginning in 2009 (Notice of Intent) through 2012 (DEIS). It evaluated five alternatives to address the potential environmental impacts of opening approximately 22,805-acres of BLM managed federal mineral estate for geothermal energy exploration and development and leasing and for three individual leasing proposals covering approximately 4,460-acres of federal mineral estate for geothermal energy testing and development. A supplement to the DEIS and proposed amendment to the CDCA Plan, was released in 2019. It was been prepared primarily to update both documents to be consistent with changes to landuse designations and resource management strategies based on the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). The total area under review (22,805-acres) and proposed leases (4,460-acres) are exactly the same as what was previously evaluated. The County reviewed the supplemental document with regard to comments it sent in 2009 and 2012 and sent additional comments in 2019. The County continued to monitor possible implementation of the DEIS in 2022.

Owens Valley and Haiwee Pump-back Storage Projects

During 2019, Premium Energy Holding LLC applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for preliminary permits to study hydro-electric pump back storage projects for the North Owens Valley, and Haiwee dam areas. A preliminary permit is issued for up to four years. It does not authorize construction, but it maintains priority of an application for license while the applicant studies the site and prepares to apply for a license. The applicant is required to submit periodic reports on the status of its studies. The preliminary permit it is not necessary to apply for or receive a license. Many comments have been submitted regarding these applications. The Owens Valley proposal does not appear to be moving forward and Haiwee is. The County continued to monitor this proposal in 2020, 2021, 2022 and will continue to do so in 2023 as well as and provide comments at each opportunity.

Mining

Pursuant to the Surface Mining and Land Reclamation Act (SMARA), the County continued its oversight activities to encourage production and conservation of mineral resources while

minimizing associated environmental impacts. Staff has continued to amend County policy as the impacts of changes to SMARA that were approved by the California Legislature and Governor in 2016 are continuing to be implemented. Staff is responsible for the inspection and administration of reclamation policy for approximately 79 SMARA mines. Staff has noted a continuation from last year of a general increase in activity at many of the County's local surface mines during 2019. The increase in mining activities in 2019 and 2020 continued into 2021 and 2022. Also during 2022, many of the mines that were behind in fee payments were brought into compliance.

Brownfields Grant

In 2011 Inyo County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nye, Esmeralda, Lincoln, and White Pine counties of Nevada for the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant to conduct environmental site assessments and area-wide planning in support of renewable energy, transmission, and economic development in the vicinity of identified Brownfields sites. A subsequent grant was obtained, and the Coalition was expanded to include Esmeralda County. In 2018 the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe joined the Coalition. The County continued to participate in the Coalition during 2018. A site that was reviewed under a Brownfield grant funded Phase I environmental assessment in 2016 and a Phase II environmental assessment in 2017 was able to be successfully developed into a Grocery Outlet store with plans for the remainder of the property to be developed into the Inyo County consolidated office building. Also in 2018, a revolving loan and fund grant, applied for in 2017, was awarded to the coalition. The coalition completed updates to its website and to the Area Wide Plan. The county continued to participate in the Brownfields program during 2022.

Yucca Mountain Repository Assessment Office

Funding for development of the Yucca Mountain Repository was terminated by the Obama Administration, consequently eliminating the funding to all Affected Units of Local Government. Staff continues to monitor litigation and other activities. In 2016, the County reviewed and provided input regarding the Final Supplemental EIS for groundwater, which largely responded to the County's previous input. The County has continued through 2021 to support groundwater monitoring in its southeast area to provide data for the project and monitor the Yucca Mountain program.

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)

The DRECP covers the Mojave and Colorado deserts to provide binding, long-term endangered species permit assurances and facilitate renewable energy project review and approvals. The DRECP planning area includes portions of Inyo County: roughly in the Owens Valley to just north of Independence, the Panamint Valley, Death Valley, and other southeast portions of the County. The County has been participating in the project since the late 2000s, which was to have been a General Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan. In 2014, a phased approach was taken to the DRECP whereby the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment was separated out from the NCCP component. The Final EIS and Proposed Decision were released in late 2015, which the County protested. The County approved a Programmatic Agreement regarding cultural resources related to the Plan in early 2016, and reviewed BLM's recirculation of the Areas of Environmental Concern from the draft DRECP. The Record of Decision was issued later in 2016, which dismissed the County's protest and

implemented the BLM's DRECP components. In early 2017 the BLM published a Segregation Notice for mineral entry on California Desert National Conservation Land. The County provided comments on this action and continues to monitor DRECP activities. In February 2018 a Presidential Executive Order was noticed in the Federal Register instructing the BLM to begin a scoping process for possible amendments to the DRECP. The notice specifically requested comments on how land designations identified in the DRECP might affect the ability to develop solar, wind or other renewable energy resources. The County evaluated and provided comments to the BLM regarding this request. The county continued to monitor DRECP activities through 2022 and the BLM is now looking at updating its renewable energy plans possibly including the DRECP.

Tribal Consultation Policy

In response to input from the Big Pine Tribe, the County developed a draft Tribal Consultation Policy to guide its consultation efforts under Senate Bill 18 (Burton, 2004) and Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, 2014). The County shared the draft Policy with local Tribes and conducted multiple workshops in 2015 and 2016. The County approved the Policy in late 2016, and invited the Tribes to consult regarding development of Tribe-specific agreements. The County continues to work with the Tribes on establishing good communications and possible Tribal-specific agreements.

Coso Hay Ranch Water Export Project

The County approved a project in 2009 that pumps water from the Hay Ranch in the Rose Valley to the Coso Geothermal plants at China Lake Air Weapons Naval Station. The County continued to monitor pumping activities in 2022.

Crystal Geyser Roxane Cabin Bar Ranch Water Bottling Plant Project

The CGR Cabin Bar Ranch Water Bottling Plant project proposes the construction and operation of a spring water bottling facility on a 34-acre site on the northeastern portion of the 420-acre Cabin Bar Ranch property, adjacent to the southern boundary of the community of Cartago and on the east side of US Highway 395. Approved in 2013, the project will pump 360 acre feet of groundwater per year. Project facilities include a 198,000-square foot water bottling plant containing four bottling lines and an associated 40,000-square foot warehouse facility. The County will continue to monitor implementation in 2022.

Crystal Geyser Olancho Bottling Plant Water Quality Investigation

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is investigating unpermitted arsenic discharges from CGR's water bottling plant in Cartago. The County coordinated with the Water Board to conduct two public meetings regarding the investigation in 2016, as well as responding to the Grand Jury's findings regarding the issue. The County continues to monitor this situation.

North Sierra Highway Corridor/Specific Plan

In 2015, Caltrans selected the County and the City of Bishop for a grant to prepare a Corridor Plan for North Sierra Highway (generally between the Tri-County Fairgrounds and the Bishop Paiute Palace on the north side of Bishop) in 2015. The County, City of Bishop, and the Bishop Paiute Tribe worked with other interested parties in the Corridor to expand the scope of work to a Specific Plan, and the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority pledged to provide financial support to

assist doing so. In 2016, the County and its partners selected a consultant to assist in the planning process and convened an Advisory Committee to assist with coordination between the many participating agencies. Preliminary outreach commenced, existing conditions were assessed, and a visioning was initiated. A Charrette was conducted to brainstorm ideas for the Plan, and a draft Plan is anticipated in 2017. The Corridor Plan was completed in 2017. The specific plan has not been completed and staff will continue to look for grants to fund its completion. During 2022 the plan was consulted with to help Cal Trans with the Meadow Farms ADA project as the project area is within the North Sierra Highway Plan area.

Sol Smart

Through the Department of Energy's Sun Shot – Roadmap, Inyo County deployed a program to encourage small solar energy systems and energy efficiency for local residents and businesses. The County developed an expedited permitting process for small-scale solar energy systems and institutes a small-scale solar-friendly zoning ordinance. In cooperation with Southern California Edison (SCE), the County updated its General Plan to incorporate energy efficiency goals, policies, and implementation measures. Also in cooperation with SCE, the County has prepared an Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund program, and is seeking seed funds to implement. Through these programs, Sol Smart, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Sun Shot Initiative, has recognized Inyo County as second in the nation for taking important first steps to encourage solar energy for homes and businesses. The County is still participating in the Sol Smart program.

DWP Solar Ranch

The County is monitoring DWP's Solar Ranch proposal in the Southern Owens Valley, which intends to develop approximately 200 megawatts of photovoltaic. DWP issued a Notice of Preparation for the project in 2010, and the two locations and in 2013, DWP decided to develop a third site, located south of Independence. The County provided input regarding the Draft EIR for the project in 2013, and continues to monitor for any progress.

Zoning Code/General Plan Update

The County adopted a comprehensive General Plan update in 2001. One of the follow-up actions directed in the 2001 General Plan was to update the Zoning Code, which is a component of the Inyo County Code. Staff worked with Wildan in 2011 to prepare updated Zoning Code sections and incorporated the Planning Commission's and Board of Supervisors' input into a comprehensive Zoning Code update and prepared a related General Plan update. Staff received direction from the Board regarding several issues related to the update in 2014, including code enforcement, Digital 395, and special event permits. Environmental review is still waiting for a funding source.

Endangered Species Coordination

The County has been monitoring the US Fish and Wildlife Service's and the California Fish and Wildlife's endangered species listing work program. Most recently this included proposals for listing of various species of Joshua Trees.

Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center (SBRC)

In 2022 the Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center began buildout of a new facility on

Main Street in Bishop, and held four events to support and encourage local small business growth and entrepreneurialism. In addition, the County signed an MOU with Sierra Business Council, a 501(c)3 that runs small business development centers in small towns throughout the Sierra, to place a staff person at the new facility in Bishop. The buildout is expected to be completed by Q2 2023 and we look forward to having a full-time facility available for local small business owners to receive training, technical assistance, mentorship, access to capital resources, and other critical supports and services.

Inyo County Visitor Website

In 2022, Inyo County launched a new tourism-aimed website at www.inyocountyvisitor.com. This website provides information for visitors on the many quaint small towns throughout the County, provides information on filming and film locations, and outlines the County's many superlatives including the contiguous United States' highest peak at Mt. Whitney; lowest point at Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park; the oldest living thing in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest; and celebrating the designation of the Alabama Hills as a National Scenic Area.

New Film Commissioner

In 2022 Inyo County executed a contract for new Film Commissioner. The new Film Commissioner will be responsible for growing Inyo County Film opportunities and streamlining the filming permit process; growing social and traditional media footprint; and marketing Inyo County as a filming destination throughout the Country.

Lone Pine Housing Efforts

The County of Inyo is in the process of purchasing .5 acres of land in Lone Pine, California, for the purpose of incentivizing the development of housing. Up to 8 units may be possible on the parcel. The County continues to seek opportunities to leverage private land for the creation of new housing, while working with LADWP to identify opportunities for future land divestment.

Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA)

Inyo County applied for 2019, 2020, and 2021 (PLHA) funds equaling \$490,685. Inyo County will use the funds for the predevelopment, development, acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable rental and ownership housing, including ADUs that meets the needs of a growing workforce earning up to 120-percent of AMI. PLHA funds will be utilized for two programs:

A) Beginning in year 1 and continuing through year 5, Inyo County will use PLHA funds to provide a low-interest loan program for low-to-moderate income homeowners in need of repairs on their single family homes, or mobile homes set on a permanent foundation, and owners of multi-family rental properties where at least half of tenants are low income households under 60% AMI; and,

B) loans to low-to-moderate income homeowners for the development of ADUs and JADUs for long-term rental, with up to 20% of the loan forgivable if the homeowner can show that the ADU has been rented for at least 5 years to a tenant with income under 60% AMI and 30% of the loan forgivable if the ADU was rented for at least 5 years to a tenant with income under 30% AMI.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Prototypes Program

Inyo County will shortly issue an RFP for an architectural firm to build a suite of pre-approved

ADU and single family home prototype plans, which will reduce the cost of housing and ADU development and streamline the permitting process. Prototypes will be available in a variety of configurations and sizes, and will be pre-designed to meet the requirements of Inyo County's rugged climate and extreme weather.

Silver Peaks

In Partnership with Visionary Home Builders and Mammoth Lakes Housing, Inyo County helped to develop and submit an application for HCD's MHP Super NOFA for approximately \$19 million to build a 72 unit affordable housing apartment complex in Bishop.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy CEDS

In partnership with Mono County, Alpine County, and the Golden State Finance Authority, Inyo County issued a successful RFP and has executed a contract with a consultant to create a (CEDS). The CEDS should be complete by June 2023, and will allow the 3-county area to create an Economic Development District and become eligible for federal funds through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Inyo County Consolidated Office Building

The County continued, in 2019, to work towards developing a consolidated office building to house multiple departments currently located in various facilities throughout Bishop. The proposed consolidated office building will house County Counsel, the District Attorney office, the Public Guardian, Health and Human Services, Waste Management, Motor Pool, Building and Safety, Parks and Recreation, Personnel, Information Systems, Sheriff, and Probation, and possibly an Adult Education Center. The County has been considering a consolidated office building for about 20 years. In 2018, the Chair of the Board signed an agreement with a developer who will design and build the consolidated office building. A lease agreement was entered into and ground breaking for the project was spring 2020 with completion expected in 2021. On July 1, 2021 the Consolidated Office Building was issued a Certificate of Occupancy and the various County offices were moved in over a period of three weeks through the month of July 2021. The building was in full use through 2022 and many county departments are now housed there.

2022 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

This project involves the development and selection of transportation projects that are then programmed in specific amounts and program years for the next five-year funding cycle. The development of this program requires local and regional coordination. The program was approved by the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) in November 2021 and was submitted for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP has been implemented on an ongoing basis by Caltrans, County, and City of Bishop. The construction phase of the 395 Olanca Cartago 4 Lane Project has begun and therefore the project has been removed from the RTIP. Within the funding limitations of the 2022 STIP, the ICLTC has only been able to prioritize local projects but has continued to advocate moving forward the Tri-County (Kern, Mono, Inyo) MOU projects with the next in line being the SR 14 Freeman Gulch Segment 2 Project and the Mono County Conway Summit Passing Lanes. There was insufficient funding to move any of these regional projects forward. The 2022 RTIP advanced the P,S&E phase of the Lone Pine Town Rehab Project and the East Line St. Bridge

Project. The Inyo County 2022 RTIP has been supplemented with \$1.757 million of Federal COVID relief funds. The 2024 RTIP is under development and due to Caltrans in December of 2023. The construction phase of Lone Pine Town Streets Rehab will be proposed for construction within the 2024 RTIP/STIP and at least a portion of the \$1.7M match required for a Federal FLAP grant to reconstruct State Line Road will also be proposed. STIP funding has been on the decline statewide. An estimate of 2024 STIP funding from the State is due in late summer of 2023. A negative RTIP/STIP balance for Inyo County will continue for the next several cycles. It is plausible for the Inyo County RTIP to be out of the negative by 2026. This is highly dependent upon Kern COG repaying RTIP funds forwarded by Inyo County during the 2016 STIP cycle for Freeman Gulch Phase 1.

State Line Road Rehabilitation Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant

This project was approved by the Federal Highway Administration on December 14, 2022. This project will rehabilitate and widen State Line Road from Death Valley Junction to the State Line. State Line Road will be widened to 28 feet with 12-foot-wide travel lanes and two 2-foot-wide paved shoulders. Signage, striping and safety-related features will be included. The County, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, will complete a review of this project under the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. This roadway experiences heavy traffic volumes and is a popular route to Death Valley. The project will improve access to Death Valley National Park, Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, and Bureau of Land Management Lands. The project adjoins another FLAP project on Bell Vista Road in Nevada, which is slated for construction in 2025. State Line Road construction funding is preliminarily programmed for fiscal year 2028.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

This planning document involves the development and selection of transportation projects that are then eligible to be programmed in specific amounts and program years in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. The ICLTC is currently working under the 2019 RTP with an update due this November, the 2023 RTP. The RTP is intended to be a fiscally constrained planning document for a twenty-year period. The RTP is updated every four years. The development of this plan requires local and regional coordination. This plan was approved by the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) in October 2019. The ICLTC with the help of LSC Consulting is in the process of outreach and public comment to develop the 2023 RTP update. Any road construction and transportation infrastructure beyond basic repair and maintenance within the next four years should be included in this document.

Inyo County Active Transportation Program Plan

Inyo County, with a consultant, drafted an Active Transportation Program (ATP) Plan and held public outreach meetings. The 2015 ATP was released for public review and comment and then approved by the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission in April 2016. The 2015 ATP Plan includes:

1. Bicycle Element – an update of the 2009 Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan;
2. Pedestrian Element – this describes existing facilities, examines past accident records, estimates the current number of pedestrians, lists and prioritizes potential projects, and identify funding sources;

3. Recreation Trails Element – this identifies areas where there are deficiencies in motorized and non-motorized recreational trails, lists and prioritizes potential projects, estimates the number of users for a given trail segment, and describes how the projects provide for the viewing of points of interest; and
4. Safe Routes to School Element – this section creates Safe Routes to Schools maps for all areas in Inyo County and updates the Safe Routes to School maps for schools inside the City of Bishop.

The Inyo County LTC is in the process of updating its Active Transportation Plan and anticipates completion in the Fall of 2023. An Active Transportation Plan or its equivalent is a requirement to submit application for ATP grant funds. In 2018 Inyo County submitted applications for several competitive ATP Cycle 4, 2019 Grants. One of the three submissions was successful. The California Transportation Commission awarded funding for the “Lone Pine Sidewalk Construction and ADA Improvement Project.” During the 2022 ATP grant cycle, the City of Bishop applied, but was not successful. The 2022 ATP grant program was ten times over-subscribed and highly competitive. Inyo County LTC staff are currently identifying projects to try and find a competitive concept for the next ATP Cycle 7.

Eastern Sierra ATV Adventure Trails System Project

The County certified an EIR for this project in early 2015, which included potentially up to 38 combined-use routes on County roads for Off-highway vehicles. The Board approved seven of the routes for a pilot program, three of which opened in the summer of 2015. The County reached an agreement with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) to open the remaining four routes in December 2016. The pilot program is designed to test the extension of combined use routes from the existing law’s three-mile limit to a longer ten mile limit. An update hearing before the Board of Supervisors was held in December and a final report was sent to the California Legislature in December as required by the law. The Legislature has extended the pilot program for another five-year period now expiring January 1, 2025.

Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP)

The Local Transportation Commission (LTC) received in 2020 a grant to complete a local road safety plan to identify potential highway safety improvements in the City of Bishop and County of Inyo. ICLTC staff with a consultant, presented a final LRSP to the Commission in October 2022. The 2022 cycle of Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) grants required an LRSP as a pre-condition.

Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP)

Inyo County Public Works received an HSIP grant to add fog-line and centerline striping at various locations throughout southern Inyo County. This striping work is complete. Public Works won another HSIP grant to replace the Onion Valley Road guardrail. Two grant proposals for the HSIP program were submitted in October 2022 for signage and safety improvements along Trona Wildrose and Emigrant Pass in Southeast Inyo County. Results will be announced in early 2023.

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP)

The ICWD participates in this collaborative body made up of public, private, and not-for-profit entities. MOU signatories include Inyo and Mono counties, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the

City of Bishop, tribes, water districts, and community service districts. The group consists of about 34 voting members. The mission of the Inyo Mono Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) is to “To research, identify, prioritize, and act on regional water issues, and related social and economic issues, so as to protect and enhance our environment and economy.” A Phase II Inyo Mono IRWM Plan was completed in 2012, which was revised in 2014 and again in 2019.

To date, the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program has raised more than \$7.75 million to support water infrastructure and ecosystem stewardship projects, provide technical assistance and project development services to small water systems, and engage disadvantaged communities throughout the region. Most recently, the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program was awarded \$2.762 million through Proposition 1 for nine projects, five of which are in Inyo County. Public Works will receive \$558,000 to replace water meters in Laws, Independence, and Lone Pine. In addition, Mono County will receive funding to build a groundwater model for the Tri-Valley, which is a project delineated in the Owens Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

The long-term outlook for the IRWM Program is uncertain at this time. Once the Prop 1 funding is exhausted, there will be no more IRWM-specific funding available from the State. The RWMG is investigating other possible funding mechanisms to continue the Program.

Inyo/Los Angeles Long Term Water Agreement

The Inyo/Los Angeles Long Term Water Agreement (Agreement) is settlement to CEQA litigation between the County and Los Angeles concerning the operation of Los Angeles’s second aqueduct. The Agreement requires Los Angeles to manage surface water and groundwater so as to avoid any significant adverse impacts that cannot be acceptably mitigated and to provide a reliable supply of water for Inyo and Los Angeles. Activities conducted by the County and Los Angeles include annual planning of water management activities, implementation and monitoring of mitigation projects, monitoring of habitat and hydrologic conditions, and evaluation of current conditions relative to the Agreement’s goals.

Specific activities undertaken during 2021 included continued monitoring of hydrologic and environmental effects of LADWP’s test of well 385 near Fish Slough and completion of technical reports describing the results of that test. An evaluation of conditions and potential modifications to the McNally Ponds and Native Pasture project in the Laws area was commenced in 2021. Inyo and Los Angeles implemented several adaptive management measures in the LORP including revised flows in the delta habitat area and substantially revised the wetland management procedures in the Blackrock waterfowl management area according to an Interim Plan developed by Inyo and Los Angeles. Staff also implemented new monitoring programs to assess the effects of these measures. These programs are discussed in greater detail below. The development of enhanced biological monitoring at certain mitigation sites and implementation of a Type-D study of willow and cottonwood development in riparian areas of the Owens Valley continued. A significant effort is to conduct ongoing monitoring of phreatophytic vegetation and hydrologic conditions on Los Angeles’s land throughout the Owens Valley floor.

Lower Owens River Project (LORP)

The LORP is a compensatory mitigation project under the Long-Term Water Agreement with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The project was established to offset

impacts that are difficult to quantify or mitigate directly. After 15 years, the LORP is partially meeting its goals of creating a thriving and diverse ecosystem for the benefit of biodiversity and endangered species. To assess its progress, refer to the 2020 LORP Annual Report, available at: https://www.inyowater.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/01/2019_DRAFT_LORP_ANNUAL_REP-ORT-reduced-1.pdf

The LORP project has resulted in the significant greening of river-riparian areas since 2006, but the growth of willow and cottonwood forests has fallen short of expectations. Instead of a predicted increase, there has been a net decrease in forest canopy. The absence of certain bird species, which use riparian trees for habitat and serve as indicators of project success has been noted. To address this issue, the Water Department has started a tree recruitment study, now in its second year. The study aims to document past recruitment patterns and inform future adaptive management actions that might encourage natural recruitment.

In the Project area, bulrush and cattails have filled in wetlands, and ponds, and the river, and have greatly diminished the amount of open water in the project area. Emergent vegetation continues to limit recreational access, encroach upon ranch pasture, and occupy land where tree willow might otherwise establish. In the river, the combination of warm water and high flows, which stir up accumulated organic material, can cause a decrease in dissolved oxygen. On numerous occasions this situation has led to fish kills. In response to low run-off condition, seasonal habitat flows in 2022 were less variable than in previous years and no water quality impacts to the fishery were noted. Poor water quality will likely be a permanent concern for LORP management.

Surveys completed in August 2018 found a significant increase in populations and spread of the noxious weed *Lepidium* due to flooding in 2017. A weed survey in 2021 found that the spread of *Lepidium* has somewhat stabilized, but that tamarisk had become abundant in areas that have been previously cleared. ICWD and Inyo/Mono Agricultural Department are engaged in cooperative planning to control further spread of weeds in the LORP.

In response to a 2019 LORP evaluation, changes have been made to reduce flows into the Delta Habitat Area during the growing season—this to limit the growth of emergent vegetation and improve habitat for waterfowl. Another reaction to the evaluation is a study of trees in LORP—in an attempt to understand how they established and what we might do to encourage new tree recruitment.

The project area has seen the growth of bulrush and cattails, which have filled in wetlands, ponds, and the river, reducing open water. Emergent vegetation, including the noxious weed *Lepidium*, continues to impede recreational access, encroach on pasture land, and limit the establishment of tree willows. The combination of warm water and high flows in the river can lead to decreased dissolved oxygen, which has resulted in fish kills on multiple occasions. However, there were no reported water quality impacts to the fishery in 2022. Water quality remains a permanent concern for LORP management.

Surveys conducted in 2018 showed a significant increase in the populations and spread of *Lepidium* due to 2017 flooding. A 2021 weed survey found that the spread of *Lepidium* had stabilized, but tamarisk had become prevalent in cleared areas. The ICWD and Inyo/Mono

Agricultural Department are collaborating to prevent further weed spread in the LORP.

To address the findings of a 2019 LORP evaluation, changes have been made to reduce flows into the Delta Habitat Area during the growing season, improving habitat for waterfowl and limiting emergent vegetation growth. These changes will still comply with the legally mandated average annual flow limits. Additionally, a study of trees in the LORP has been initiated to understand their establishment and inform new tree recruitment.

Another reaction to the evaluation is a study of trees in LORP—in an attempt to understand how they established and what we might do to encourage new tree recruitment. Average annual flows will still comply with legally mandated limits.

Inyo and LADWP with the support of the MOU parties, and approval of the Standing Committee approved an Interim 5-year Blackrock Waterfowl Area (BWMA) Plan in 2021. The new water management was implemented in the fall 2021. Under the plan, water is provided to three of the four basins (Drew Unit is dried for the experiment). Instead of the year round flooding called for in the original management plan, the area will receive water adequate to provide 500 acres of flooding from October to March. The flooded basins will be dried in the growing season to discourage the spread of cattail and Bulrush, which had diminished open water habitat under former management. Progress on this plan is reported in the LORP Annual Report and at a public meeting every May.

Owens River Water Trail (ORWT)

Owens River Water Trail would open up about 6 miles of river channel east of Lone Pine for recreational canoeing, kayaking, and paddle boarding. The County has been awarded two grants to construct the ORWT; \$500,032 from the California Natural Resources Agency (CRA) in 2016, and \$110,000 from California Division of Boating and Water in 2017. These funds will pay for design, engineering, and permitting for improvements at the launch and take-out facilities. LADWP funded the development and production of the draft EIR, which was completed in May 2019. The CEQA document will be certified as soon as the terms for a long-term lease with LADWP are known. The lease will allow the development of water entry and exit points that are located on LADWP owned lands.

Mitigation Projects

One of the key roles of the ICWD is to assist with, monitor, and report on the implementation and ongoing management of 64 Environmental Projects and Enhancement/Mitigation Projects, which are LADWP obligations in the Owens Valley. These mitigation projects include civic improvement, revegetation, wildlife enhancement, habitat recovery, and the LORP. These projects are mitigation measures adopted by LADWP in the 1991 EIR; projects that are provided for in the 1997 MOU; and projects developed subsequently. If mitigation goals are not being met, or projects are not being managed as stipulated, or simply not being implemented, the ICWD works with the LADWP and MOU parties to either help implement or modify the project. The full list of these projects and their status, as well as other useful information can be found in the Inyo County Water Department's webpage www.inyowater.org/mitigation. In 2022 an interactive online map of all mitigation projects was developed by the ICWD. The map can be accessed at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/44b652a16c4b443b9b4a2e7dc3fcb91/>. In 2020, Los Angeles and the County worked on a joint assessment of the status of mitigation projects and other activities mandated under the Agreement. Inyo County and LADWP agreed on the status of all but two of the mitigation projects (Five Bridges revegetation, and the LORP),

and one of the other mandated commitments (Haiwee Reservoir). In Inyo County's assessment, 48 projects were either complete, or they were implemented and ongoing, and 16 projects were either implemented but not meeting goals or not fully implemented. Other revegetation mitigation projects claimed complete by LADWP are being assessed and evaluated by the County.

A focus of upcoming work will be the development of scientific studies to assess habitat related projects—to determine if changes in management can improve conditions. As well, the County and LADWP are investigating moving the ponds portion of the McNally Ponds and Native Pasture Project from the McNally Ditch, where the water supply is both unreliable and/or prone to creating drawdown impacts, to an area just below Farmers Pond, where upstream water resources might allow reliable annual operation of substitute ponds in an environment more favorable to waterfowl and conducive to habitat development.

Sustainable Groundwater Management for the Owens Valley (SGMA)

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA) requires that local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) manage groundwater basins in California. The Owens Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) includes Owens, Chalfant, Hammil, and Benton valleys, and originally, Inyo County, Mono County, City of Bishop, and the Tri Valley Groundwater Management District were designated as individual GSA's. In 2018, the four agencies withdrew as GSA's to allow the Owens Valley Groundwater Authority (OVGA) to become the exclusive GSA for the Basin. Seven additional community service districts also elected to become members of the OVGA. A grant was acquired and consultant selected to develop the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Basin in late 2019. The Basin initially was designated as medium priority which requires that groundwater must be managed by a local GSA in accordance with an approved GSP. Work to prepare the GSP by staff and the consultant, Daniel B. Stephens and Associates, began in earnest in early 2019. The Basin boundary adjustment to remove the Starlight area (Starlite wells tap a different aquifer than the rest of the Basin) triggered a re-evaluation of the Basin priority by the Department of Water Resources which released a draft report in April 2019 designating the Basin as low priority. Under SGMA, low priority basins are not required to be managed by a GSA. Following several months of uncertainty, the OVGA decided that regardless of the basin status, the agency should proceed with development of the GSP. The designation of the basin as low priority was finalized in December 2019. Four agencies subsequently decided in 2020 to withdraw from the OVGA. Additional changes to the OVGA composition occurred in 2020 when the Owens Valley Committee (a local environmental group) and the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe were added as Interested Parties.

Work on the GSP accelerated in 2020, specifically the components to acquire existing hydrologic data, describe the basin hydrology, water balance, groundwater dependent ecosystems, and hydrologic conceptual model, prepare draft sustainable management criteria, develop an online hydrologic database management system and website, and adoption of a mission statement and public engagement plan. Consultant work products for the GSP were presented at regular OVGA meetings and discussed at several evening workshops in 2020 and 2021. Unfortunately, due to coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions, the OVGA was prevented from conducting the public process to engage stakeholders in-person as intended. The OVGA Board

meetings and stakeholder meetings are public and were migrated to a virtual format successfully. In Benton, Hammil and Chalfant valley, internet access is relatively poor, and the OVGA resorted to a slower and higher cost direct mailer to reach residents in those communities.

The final GSP including responses to public comment was adopted by the OVGA on December 9, 2021. The Basin was divided into three management areas, Tri-Valley/Fish Slough, Owens Valley, and Owens Lake based on the differing hydrologic characteristics of each area. Tri-Valley exhibits chronically declining water levels. Water levels in the Owens Valley and Owens Lake fluctuate but do not exhibit declining trends. Sustainable management criteria and management actions in the GSP reflect the desire to avoid negative results in the Owens Lake and Owens Valley areas. In Tri-Valley, the management actions prescribe a path to address identified data gaps and to seek funds to develop numerical groundwater models necessary to make informed decisions to address the declining water levels. Given the low priority status, implementation of all or parts of the GSP is at the discretion of the OVGA.

In early 2022, Mono County elected to withdraw from the OVGA. Subsequently, The Tri Valley Groundwater Management District was granted exclusive GSA status for the portion of the basin within their jurisdiction and Mono County was granted GSA status for the remainder of the Basin in Mono County. The OVGA no longer has a member with land or water management responsibility in Mono County, and the agency is responsible for sustainable groundwater management only within the Inyo County portion of the Basin excluding lands owned by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The Owens Lake is owned by California and managed by the State Lands Commission. The Commission has discretion to determine if measures in the GSP would be applied to operations on the lakebed.

Given the low priority status and relatively stable (fluctuating but not consistently declining) water levels in the Basin in Inyo County, the OVGA elected to implement two management measures to maintain and publish a complete database of pumping and water levels in the Basin. Inyo County will share applications for new well drilling permits with the OVGA hydrologic staff for review and inclusion in the database. The GSP identified a data gap for the amount of pumping by private pumpers and Community Service Districts. This is a relatively small component of pumping but the lacking data be acquired and added to the database under a Well Registration Ordinance adopted by the OVGA in September 2022.

Two management actions in the GSP that are no longer OVGA projects are being pursued by other agencies. Mono County has been awarded a grant through the Integrated Regional Water Management Group to develop the model for the Tri-Valley/Fish Slough portion of the Basin, and the Tri-Valley District is implementing steps to increase groundwater monitoring to address that data gap.

Local Agricultural Study

The Agriculture Department worked with a consultant to complete a study aimed at quantifying the value of local agriculture to our economy. This study was completed in 2017 and provides more in-depth analysis than the gross production value that is presented in the annual Crop and Livestock Report. Areas of analysis include comparison to other local industries, valuation of industries reliant on or linked to agriculture, economic ties between Inyo and Mono Counties, number of jobs maintained by this industry, economic contributions by crop and land ownership, a valuation of taxes generated by this industry, and estimated value of ecosystem services provided by agricultural producers. This report continues to provide valuable information to the

County.

The Agriculture Department also continued the continuing education program in 2022, but later than normal and via zoom due to Covid. The Eastern Sierra Weed Management Area and Owens Valley Mosquito Abatement Program divisions fully implemented a GIS based electronic field monitoring and reporting system that will help to provide more efficient and effective survey, treatment, and reporting of field operations.

Cannabis

The division began inspections of cultivation sites and continued inspections of retail locations. Various changes were made to the Inyo County Code in relation to cannabis with the input of industry and other county departments with the intention of improving and streamlining processes. The division also implemented a licensing system to integrate application review, renewals, taxes, and other processes into one system.

The Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center

In early 2022 the Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center was completed. It is a welcome center for the region's businesses and entrepreneurs. Its vision is to directly support the business through access to knowledge and resources, networking, collaboration space, and enhancement of the region's entrepreneurship ecosystems. It has been a long-standing vision of the Inyo County Board and Administration to provide business the support and resource they need to start, grow and thrive; thereby adding living-wage jobs for Inyo County citizens. The BRC's direct services and core activities include the navigator program, events and meetups, and business development services.

III. General Plan Elements

The General Plan details the County's guiding principles for a variety of planning topics and is the roadmap for future development. California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. provides direction and specifications for the content of the General Plan. The following seven elements are required:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety
- Housing

The elements may be combined or renamed, but basic requirements must be included. An agency may adopt any type of optional element, such as an Economic Element, at its discretion. Only the Housing Element must be certified by another agency (i.e., HCD), although the State Geologist and CalFire provide some oversight of other aspects.

The Inyo County General Plan consists of the following Elements:

- Government

- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Circulation
- Conservation/Open Space
- Public Safety

Subtopics are included in the elements to meet California’s requirements. The following sections address implementation for each of the County’s General Plan Elements.

Government Element

The Government Element includes the following goals (i) promoting consistency of other agencies’ actions with General Plan (Goal Gov-1), (ii) encouraging collaborative planning and public participation (Goal Gov-2), (iii) increasing private land ownership (Goal Gov-3), (iv) guiding federal land actions and encouraging economic development (Goal Gov-4), (v) protecting and developing water resources (Goal Gov-5), (vi) preserving and expanding agriculture (Goal Gov-6), (vii) enhancing opportunities for recreation, including for off-road vehicles, hiking, and biking (Goal Gov-7), (viii) encouraging improved management of wildlife and fisheries (Goal Gov-8), (ix) promoting exploration, development, and reclamation of mineral resources (Goal Gov-9), (x) balancing energy development (Goal Gov-10), and (xi) enhancing transportation and preserving access (Goal Gov-11)

To achieve these goals, the County has continued dialogue with local, regional, State, and federal agencies on a variety of projects, as discussed elsewhere in this report, thereby continuing the previous coordination efforts with other agencies. The County constantly strives to ensure collaboration between national, California, and regional agencies as required by federal, State, and local regulations. The County works to make such agencies aware of County programs and policies and bring their actions into conformance with the General Plan. During 2018, the County worked with the US Forest Service, BLM, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and other state and federal agencies in regional planning efforts affecting Inyo County resources.

The County also involves citizens, Native American tribes, and public interest groups in the planning process whenever feasible. Staff works to ensure that the public is made aware of all planning projects through mailings and notices in the newspaper to allow for their participation. Routine feedback and public input is requested, and the County’s website is maintained to provide for current up-to-date information regarding planning issues.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element guides County land use policy and insures that appropriate development takes place, with adequate provision of public services and utilities. Land use designations are specified, defined, and mapped in the Land Use Diagrams. The land use designations roughly correspond to the County’s zoning districts. Public services and utilities are also addressed in the Land Use Element. Development in and around existing towns is encouraged, which is where

most building permits are issued. Potential impacts from new development are assessed under CEQA. Additional conditions of approval and mitigation may be required if deemed necessary to provide for issues such as screening, habitat conservation, parking, and noise-reduction, or otherwise address issues per the General Plan's direction.

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element works to support long-term efforts to improve economic conditions for all County residents, and addresses tourism, natural resources, and retail sales. Towards these ends, the County has continued to promote access to public lands and limit any new restrictions being planned. Promotions regarding Inyo County in major population centers elsewhere in the State (including at the State fair) are carried out. Filming opportunities are exploited, and several dramatic locations were featured in film, television, and other venues in 2022. There are also several new economic development programs. These are outlined in the Other Plans and Projects section.

Housing Element

The Housing Element works to provide housing for all of the community, and addresses the needs of specified populations. In 2022, the County completed its 6th Cycle Updated of the Housing Element, which was certified by HCD in August 2022. Preliminary data indicate that in 2022 sixteen new units were applied for, and that construction began on a significant number of the new units, and 3 units obtained certificates of occupancy.

The County continues to work with service providers to provide for the needs of lower- income households, the disabled, and other special needs populations, per the direction provided by the Housing Element. The County is also working to update the Zoning Ordinance, which incorporates new State zoning requirements regarding housing.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element addresses a wide variety of topics, including roads, scenic highways, public transportation, bicycles and trails, railroads, aviation, canals, pipelines, and transmission cables. These planning programs prioritize improvement to achieve implementation measures for roadway repaving and reconstruction projects.

As discussed previously, projects are reviewed to minimize impacts, provide for parking, reduce vehicle trips, and optimize transportation access. Continuing improvement in telecommunications infrastructure provides opportunities for telecommuting and economic development, and Digital 395 provides an excellent opportunity for telecommunications enhancements locally. The County continues to work with Caltrans regarding the Olancho-Cartago Four-Lane project and is seeking ways to implement the strategies identified in the corridor study prepared for the area proposed to be abandoned.

The Adventure Trails project works to provide access and encourage economic development. Viewshed issues along scenic highways are also addressed, as they may apply. The County continues to encourage the Forest Service and other federal agencies to address local concerns

regarding appropriate motorized transport on federal lands and to otherwise maintain and improve access.

The County continues to work with and support ESTA to implement transit service throughout the County and beyond. The Short Range Transit Plan completed in 2016 and the Roles and Responsibilities Analysis started in 2010 implement the General Plan's direction to support and promote public transit and accessibility. In 2016, the County approved the Inyo County Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which includes bicycles, pedestrians, safe-routes-to-schools, and recreation trails. An update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is required every four years. The latest update was scheduled, completed and approved in 2019.

The County worked with the City of Bishop, Caltrans, and other local stakeholders to implement the Collaborative Bikeways Plan, which was adopted in 2008. This project implements the Circulation Element's bicycle goals, policies, and implementation measures. As discussed above, the Inyo 2016 ATP built upon and incorporated the policies and goals set forth in the 2008 bikeways plan. Continued coordination with LADWP, the Forest Service, and the BLM ensures appropriate trail maintenance and access to public lands.

The County continues its planning efforts towards commercial air service at the Bishop Airport. The County continues working on improving other airports in its jurisdiction by seeking grant funds and coordinating with Caltrans and the Federal Aviation Administration. The Bishop Airport layout plan and narrative was also completed and sent to the FAA for review and approval in 2019. Work continued throughout 2020 on the project and scheduled commercial passenger service to the Bishop Airport by United Express (operated by Skywest) began on December 19, 2021.

Conservation/Open Space Element

The Conservation and Open Space Element works to provide for resource management, open space for recreation, and park development. Inyo County's Open Space Element includes sections on soils, agriculture, minerals and energy, water, biology, cultural (i.e., archaeology), visual, and recreation.

The County continues its programs to support agriculture and ranching. Mineral resource development is encouraged, and the County reviews projects to ensure compliance with SMARA and other regulations. As discussed above, the Planning Commission continues its work providing oversight for reclamation plans, and staff inspected about 80 mines in 2022. The County is working with State and federal agencies to encourage appropriate mineral production.

The Environmental Health Department provides oversight and permitting for potable water and wastewater treatment systems in order to manage and improve water quality. Individual projects are reviewed to ensure that they do not adversely impact groundwater quality or quantity. Work on the LORP and other enhancement projects improve surface water quality through biological filtering. Water transfers are reviewed to minimize environmental and economic effects. Potential impacts on biological, cultural, and visual resources are analyzed for projects and programs through environmental review processes. Architectural Design review in Lone Pine is carried out to ensure compatibility. The County continues to work to improve its parks and

provide access to federal lands.

Public Safety Element

The Public Safety Element works to reduce hazards regarding air quality, floods, avalanches, wildfires, geology and seismicity, and noise. The County continues to cooperate with DWP to reduce dust from Owens Lake, and evaluates air quality issues for major discretionary projects. Building permits and other development proposals are reviewed for flooding, fire, avalanche, and faulting hazards. The County continued its work on a Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2017 and it was approved by FEMA in December 2017. In September 2018 the County's General Plan Public Safety Element was amended to add by reference the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Incorporating the MHMP into the General Plan is beneficial to the County as it adds identification of potential hazards, analysis, and mitigation language to the General Plan; and, it opens up more potential funding opportunities to the County in the event of a disaster. The Hazard Mitigation Plan and Safety Element are currently in the beginning stages of being updated and staff from several county departments will be working on it.

IV. General Plan and Zoning Code Update

The County comprehensively updated its General Plan on December 11, 2001. One of the follow-up actions was to update the County's Zoning Code per the direction provided in the General Plan. During the past several years staff has been working to update the Zoning Code and conducting workshops on proposed changes with both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. As a result of those changes to the Zoning Code, related changes to the General Plan are being considered to maintain consistency between the two documents.

During 2013, staff held numerous meetings with stakeholders and public workshops throughout the County to provide information, and receive input and feedback on the updated general plan and zoning code update. Results of the stakeholder and public outreach were presented to the Planning Commission in late 2013 and to the Board of Supervisors in early 2014. Staff is incorporating the results of public outreach, as well as comments from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and working to conduct environmental review in 2023.

V. Conclusion

The General Plan is the County's constitution and guiding vision. Due to the world's ever-changing nature, upkeep and maintenance of the General Plan is a continuous process. The County implements the General Plan's vision on a day-to-day basis in its many planning projects, and strives to include the public in the decision-making process.

The County provided leadership and participated in many planning activities in 2022, as identified in this report. It continued its project review responsibilities to further the General Plan's goals, policies, programs, and implementation measures.

Appendix A

Government Code Section 65400

(a) After the legislative body has adopted all or part of a general plan, the planning agency shall do both of the following:

(1) Investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan or element of the general plan, so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the general plan.

(2) Provide by April 1 of each year an annual report to the legislative body, the Office of Planning and Research, and the Department of Housing and Community Development that includes all of the following:

(A) The status of the plan and progress in its implementation.

(B) The progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs determined pursuant to Section 65584 and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583.

The housing element portion of the annual report, as required by this paragraph, shall be prepared through the use of forms and definitions adopted by the Department of Housing and Community Development pursuant to the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2). Prior to and after adoption of the forms, the housing element portion of the annual report shall include a section that describes the actions taken by the local government towards completion of the programs and status of the local government's compliance with the deadlines in its housing element. That report shall be considered at an annual public meeting before the legislative body where members of the public shall be allowed to provide oral testimony and written comments.

The report may include the number of units that have been substantially rehabilitated, converted from nonaffordable to affordable by acquisition, and preserved consistent with the standards set forth in paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583.1. The report shall document how the units meet the standards set forth in that subdivision.

(C) The degree to which its approved general plan complies with the guidelines developed and adopted pursuant to Section 65040.2 and the date of the last revision to the general plan.

(b) If a court finds, upon a motion to that effect, that a city, county, or city and county failed to submit, within 60 days of the deadline established in this section, the housing element portion of the report required pursuant to subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) that substantially complies with the requirements of this section, the court shall issue an order or

judgment compelling compliance with this section within 60 days. If the city, county, or city and county fails to comply with the court's order within 60 days, the plaintiff or petitioner may move for sanctions, and the court may, upon that motion, grant appropriate sanctions. The court shall retain jurisdiction to ensure that its order or judgment is carried out. If the court determines that its order or judgment is not carried out within 60 days, the court may issue further orders as provided by law to ensure that the purposes and policies of this section are fulfilled. This subdivision applies to proceedings initiated on or after the first day of October following the adoption of forms and definitions by the Department of Housing and Community Development pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (a), but no sooner than six months following that adoption.

Appendix B

Jurisdiction	County - Unincorporated	
Reporting Year	2022	(Jan. 1 - Dec. 31)
Planning Period	6th Cycle	04/30/2021 - 04/30/2029

Building Permits Issued by Affordability Summary		
Income Level		Current Year
Very Low	Deed Restricted	0
	Non-Deed Restricted	0
Low	Deed Restricted	0
	Non-Deed Restricted	0
Moderate	Deed Restricted	0
	Non-Deed Restricted	0
Above Moderate		14
Total Units		14

Note: Units serving extremely low-income households are included in the very low-income permitted units totals

Units by Structure Type	Entitled	Permitted	Completed
SFA	0	0	0
SFD	4	4	2
2 to 4	0	0	0
5+	0	0	0
ADU	10	8	1
MH	3	2	0
Total	17	14	3

Housing Applications Summary	
Total Housing Applications Submitted:	17
Number of Proposed Units in All Applications Received:	17
Total Housing Units Approved:	0
Total Housing Units Disapproved:	0

Use of SB 35 Streamlining Provisions	
Number of Applications for Streamlining	0
Number of Streamlining Applications Approved	0
Total Developments Approved with Streamlining	0
Total Units Constructed with Streamlining	0

Units Constructed - SB 35 Streamlining Permits			
Income	Rental	Ownership	Total
Very Low	0	0	0
Low	0	0	0
Moderate	0	0	0
Above Moderate	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

Cells in grey contain auto-calculation formulas