



# CITY of NORCO

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February 28, 2005

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DIV. OF HOUSING  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT HCD

Department of Housing and Community Development  
P.O. Box 952053  
Sacramento, CA 94252-2053

Attached please find the City of Norco's Annual Report for 2003.

Sincerely,

James E. Daniels  
Director of Community Development

/sd-55612

## CITY COUNCIL

HERB HIGGINS  
Mayor

KATHY AZEVEDO  
Mayor Pro Tem

HAL CLARK  
Council Member

FRANK HALL  
Council Member

HARVEY SULLIVAN  
Council Member

# Planning Division

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# Annual Report

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# 2003

# **City of Norco**

2870 Clark Avenue  
Norco, CA 92860

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## **City Council**

Harvey Sullivan, Mayor  
Barbara Carmichael, Mayor Pro Tem  
Hal Clark, Council Member  
Frank Hall, Council Member  
Herb Higgins, Council Member

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## **Planning Commission**

Wayne Hinson, Chair  
Greg Newton, Vice Chair  
Paul Ryan, Commissioner  
James Wilson, Commissioner  
Robert Wright, Commissioner

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## **Planning Department/Division**

James E. Daniels, Community Development Director  
Steve King, Senior Planner  
Alma Robles, Assistant Planner  
Michelle Weaver, Assistant Planner  
Susan Dvorak, Executive Secretary



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## PLANNING DIVISION ACTIVITIES

The City of Norco Planning Division's Annual Report outlines the activities of the Division from January 2003 through December 2003.

The Planning Division has a total of four staff persons, headed by the Community & Development Director. Staff includes three planners (a senior planner and two assistant planners) and an executive secretary.

The Planning Division is broken down into two divisions, current and advanced planning. The Planning Division deals with technical and aesthetic issues as they relate to land use, environmental concerns, and zoning. All planning projects and cases are reviewed and approved in compliance with the City's Zoning Code and the General Plan.

### **Current Planning**

Activities of current planning include a busy schedule, and a great deal of interaction with the general public. Duties include:

- ◆ Administrating the City's Zoning Ordinances, regulations, policies, and codes;
- ◆ Processing planning applications and preparing reports for review by the Streets and Trails Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council;
- ◆ Environmental review of projects;
- ◆ Plan checking of projects as they relate to zoning and land use for compliance with the standards of the City's Zoning Ordinances;
- ◆ Responding to numerous telephone calls and inquires both in writing, at the public counter, and via email regarding zoning and land use issues;
- ◆ Code enforcement assistance in order to facilitate compliance with the zoning code;
- ◆ Field inspections of existing and proposed sites for final occupancy and other planning issues; and
- ◆ Business license review for new and existing businesses in the City.
- ◆ Issuance of commercial vehicle exemption permits.

## **Advanced Planning**

The activities of advance planning include: research, data analysis, and report writing of federal, state, and local mandated documents required of city government for legislative review and compliance. These types of documents generally require a great deal of staff time and many hours of preparation. In addition, some documents are required to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The General Plan was the largest state-mandated document worked on in 2003.

Other documents are prepared in an effort to seek funding from various federal, state, and/or local agencies for an array of land use projects. Additionally, updates and amendments to the Norco's Zoning Code, Municipal Code, and Norco's California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines are prepared. Other reports are prepared under separate cover to reflect new and/or required legislation, and lastly, projects processed/prepared under advance planning also require environmental review.

In an effort to streamline the division and improve efficiency and service to the public, our advanced planning staff is also trained and capable to assist in current planning activities as time permits and on an as-needed basis.

## **PLANNING PROJECTS FOR 2003**

### **General Plan**

The City of Norco is in the process of comprehensively updating its General Plan. In 2003, staff worked on and/or completed mandatory elements of the required document. The following is a list of the elements that will be included in the City's General Plan and their expected completion year:

- ◆ Circulation (completed - 2000)
- ◆ Housing (completed - 2000)
- ◆ Land Use (completed - 2001)
- ◆ Conservation (completed - 2002)
- ◆ Noise (completed - 2003)
- ◆ Safety (expected to be completed in 2005)
- ◆ Open Space/Parks and Recreation (expected to be completed in 2005)

### **Administrative Cases**

The following table indicates the number of applications reviewed in-house administratively. Generally, administrative cases are not reviewed by the Planning Commission or City Council unless appealed, or under special circumstances.

As can be seen in Table 1, the processing of administrative cases plays a major role in the daily activities of the Planning Division. From the administrative cases reported,

building permit reviews continue to be at the top of administrative cases reviewed by the Department. Building permits for new commercial development (after review and approval by the Planning Commission or City Council), new homes, room additions, residential pools, accessory structures, fencing etc., are reviewed for zoning compliance and consistency with Planning Commission conditions of approval, if applicable.

**Table 1**  
**Administrative Cases**

<b>CASES</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Special Event Permits</b>	74	90	65	67	78
<b>Building Permit Reviews</b>	1495	1766	1730	1512	2115
<b>Certificate of Occupancy Reviews</b>	70	102	182	73	81
<b>Sign Reviews</b>	30	29	20	37	35
<b>Business License Reviews</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	166
<b>Large Family Day Care</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1669</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1689</b>	<b>2475</b>

### **Planning Cases**

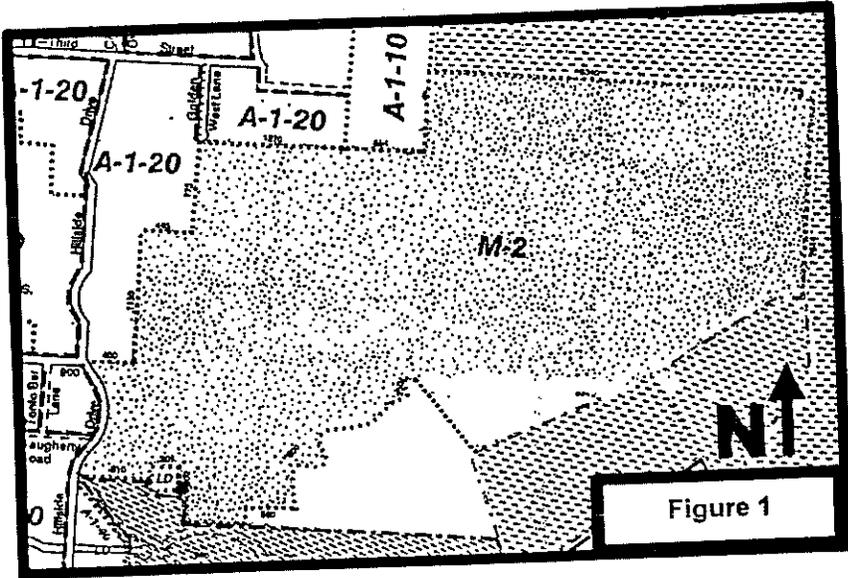
Calendar Year 2003 was among the busiest years on record in the Planning Division (see Table 2 on page 7). This can be attributed to the rebound in the economy as housing and business developments are on the rise.

The Planning Division processed a total of 78 Planning Commission cases for 2003. Items that went to the Planning Commission included variances, conditional use permits, general plan amendments, tentative tract and parcel maps, site plan reviews, zone changes, and zone code amendments.

#### **◆ General Plan Amendments, Zone Changes and Annexations**

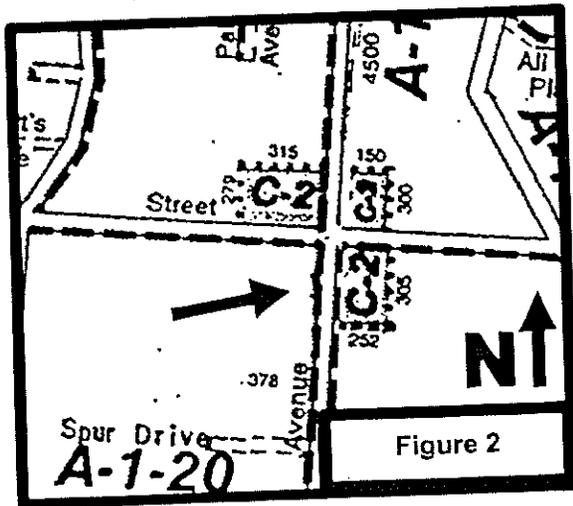
There were three zone changes (ZC) and four general plan amendments (GPA) in 2003, compared to four zone changes and four general plan amendments in 2002. Below is a brief description of the general plan amendments/zone changes processed in 2003.

General Plan Amendment 2003-01: This project consisted of a general plan amendment to update the Circulation Element to revise the road classification and standard width of California Avenue between North Drive and Sixth Street. **(Status - approved)**



General Plan Amendment 2003-02/ Zone Change 2003-01 (ref. Figure 1): This project consists of changing the General Plan land use designation from Heavy Manufacturing to Residential, and to change the zoning designation from M-2 (General Manufacturing) to A-1 (Agricultural, Low Density Residential) for the future development of housing tracts. **(Status - pending EPA findings)**

General Plan Amendment 2003-03/Zone Change 2003-02: This project consisted of a City-initiated amendment to change the General Plan land use designation from Residential-Low to Residential - Agricultural, and to change the zoning designation from R-1 (Residential - Single Family) to A-1-20 (Agricultural, Low-Density Residential), for ten lots located on the northwest corner of Corona Avenue and Seventh Street. **(Status - denied)**



General Plan Amendment 2003-04/Zone Change 2003-03 (ref. Figure 2): This project consisted of a general plan amendment to change land use designation from Commercial Community to Residential Agricultural and to change the zoning designation from C-2 (General Commercial) to A-1-20 (Agricultural-Low Density) for property located at the southeast corner of California Avenue and Seventh Street. This general plan amendment and zone change were necessary for the approval of a residential subdivision at this location. **(Status - approved)**

**Table 2**  
**Planning Commission Cases**

<b>CASES</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Variances</b>	13	15	20	17	8
<b>Conditional Use Permits:</b>					
<b>New applications</b>	17	21	18	18	20
<b>Modifications</b>	0	1	0	2	2
<b>General Plan Amendments</b>	1	4	2	4	4
<b>Tentative Parcel Maps</b>	0	2	3	6	5
<b>Special Sign Permits</b>	4	1	3	0	1
<b>Special Use Permit</b>			1	0	0
<b>Site Plan Reviews:</b>					
<b>New Applications</b>	18	21	8	11	20
<b>Modifications</b>	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Specific Plans</b>	0	2	1	0	3
<b>Tentative Tract Maps</b>	0	2	2	1	6
<b>Zone Changes</b>	1	2	2	4	3
<b>Zone Code Amendments</b>	3	6	5	5	4
<b>Annexations</b>	1	1	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>78</b>

◆ **Zone Code Amendments (ZCA)**

There were four zone code amendments processed in 2003, which was one less than the previous two years. Zone code amendments are typically processed to reflect new legislation and to establish and/or update provisions and requirements for certain land uses and development standards. Below is a list of zone code amendments processed for 2003.

- ☑ ZCA 2003-01 (City of Norco): was reviewed but not approved to establish Chapter 18.35.16 – "Dog Rescue Operations," to provide standards and regulations for dog rescue operations in the City;

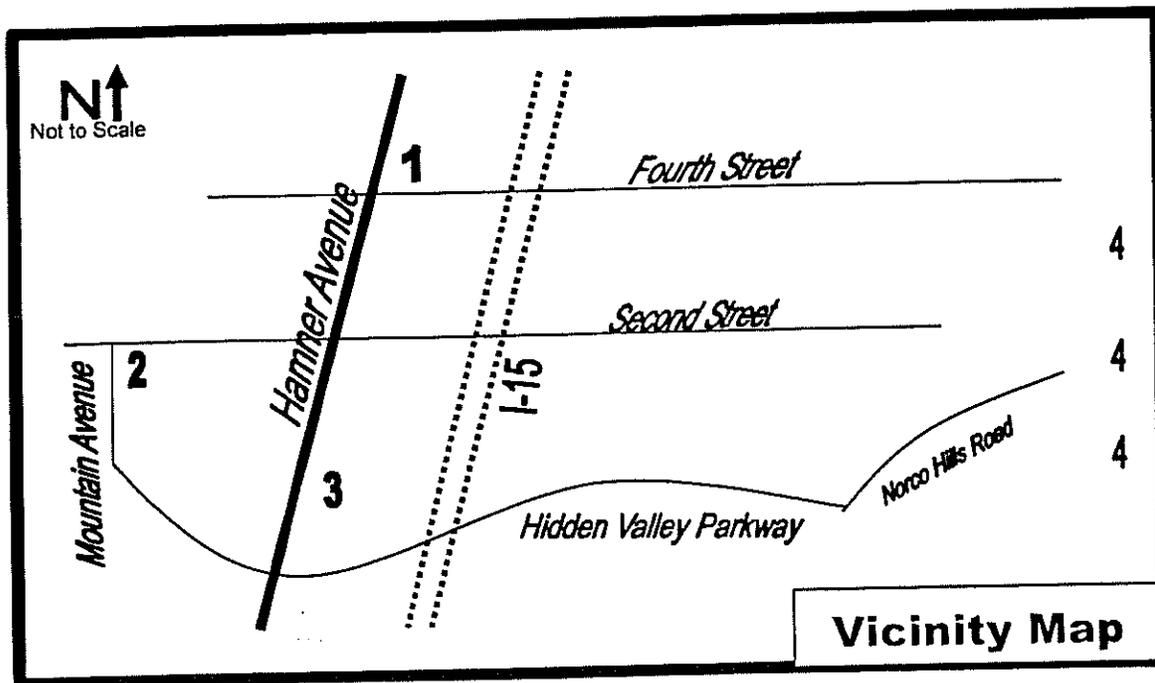
- ☑ ZCA 2003-02 was approved to amend Chapter 18.30 entitled "General Provisions – Miscellaneous," changing the approval process of second units from requiring a conditional use permit to only requiring a minor site plan review;
- ☑ ZCA 2003-03 was approved to establish Chapter 18.53 of the Norco Municipal Code to revise and add criteria for the operation of adult entertainment establishments located within the City of Norco; and
- ☑ ZCA 2003-04 was approved to amend Chapter 18.13.08 to establish provisions for increasing the number of animal units with a conditional use permit.

**Staff Development**

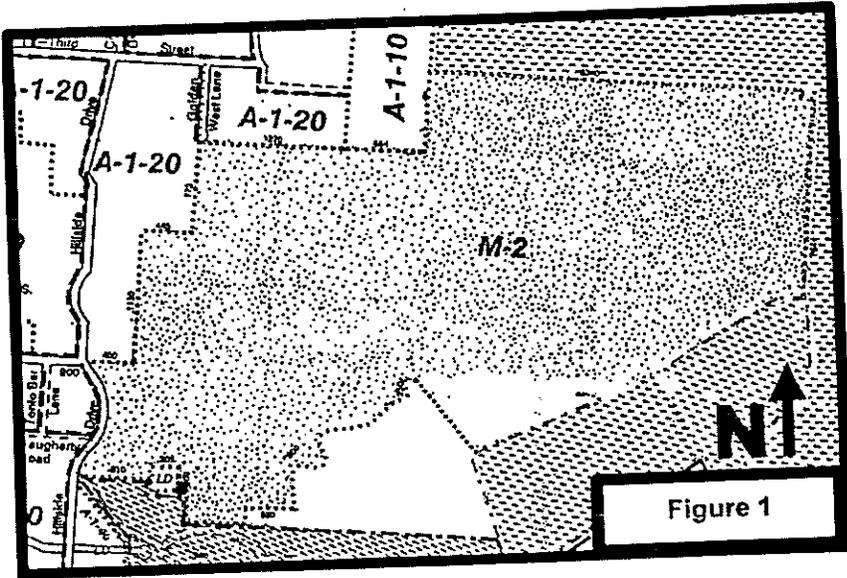
During 2003, staff development was limited due to budget restraints. However, one staff member attended a day-long conference titled "Understanding the California Environmental Process," hosted by the Association of Environmental Professionals.

**Norco Developments**

There were several plans reviewed for new development in 2003 in the City of Norco. The following are samples of the many projects that were either approved, completed, or under construction in 2003. Commercial development in the recent past has been mostly along Hamner Avenue, the City's main commercial strip. However, development has recently increased in the areas zoned for industrial (M-1 zone), neighborhood commercial (i.e., Sixth Street) and residential development. Below is a vicinity map and a brief description of some of the City's development projects for 2003.

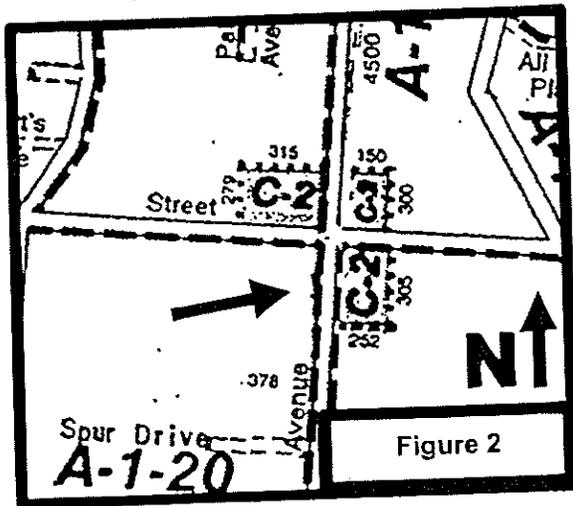


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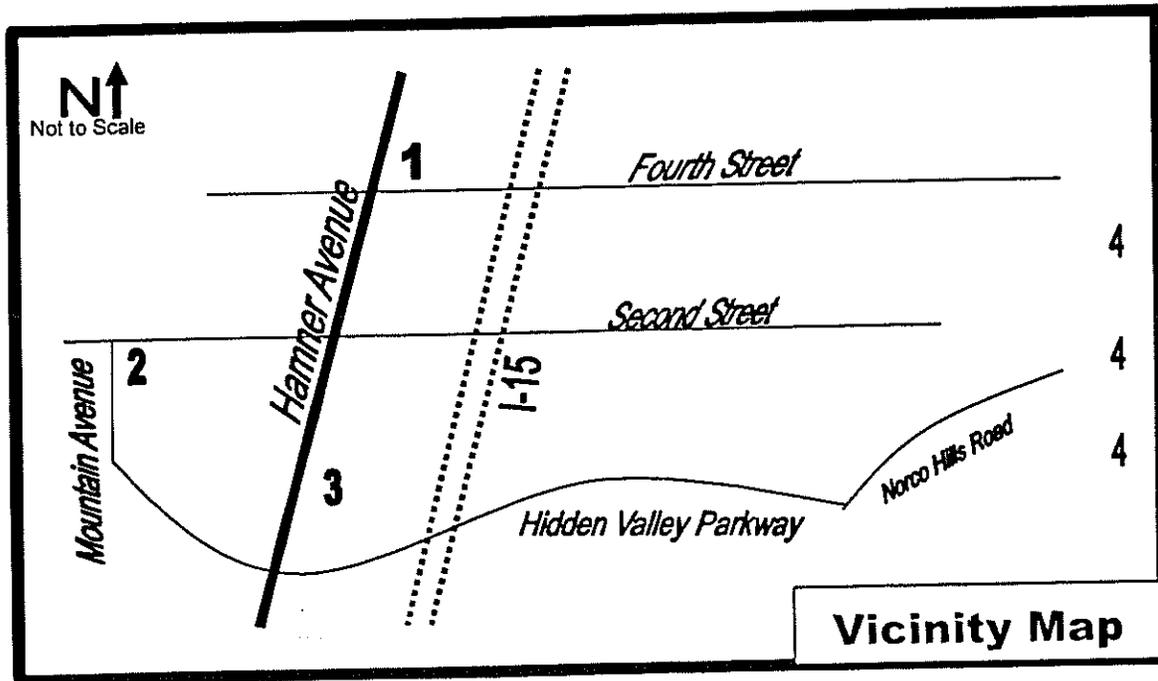
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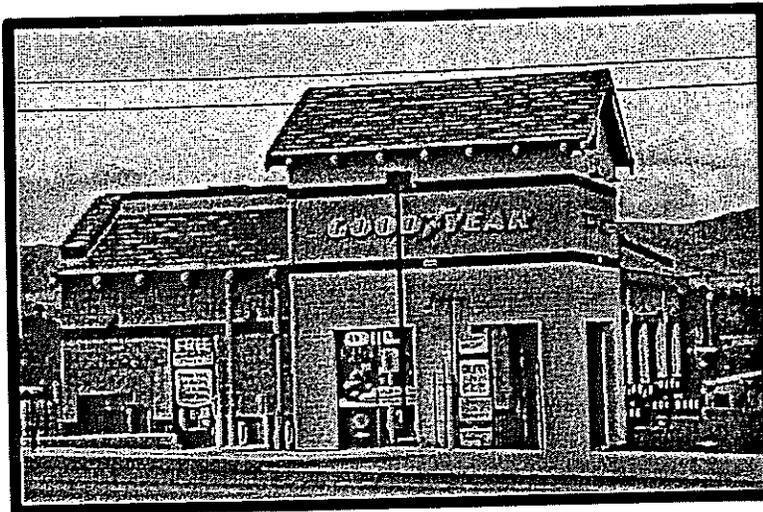
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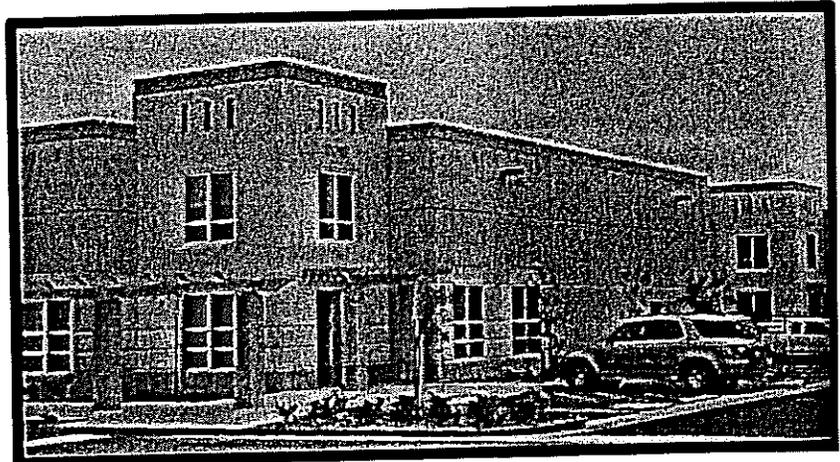


**1. Goodyear Tire and Jiffy Lube**

The Goodyear Tire and Jiffy Lube located at 2935 and 2925 Hamner Avenue was a project approved in 2003, and completed and finalized in 2004. The Goodyear facility consists of approximately 4,640 square feet, and provides tire sales and installation. The Jiffy Lube facility is approximately 2,040 square feet and provides auto-related services.

**2. Norco Trails Business Park**

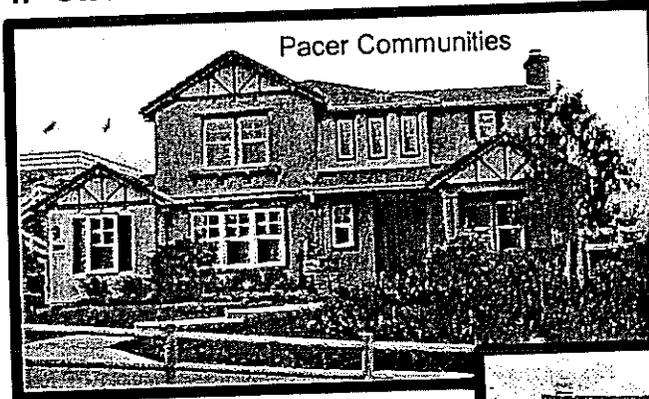
In 2003, the Norco Trails industrial project was reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. This project was approved to allow the development of an industrial business park consisting of ten buildings on five acres of property located on the south side of Second Street, east of Mountain Avenue. The buildings range in size from 4,450 square feet to 13,550 square feet.



**3. Sit 'n' Sleep Center**

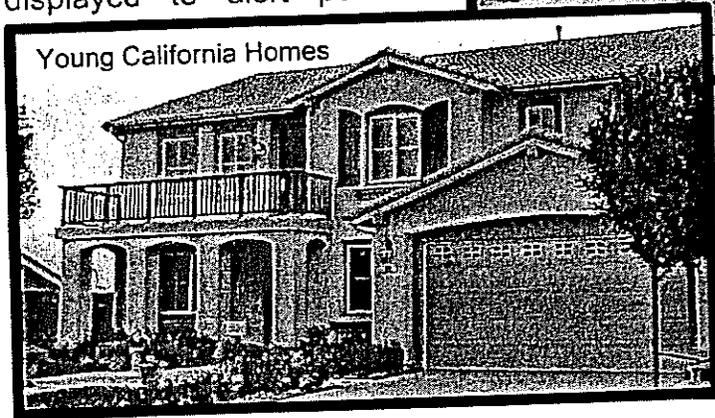
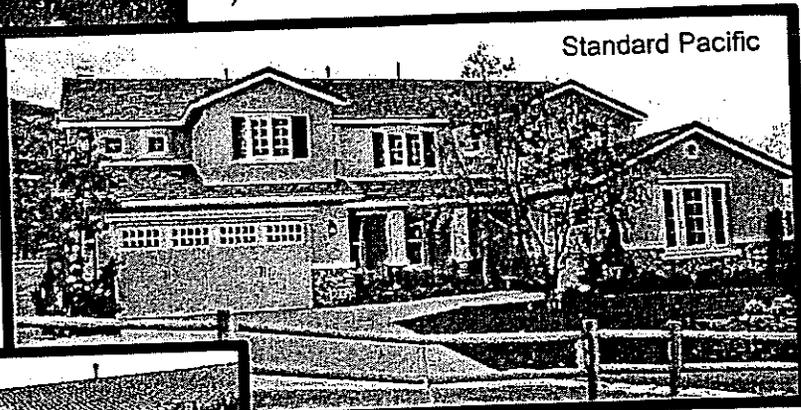
This multi-tenant commercial building was approved in 2002 and constructed and finalized in 2003. The commercial building is approximately 10,345 square feet. The center is anchored by Sit 'n' Sleep which occupies the largest unit. The center has a combination of quick food restaurants and retail.

4. Standard Pacific, Ryland Homes, Young California Homes, and Pacer Communities.



In 2003, the Planning Department processed site plan review applications for the model home complexes for Standard Pacific (Tract 29588-3,-4,-5), Ryland Homes (Tract 29588-2,-3), Young California Homes (Tract 29588), and Pacer Communities (Tract 29589,-1).

Model home complexes must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission for zoning compliance, and to insure that large animal-keeping facilities are displayed to alert potential



homebuyers of the City of Norco's equestrian lifestyle. Each of these developments are located within the Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan, along the eastern border of the City.

## BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

### Fiscal Year 2003 Activity

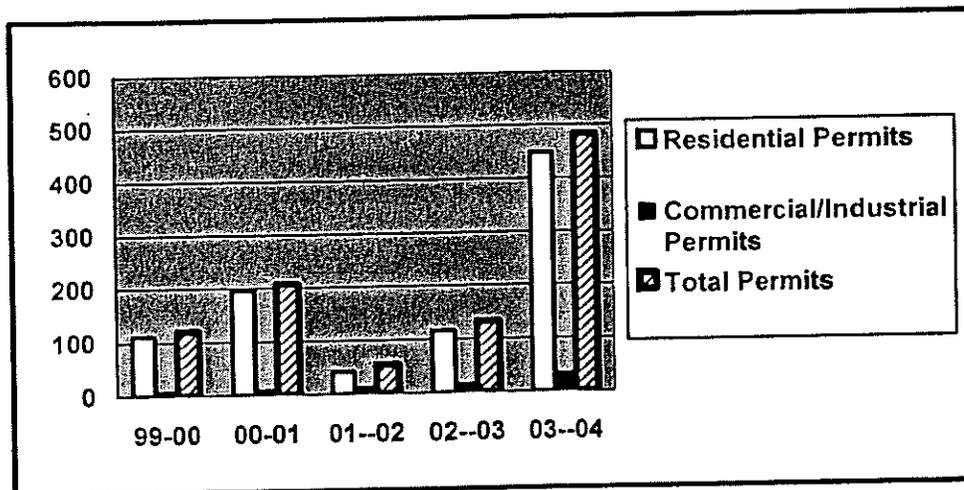
The following table indicates the number and value of building permits issued for new construction (not including additions or remodels) for fiscal years 1999 thru 2003. As noted in Table 3, building permit activity for fiscal year 2003-04 was the highest for the last five fiscal years (ref. Table 3 and Chart 1).

**Table 3  
Building Permits**

Year	Residential Permits		Commercial/Industrial Permits		Total Permits	
	Amount	Value	Amount	Value	Amount	Value
*99-00	112	31,511,469	9	7,358,949	121	38,870,418
00-01	196	56,794,586	11	10,188,981	207	66,983,567
01-02	42	13,587,510	13	6,103,854	55	19,691,365
02-03	135	39,654,093	38	21,711,595	173	61,365,688
03-04	448	146,951,424	35	18,652,380	483	165,603,804

\*Note: the numbers above do not include the month of October for Fiscal Years 98-99 and 99-00 as they were not available.

**Chart 1  
Building Permit Chart**



## COMMUNITY TRENDS AND GROWTH

### Commercial/Economic Development (Growth)

The City of Norco has neighborhood, general, and heavy commercial development throughout the City. However, the majority of commercial land is located on two commercial strips, Hamner Avenue and Sixth Street.

**◆ Hamner Avenue**

Hamner Avenue is the main commercial strip in the City. The Gateway Town Center, located on the east side of Hamner Avenue between First Street and Mountain Avenue, and the Norco Auto Mall, located on the east and west side of Hamner Avenue between Second and Third Street, are just a few of the examples of commercial development along Hamner Avenue.

Hamner Avenue has experienced major infrastructure and right-of-way improvements and new development has surfaced along this commercial corridor within the last five years. For 2003, many new businesses were either approved or relocated to Norco along Hamner Avenue. As with any other City, new businesses in the area are important as they provide services to the community and additional tax base.

In an effort to have orderly development along Hamner Avenue for the remaining vacant lots as well as the entire commercial strip, staff is working on a design document for Hamner Avenue. The project will focus on architecture, land uses, and economic development. The project is currently in progress.

**◆ Sixth Street**

The commercial corridor along Sixth Street extends from the east side of the I-15 Freeway down to California Avenue. This commercial corridor has undergone several changes throughout the years in an effort to facilitate new development, and to assist the City in maintaining the "Old Town," western-style neighborhood commercial character of Sixth Street. In 2003, land uses on Sixth Street were expanded to encourage new development that could adhere to the neighborhood commercial "Old Town" atmosphere of Sixth Street.

**◆ Residential**

The majority of residential development has been taking place towards the eastern portion of the City. In 2000, a specific plan was approved for residential development along the eastern hillside boundary of the City. The "Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan" consists of Tract Maps 29588 and 29589, approved for the development of 588 single-family homes on approximately 978 acres. The Norco Ridge Ranch was approved in 2000, grading began in 2001, and approval of all model home complexes within the Specific Plan were completed in 2003. This eastern section of the City is characterized by its hillside setting, and residential development within this area is characterized as low-density equestrian homes with hillside views.

**◆ Industrial**

The majority of industrial development in the City is presently taking place within the M-1 zone near the vicinity of Horseless Carriage Drive and Town and County Drive.

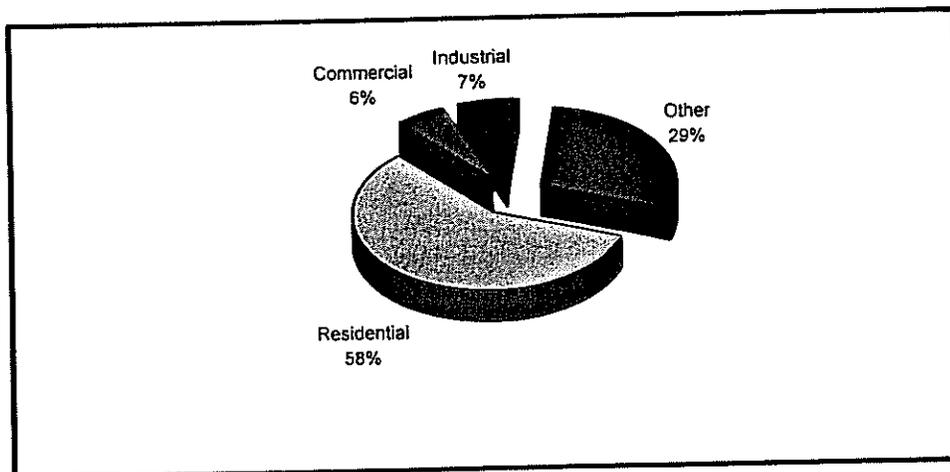
Construction of the second phase of the Norco Network development began in 2002 and was completed in 2003. The second phase is located just south of Fifth Street, east of Horseless Carriage Drive on Tandem Way, and consists of nine buildings ranging in size from 6,852 square feet to 19,188 square feet.

The developer of Norco Network, Stowe Passco, began constructing another industrial project located on the south side of Town and Country Drive, south of the U.S. Post Office. The project consists of eight buildings ranging in size from 12,000 square feet to 21,824 square feet. The developer will sell several of the buildings and lease space in several others. The project is expected to be completed in late 2004.

**Rural Atmosphere (Zoning Layout of Land)**

Locations and types of land uses for commercial, residential or industrial are based on the zoning designation. The majority of land in Norco is zoned for residential development. The amount of land zoned for residential uses allows Norco the ability to maintain its rural atmosphere. Please see Table 4 for a complete breakdown of zoning within the City. Also, see Chart 2, which shows the percentage of land zoned residential as compared to the rest of the zoning in the City.

**Chart 2  
NORCO ZONING**



**Table 4  
Zoning Table**

ZONE/LAND USE DISTRICT	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
HS (Hillside)	321	3.4
A-E (Agricultural Estate)	164	1.8
A-1-40 (Agricultural-Low Density)	132	1.4
A-1-20 (Agricultural-Low Density)	3958	42
A-1-10 (Agricultural-Low Density)	21	<1
R-1-10 (Residential-Single Family)	160	1.7
NORCO HILLS SP (Residential-Single Family)	230	2.5
NORCO RIDGE RANCH SP (Residential - Single Family)	451	4.8
<b>Residential Total</b>	<b>5437</b>	<b>58</b>
C-O (Commercial Office)	12	<1
C-1 (Light Commercial)	1	<1
C-2 (General Commercial)	205	2.2
C-3 (Heavy Commercial)	79	<1
C-4 (Commercial)	94	1.1
GATEWAY SP (Commercial)	105	1
GATEWAY SP (Office Park)	26	<1
AUTO MALL SP (Commercial)	55	<1
NORCO HILLS SP (Commercial)	4	<1
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>6</b>
M-1 (Light Manufacturing)	137	1.5
M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing)	362	3.9
GATEWAY SP (Industrial)	112	1.2
AUTO MALL SP (Industrial)	19	<1
<b>Industrial Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>7</b>
OS (Open Space)	1007	10.8
LD (Limited Development)	459	4.9
Streets and Freeway	754	8.1
NORCO RIDGE RANCH SP (Open Space)	446	4.9
NORCO HILLS SP (Open Space)	1	<1
<b>Other Total</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TOTAL AREA</b>	<b>9,315</b>	<b>100</b>

## POPULATION

### CENSUS DATA/DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

The 2000 U.S. Census calculated that Norco had a population of 24,157. Since the 1990 census, the City has grown by an estimated 855 persons, an increase of approximately 3.7%. It should be noted that the City's population includes the inmates at the California Rehabilitation Center, which increased from 5,201 in 1999 to a population of 5,209 in 2000. Table 5 and Chart 3 below illustrate the City's recent population changes.

**Table 5**  
**Population Increase**

	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census
<b>Population</b>	19,732	23,302	24,157
# Increase	5,221	3,570	855
% Increase	36	18	3.7
<b>Dwelling Units</b>	5,383	5,785	6,277
# Increase	1,956	402	492
% Increase	57	7	9
<b>Household Population</b>	18,231	18,593	19,330
# Increase	N/A	362	737
% Increase	N/A	2	4

### OTHER CENSUS DATA

Census 2000 data is now available. A portion of the Census 2000 data is provided in Table 6. The information in the table indicates the general makeup of the population and other important statistical information. The table also indicates how Norco has changed in the past decade.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison Table**

	1990 Census Data	2000 Census Data
<b>Transportation</b>		
Average commute time	37 minutes	34 minutes
Commute alone	81%	75%
Commute in a carpool	10%	17%
<b>Rent</b>		
Median rent	\$714	\$867
Rents that exceed \$750/month	42%	55%
Rents that exceed \$1,000/month	21%	36%
<b>Mortgage</b>		
Median mortgage	\$1,140	\$1,494
Mortgages that exceed \$2,000/month	7%	17%
Median home value	\$202,000	\$207,400
<b>Households</b>		
Average household size	3.3 people	3.15 people
Median household annual income	\$51,594	\$62,652
Households that make over \$100,000	8%	22%
Households that make over \$150,000	3%	6%
Households that make less than \$25k	17%	14%
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Median Age	32	36
Bachelor's Degree or higher	9%	12%
Foreign Born	--	7%

## WORK PROGRAM

The Planning Department staff has prepared the following work program:

1. Update the Safety Element in the General Plan (**completion expected in 2004**)
2. Prepare Annual Report. The Office of Planning and Research requires that it is completed by the end of the following calendar year (December 2004)
3. Design Manual for Hamner Avenue (**first draft completed**)
4. Hamner Avenue Corridor Study which includes: economic analysis, traffic and circulation improvement study, and land use alternatives (**completion expected 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2005**)
5. Update Open Space Element in the General Plan (**completion date expected in early 2005**)
6. Update Environmental Guidelines (**completion date expected in late 2005**)
7. Compile standard conditions for all departments (**completion date expected in early 2004**)
8. Code amendment to establish a western theme architectural standard for the City (**completed 2004**)