

AUG 06 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: August 5, 2019

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Desert Hot Springs
Contact: Rebecca Deming
65950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, CA. 92240

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update¹

NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW PERIOD: August 6 to September 5, 2019

The City of Desert Hot Springs (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed General Plan Update (described below). We are interested in your agency's views as to the appropriate scope and content of the DEIR's environmental information pertaining to your agency's statutory responsibilities related to the project. We will need the name of a contact person for your agency. For interested individuals, we would like to be informed of environmental topics of interest to you regarding the project.

The City has already determined that an EIR is required for the proposed General Plan Update and, and as permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d) (Preliminary Review), the City will not prepare an Initial Study for the project.


The proposed project, its location, and its potential environmental effects are described below. The City welcomes public input during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period. Due to the time limits mandated by the CEQA Guidelines, your response must be sent **not later than 30 days after your receipt of this notice**. If no response or request for additional time is received by the end of the review period, the City may presume that you have no response.

¹Per Title 14, California Code of Regulations, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Sections 15082(a), 15103, and 15375

Please send your comments to:

Rebecca Deming, Community Development Director
City of Desert Hot Springs
65950 Pierson Blvd.
Desert Hot Springs, CA. 92240
(760) 329-6411

To allow for mailing, receipt, and 30-day review of this NOP, the comment period closes on **September 5, 2019**.


Rebecca Deming,
Community Development Director
(760) 329-6411

August 5, 2019

Date

Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c) (Notice of Preparation and Determination of Scope of EIR), the City will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting comments of adjacent cities, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties requesting notice as to the appropriate scope and content of the Draft EIR.

The purpose of the meeting is to present the project and environmental topics in a public setting and provide an opportunity for the City to hear from the community and interested agencies on what potential environmental issues are important to them. The meeting will include a brief presentation of the proposed project, the EIR process, and the topics to be analyzed in the EIR. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to offer their views concerning what environmental issues should be included in the SEIR.

The Public Scoping Meeting will be held on the following date/time and location:

Tuesday, August 13, 2019, at 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Carl May Community Center
11711 West Drive
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
(760) 329-6411

Project Title: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update

Project Applicant: City of Desert Hot Springs

Project Location:

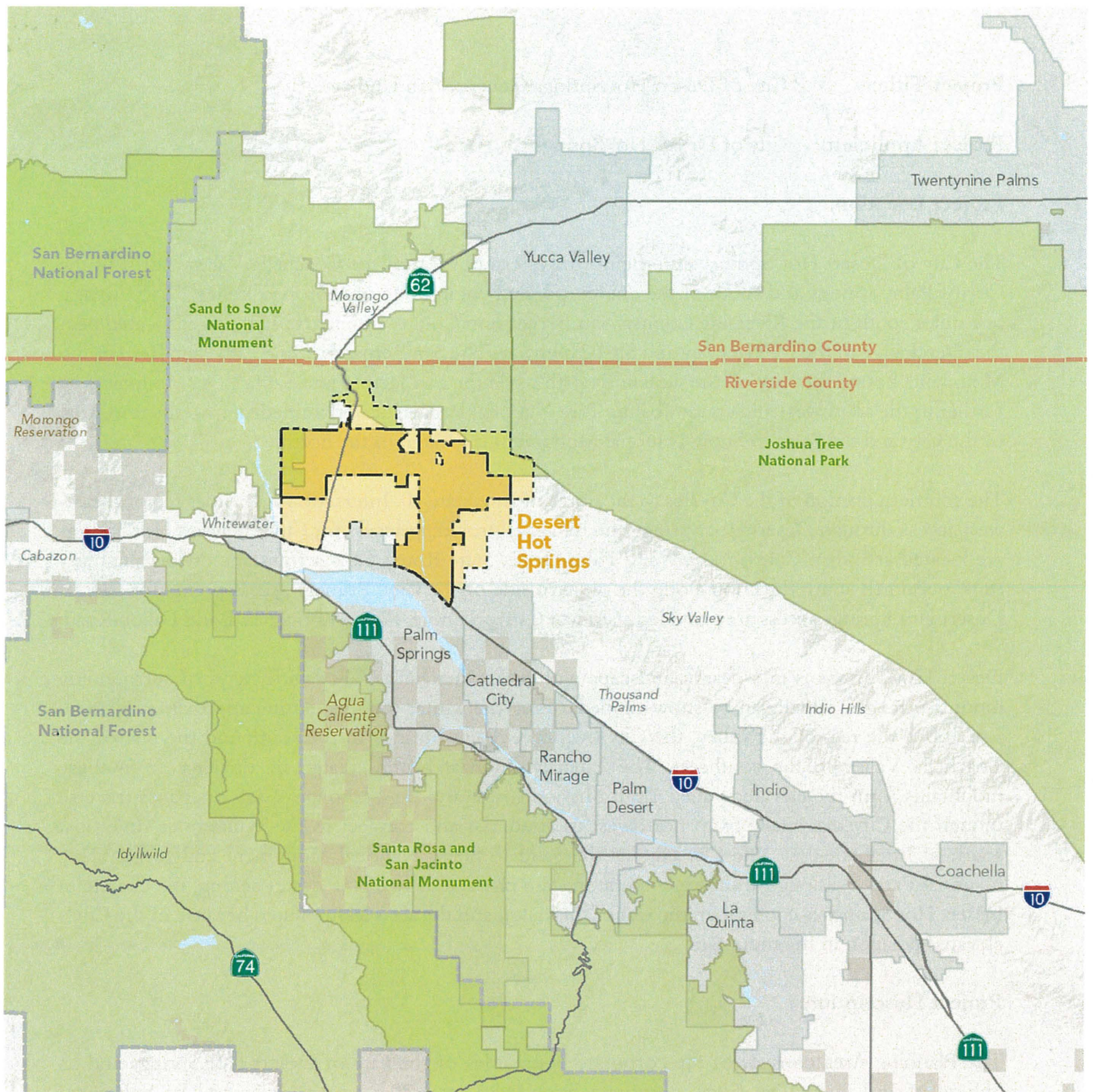
The City of Desert Hot Springs is in the northwestern portion of the Coachella Valley, north of the City of Palm Springs and south of the unincorporated community of Morongo Valley. The City is a few miles south of the Riverside County/San Bernardino County boundary. The City is located near the interchange of the I-10 freeway and SR-62 highway. The San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains bound the City on the west and north while the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains lie further to the southwest and south. Joshua Tree National Park is located immediately to the northeast of the City and the Sand to Snow National Monument is located to the north.

The southern portion of the City lies to the north of Interstate 10. Interstate 10 provides regional east-west access through Desert Hot Springs; interchanges providing access for City of Desert Hot Springs are located at Indian Canyon Drive and Palm Drive. State Route 62 is a four-lane divided highway runs in a north-south direction along the western side of the City. Primary access points for City of Desert Hot Springs access are provided at Indian Canyon Drive, Pierson Boulevard, and Dillon Road.

Desert Hot Springs is in a desert landscape within the Coachella Valley with views of surrounding mountain ranges, which can be snow-capped during the winter months. Sitting approximately 1,000 feet above the rest of the valley, the City overlooks Palm Springs to the south and the rest of the Coachella Valley to the southeast. The extensive alluvial plains created by drainage from these mountains form the elevated valley. Both Mission Creek and Big Morongo Wash drainages traverse through the City diagonally from northwest to southeast and connect to the Whitewater River just south of Interstate 10. The City adjoins the Sand to Snow National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park. Although warmer temperatures are characteristic of the desert setting, the climate in Desert Hot Springs is cooler than the rest of the valley, and the air is less polluted because of the City's elevated position in the mountain.

Project Description:

The Planning Area consists of the corporate boundaries of the City of Desert Hot Springs and its Sphere of Influence. The City's corporate boundaries total 30.5 square miles and its Sphere of Influence (unincorporated Riverside County) totals 28.8 square miles for a total Planning Area of 59.3 square miles. The regional and local context of the Planning Area are identified on Exhibits 1 (Vicinity Map) and 2 (Planning Area).



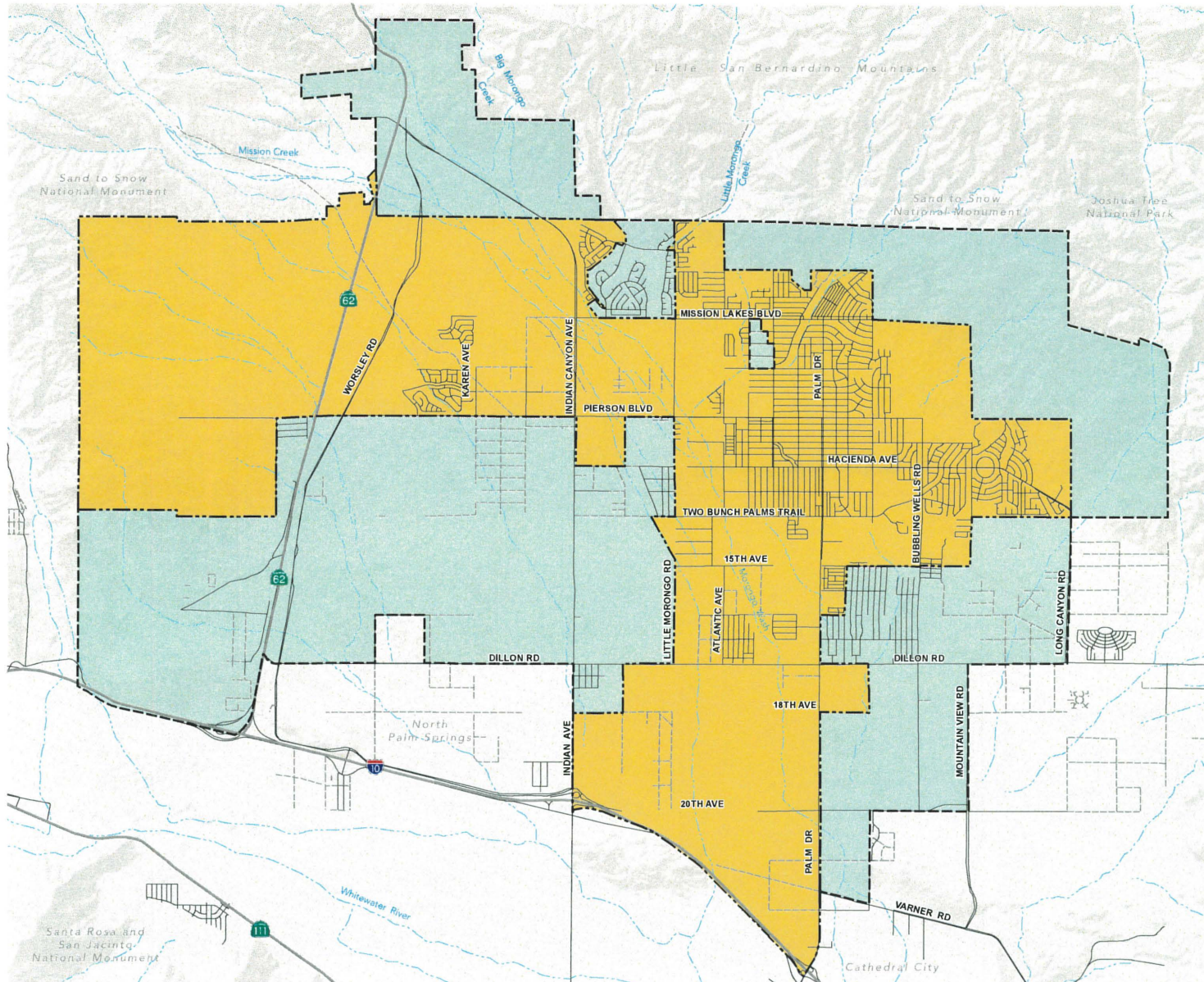
Base Map Features

-  Desert Hot Springs City Boundary
-  Sphere of Influence
-  County Boundary
-  American Indian Reservations
-  National Parks and National Forests
-  City Boundaries



**Exhibit 1
Vicinity Map**

Exhibit 2: Planning Areas



Planning Area

- Desert Hot Springs City Boundary
- Desert Hot Springs Sphere of Influence

Base Map Features

- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Water Courses

Source: City Of Desert Hot Springs and Riverside County.
Date: January 2019.



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Existing Conditions

Desert Hot Springs currently consists predominantly of low-density residential development, several commercial centers at key intersections, a pedestrian scale downtown, and light industrial uses on the periphery. Much of the Planning Area is currently undeveloped; there are areas on the periphery of the city where newer housing developments have been started. Indoor cultivation of cannabis for commercial purposes occurs in the southern portion of the City. Since incorporation in 1963, the City has seen periods of surging population growth, particularly between 1980 and 2010. During the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009, there was little growth or development. The population of the City, as of 2018, is just below 30,000; the City has nine public schools (one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools).

The existing land uses are divided into six categories: residential, commercial, industrial, public and institutional, open space, and undeveloped (vacant) lands. The City's Existing Land Use map is shown as Exhibit 3-3. Desert Hot Springs' existing land use distribution is noted in Table 1. There are an estimated 11,562 dwelling units within the city limits and 7,538 dwelling units in the sphere of influence, for a total 19,100 dwellings within the Planning Area.

Proposed General Plan Update

The General Plan Update is intended to achieve the land use, transportation, housing, and other goals of the City that reflect the community's growth over the long-term. Table 2 compares 2018 and 2040 for the City of Desert Hot Springs, the Sphere of Influence and combined (Planning Area). The 2040 planning horizon for the Planning Area is estimated at approximately 53,664 dwelling units, 136,402 residents, 20,349,704 building square feet of non-residential uses, and 20,531 jobs. This table captures existing conditions as of 2018 and the projected growth based on the proposed land use plan is for a future horizon year of 2040.

Exhibit 3 shows the proposed Land Use Policy Plan under the General Plan Update.

The General Plan Update also includes an update of the zoning code or Zoning Code Amendment. The Zoning Code Amendment is being completed in concert with the GPU and includes an updated Zoning Map with revised and new Zoning Districts that are consistent with the Land Use Policy Plan map. The revised and new Zoning Districts will include development standards and tables identifying permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses. This Zoning Code Amendment implements the General Plan Update.

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Table 1: Existing Land Use Distribution (2018)

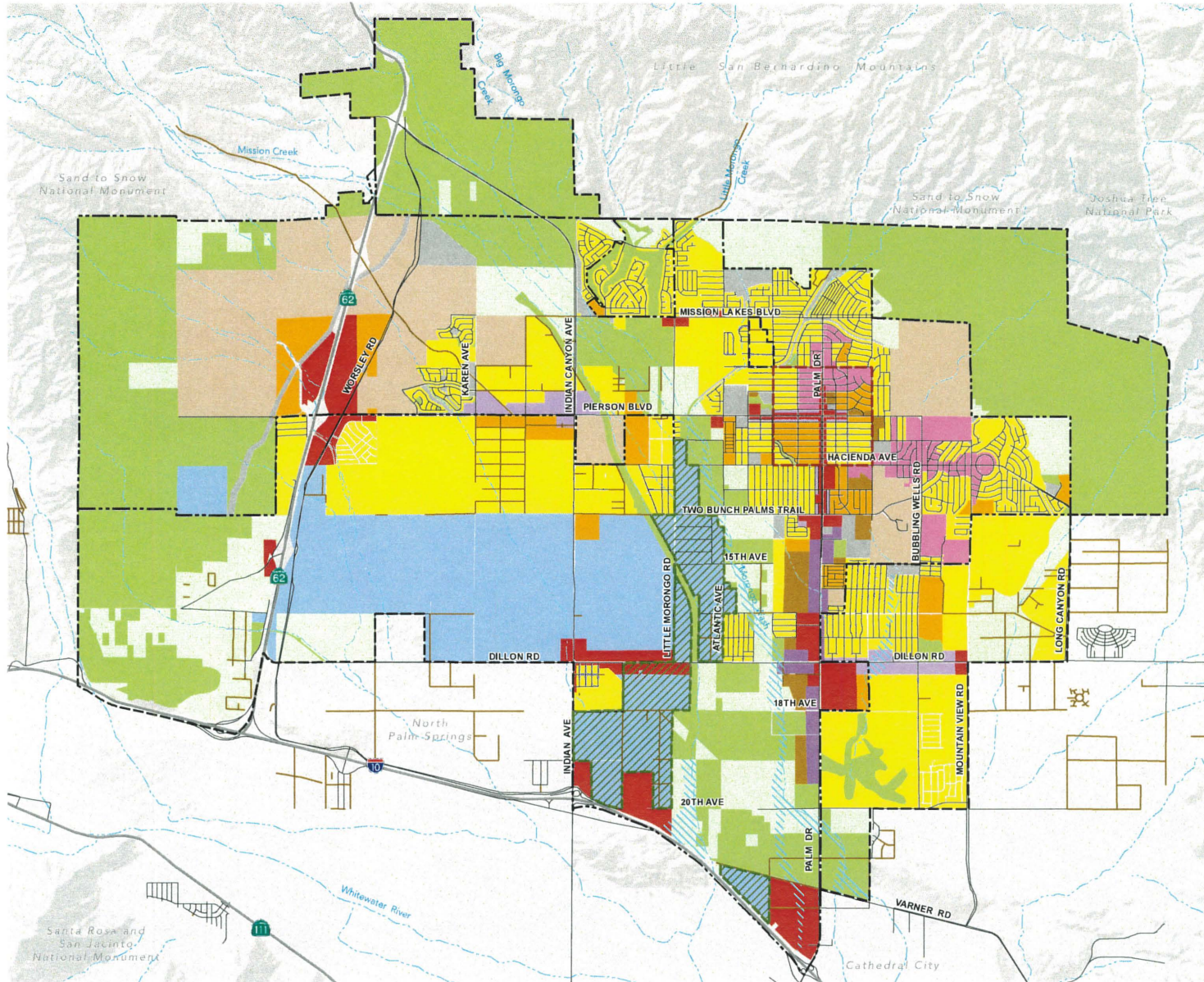
Land Use Designation	Desert Hot Springs			Sphere of Influence			Planning Area		
	Net Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Building Square Feet	Net Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Building Square Feet	Net Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Building Square Feet
Residential									
Single-Family	1,533.4	7,487	--	1,085.6	5,301	--	2,619.00	12,788	--
Multiple-Family	203.2	3,204	--	15.6	246	--	218.8	3450	--
Mobile Homes	145.9	871	--	333.5	1,991	--	479.4	2,862	--
Sub-Total	1,882.5	11,562	--	1,434.7	7,538	--	3,317.20	19,100	--
Commercial									
General Commercial	140.1	--	915,413	35.9	--	234,571	176	--	1,149,984
Hotel/Motel Spa	60.8	--	582,475	0.0	--	--	60.8	--	582,475
Office	10.7	--	120,183	0.4	--	4,513	11.1	--	124,696
Sub-Total	190.0	--	1,618,071	36.3	--	239,084	247.9	--	1,857,155
Industrial									
Light Industrial	158.7	--	1,036,945	49.0	--	320,166	207.7	--	1,357,111
Wind/Solar Farms	185.8	--	--	1,575.4	--	--	1,761.20	--	--
Sub-Total	344.5	--	1,036,945	1,624.4	--	320,166	1,968.90	--	1,357,111
Public and Institutional									
Public Facility	37.3	--	--	214.1	--	--	251.4	--	--
School - Public	111.3	--	--	14.9	--	--	126.2	--	--
Museum	4.8	--	--	--	--	--	4.8	--	--
Utility/Infrastructure	140.6	--	--	--	--	--	140.6	--	--
Sub-Total	294.0	--	--	229.0	--	--	523	--	--
Open Space									
Parks and Recreation	53.7	--	--	--	--	--	53.7	--	--
Golf Course	--	--	--	362.3	--	--	362.3	--	--
Open Space	4,508.3	--	--	5,613.0	--	--	10,121.30	--	--
Sub-Total	4,562.0	--	--	5,975.3	--	--	10,537.30	--	--
Undeveloped Land									
Vacant	10,764.3	--	--	8,179.7	--	--	18,962.30	--	--
Sub-Total	10,764.3	--	--	8,179.7	--	--	18,962.30	--	--
TOTAL	18,058.9	11,562	2,655,016	17,497.7	7,538	559,250	35,556.60	19,100	3,214,266

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County Assessor's Data, and General Plan Update GIS data, 2018.

Note: 1) Net acres excludes streets and other public rights of way.

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Exhibit 3: Draft Land Use Policy Plan



Land Use Designations

- R-RD: Residential Rural Desert (1 DU/5 AC)
- R-L: Residential Low (Up to 6.0 DU/AC)
- R-M: Residential Medium (Up to 20.0 DU/AC)
- R-H: Residential High (15.1-30.0 DU/AC)
- R-SP: Residential Specific Plan
- C: Commercial (0.30 FAR)
- V-S: Visitor-Serving/Residential
- MU-N: Mixed-Use Neighborhood (15 DU/AC)
- MU-C: Mixed-Use Corridor (30 DU/AC)
- I: Industrial (0.60 FAR)
- OS: Open Space
- P: Public/Institutional

Land Use Overlays

- Arts Overlay District
- Cultivation Overlay
- Floodway and Watercourse Overlay

Base Map Features

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Water Courses

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs and Riverside County.
Date: January 2019.



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Table 2: General Plan Update - Comparison of 2018 and 2040

Area	Dwelling Units			Population	Non-Residential Building Sq. Ft. ³	Employees	Hotel/Motel Rooms	Students	
	SF ¹	MF ²	Total						
City	2018	8,358	3,204	11,562	29,390	2,655,016	4,162	755	6,326
	2040	22,214	12,594	34,808	88,476	13,140,605	14,611	1,652	12,900
	Change	+13,856	+9,390	+23,246	+59,086	+10,485,589	+10,449	+897	+6,574
SOI	2018	7,292	246	7,538	19,160	559,250	1,020	--	763
	2040	18,025	831	18,856	47,926	7,209,099	5,920	--	7,100
	Change	+10,733	+585	+11,318	+28,766	+6,649,849	+4,900	--	+6,337
Planning Area	2018	15,650	3,450	19,100	48,550	3,214,266	5,182	755	7,089
	2040	40,239	13,425	53,664	136,402	20,349,704	20,531	1,652	20,000
	Change	+24,589	+9,975	+34,564	+87,852	+17,135,438	+15,349	+897	+12,911

The General Plan Update addresses the seven State mandated general plan elements (land use, circulation, housing, safety, conservation, open space, and noise), and also includes two optional elements the Economic Development Element and the Health and Wellness Element. The updated General Plan establishes an overall development capacity and serves as a policy guide for determining the appropriate physical development, community services, and character of the entire Planning Area. The General Plan Update includes the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Land Use and Community Design Element
- Housing Element
- Economic Development Element
- Mobility and Infrastructure Element
- Open Space and Community Resources Element
- Health and Wellness Element
- Safety and Noise Element

The Land Use and Community Design Element includes a Land Use Plan that establishes 12 land use designations intended to provide a rational and orderly approach to land use development. The land use designations and acreages for the City are noted in Table 3 and for the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) in Table 4 while Table 5 shows the land use information for the Planning Area (the City and the SOI combined).

No individual, site-specific development proposals will be approved as part of the General Plan Update EIR. Any such individual project would be subject to its own CEQA review, including evaluation against the General Plan EIR.

Table 3: Desert Hot Springs (City) General Plan Update (2040) Land Use

Land Use Designation	Net Acres	Max. DU/AC FAR	Units	Pop.	Commercial, Office, and Industrial Building Square Feet	Employment
Residential						
Residential -Rural Desert	2,212.7	0.20 DU/AC	230	585	--	--
Residential -Low	2,656.2	6.0 DU/AC	11,168	28,388	--	--
Residential -Medium	677.6	20.0 DU/AC	6,568	16,695	--	--
Residential -High	269.5	30.0 DU/AC	5,176	13,156	--	--
Sub-Total	5,816.0	N/A	23,142	58,824	--	--
Commercial						
General Commercial	984.8	0.30 FAR	--	--	5,581,081 SF	5,390
Visitor-Serving/ Residential	557.5	1.00 FAR	--	--	--	630
Sub-Total	1,542.3	--	--	--	5,581,081 SF	6,020
Mixed Use						
Mixed-Use Corridor	223.3	30.0 DU/AC	2,679	6,810	340,397 SF	467
Mixed-Use Neighborhood	188.7	15.0 DU/AC	1,132	2,877	287,631 SF	395
Sub-Total	412.0	--	3,811	9,687	628,028 SF	862
Industrial						
Industrial/Employment	1,302.8	0.60 FAR	--	--	6,809,996 SF	5,566
Sub-Total	1,302.8	--	--	--	6,809,996 SF	5,566
Public Uses						
Public Facilities	622.6	--	--	--	(12,900 students)	1,277
Sub-Total	622.6	--	--	--	--	1,277
Open Space/Recreation						
Open Space	4,796.4	--	--	--	--	--
Sub-Total	4,796.4	--	--	--	--	--
Other						
Specific Plans	3,566.8	varies	7,855	19,965	121,500 SF	886
Sub-Total	3,566.8	--	7,855	19,965	121,500 SF	886
TOTAL	18,058.9		34,808	88,476	13,140,605 SF	14,611

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs and General Plan Update GIS data.

Note: Project area acreage excludes ROWs within planning area.

Table 4: SOI General Plan Land Uses (2040)

Land Use Designation	Net Acres	Max. DU/AC FAR	Units	Pop.	Commercial, Office, and Industrial Building Square Feet	Employment
Residential						
Residential -Rural Desert	2,229.4	0.20 DU/AC	232	589	--	--
Residential -Low	4,289.4	6.0 DU/AC	15,208	38,655	--	--
Residential -Medium	326.0	20.0 DU/AC	2,585	6,570	--	--
Sub-Total	6,844.8	N/A	18,025	45,814	--	--
Commercial						
General Commercial	244.8	0.30 FAR	--	--	1,226,251	1,340
Sub-Total	244.8	--	--	--	1,226,251	1,340
Mixed Use						
Mixed-Use Corridor	9.7	30.0 DU/AC	116	295	14,728	20
Mixed-Use Neighborhood	119.1	15.0 DU/AC	715	1,817	181,610	249
Sub-Total	128.8	--	831	2,112	196,338	269
Industrial						
Industrial/Employment	3,008.5	0.60 FAR	--	--	5,786,510	3,845
Sub-Total	3,008.5	--	--	--	5,786,510	3,845
Public Uses						
Public Facilities	250.3	--	--	--	(7,100 students)	466
Sub-Total	250.3	--	--	--	--	466
Open Space/Recreation						
Open Space	7,020.5	--	--	--	--	--
Sub-Total	7,020.5	--	--	--	--	--
TOTAL	17,497.7	--	18,856	47,926	7,209,099	5,920

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs and General Plan Update GIS data.

Note: Project area acreage excludes ROWs within planning area.

Required Approvals:

Implementation of the General Plan Update will require the following discretionary approvals by the City of Desert Hot Springs's City Council:

- Certification of Final Environmental Impact Report;
- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;
- Adoption of General Plan Update
- Adoption of Zoning Code and Map Amendment

Table 5: Planning Area General Plan Land Uses (2040)

Land Use Designation	Net Acres	Max. DU/AC FAR	Units	Pop.	Commercial, Office, and Industrial Building Square Feet	Employment
Residential						
Residential -Rural Desert	4,442.1	0.20 DU/AC	462	1,174	--	--
Residential -Low	6,945.6	6.0 DU/AC	26,376	67,043	--	--
Residential -Medium	1,003.6	20.0 DU/AC	9,153	23,265	--	--
Residential -High	269.5	30.0 DU/AC	5,176	13,156	--	--
Sub-Total	12,660.8	N/A	41,167	104,638	--	--
Commercial						
General Commercial	1,229.6	0.30 FAR	--	--	6,807,332	6,730
Visitor-Serving/ Residential	557.5	1.00 FAR	--	--	-	630
Sub-Total	1,787.1	--	--	--	6,807,332	7,360
Mixed Use						
Mixed-Use Corridor	233.0	30.0 DU/AC	2,795	7,105	355,125	487
Mixed-Use Neighborhood	307.8	15.0D U/AC	1,847	4,694	469,241	644
Sub-Total	540.8	--	4,642	11,799	824,366	1,131
Industrial						
Industrial/Employment	4,311.3	0.60 FAR	--	--	12,596,506	9,411
Sub-Total	4,311.3	--	--	--	12,596,506	9,411
Public Uses						
Public Facilities	872.9	--	--	--	(12,900 students)	1,743
Sub-Total	872.9	--	--	--	--	1,743
Open Space/Recreation						
Open Space	11,816.9	--	--	--	--	--
Sub-Total	11,816.9	--	--	--	--	--
Other						
Specific Plans	3,566.8	Varies	7,855	19,965	121,500	886
Sub-Total	3,566.8	-	7,855	19,965	121,500	886
TOTAL	35,556.6	-	53,664	136,402	20,349,704	20,531

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs and General Plan Update GIS data.

Note: Project area acreage excludes ROWs within planning area.

Programmatic EIR:

The City of Desert Hot Springs has determined that the proposed General Plan Update will require preparation of an EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is the Lead Agency for preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the proposed General Plan Update. The Program EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the General Plan Update and will recommend mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts, where applicable. The Program EIR also is intended to help the City review future project proposals pursuant to section 15168 (Program EIR) of the CEQA Guidelines.

The following environmental topics will be evaluated in the EIR:

Aesthetics: The EIR will describe the aesthetic implications of the proposed General Plan Update, including its visual relationships to the surrounding vicinity and the potential impacts of development (the proposed array of building masses, heights, view corridors etc.) on important surrounding vantage points.

Air Quality: The EIR will describe the potential impacts of the General Plan Update on local and regional air quality based on methodologies defined by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

Biological Resources: The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on biological resources resulting from implementation of the General Plan Update.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources: The EIR will describe any potential impacts and mitigation needs associated with historic and cultural (archaeological) resources, including potential impacts on Tribal Cultural Resources.

Geology and Soils: The EIR will describe the potential geotechnical implications and/or geologic hazards associated with implementation of the General Plan Update.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change: The EIR will describe the impacts of implementation of the General Plan Update on greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change, following the latest approach and methodologies recommended by State and regional agencies.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The EIR will describe the potential for hazardous material use or hazardous waste investigation and cleanup activities anticipated in the plan area and will describe any associated potential impacts and mitigation needs, if applicable. Potential construction period hazards and hazardous material impacts and mitigation needs will also be described.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on hydrology and water quality resulting from implementation of the General Plan Update, including possible effects related to drainage and flooding.

Land Use and Planning: The EIR will describe the potential effects of implementation of the General Plan Update on existing and planned land use characteristics in the City, including the General Plan's relationship to other adopted regional and local plans.

Mineral Resources: The EIR will evaluate if the General Plan Update will have any significant impact on existing mineral resources in the Planning Area.

Noise: The EIR will describe potential construction and long-term operational noise (traffic, mechanical systems etc.) impacts and related mitigation needs where applicable.

Population and Housing: The EIR will describe the anticipated effects of the projected population growth and subsequent increase in housing. This information will be used to forecast public service and utility needs in the General Plan area.

Public Services: The EIR will describe potential impacts on public services (police and fire protection parks and recreation, and schools).

Transportation and Circulation: The EIR will describe the transportation and circulation implications of the proposed General Plan Update, including the contribution to daily and peak hour traffic on local and regional roadways. The evaluation will include roadway system impacts, transit implications, and effects on pedestrian and bicycle circulation. General Plan components to improve multimodal travel will also be considered

Utilities and Service Systems: The EIR will describe the impacts of implementation of the General Plan Update on local utility and service systems, including water supply, water and wastewater treatment, and solid waste and recycling.

Agriculture and Forestry: The EIR will explain why these CEQA-defined environmental topics will not be adversely affected by implementation of the General Plan Update.

Alternatives: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will identify and compare a reasonable range of alternatives to the General Plan Update.