

**Draft Initial Study
and
Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**RANCHO DESCANSO
SPECIFIC PLAN
(Case No. SP 21-3)
(Amendment No. 1 to the Aventura Palms II Specific Plan)**

**Tentative Tract Map No. 38200
(Case No. TM 21-5)
(And Associated Lot Line Adjustment)**

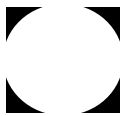
Development Permit No. 21-18

Applicant:

GHA RANCHO DESCANSO, LLC
GHA Enterprises, Inc.
30875 Date Palm Drive, Suite C-2
Cathedral City, CA 92234
Tel.: (760) 739-9200
Email: jcriste@terranovaplanning.com

Lead Agency:

City of Desert Hot Springs
11999 Palm Drive
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240



Prepared by:
Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc.®
42635 Melanie Place, Suite 101
Palm Desert, CA 92211



City of Desert Hot Springs

Date: October 2021

Project Name: Rancho Descanso Specific Plan, TTM 38200, Dev Permit 21-18

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Appendices (provided as separate documents)

- Appendix A CalEEMOD Air Quality and GHG Modeling prepared by Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. 42635 Melanie Place, Ste 101, Palm Desert, CA 92211
- Appendix B Biological Resource Assessment & Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Compliance Report prepared by WOOD, 1845 Chicago Avenue, Ste D, Riverside, CA 92507
- Appendix C Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report prepared by CRM TECH, 1016 E. Cooley Drive, Suite A & B, Colton, CA 92324
- Appendix D Rancho Descanso Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by Trames Solutions, Inc., 4225 Oceanside Blvd. #354H, Oceanside, CA 92056
- Appendix E Rancho Descanso Geotechnical Report prepared by Sladden Engineering, 45090 Golf Center Parkway, Ste F, Indio, CA 92201



CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Authority

The main purpose of the IS/MND is to determine whether there are potentially significant impacts associated with development of the proposed Project in the City of Desert Hot Springs.

This Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared for the development of the Rancho Descanso Specific Plan (Amendment No. 1 to the Aventura Palms II Specific Plan) and TTM 38200 (proposed Project).

This document conforms to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq. The City of Desert Hot Springs has prepared this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) as the lead agency for the proposed Project. This IS/MND is in conformance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15070, Subsection (a).

1.2 Determination

This Initial Study determined that development of the proposed Project would not have significant impacts on the environment, with the implementation of mitigation measures.

1.3 Public Review Process

This IS/MND will be circulated for public review to responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties for a period of 20 days. Following the public review and comment process, the City plans to issue a Mitigated Negative Declaration and prepare and file a Notice of Determination.



CHAPTER TWO – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Vicinity

Total Project Area: 17.83 acres

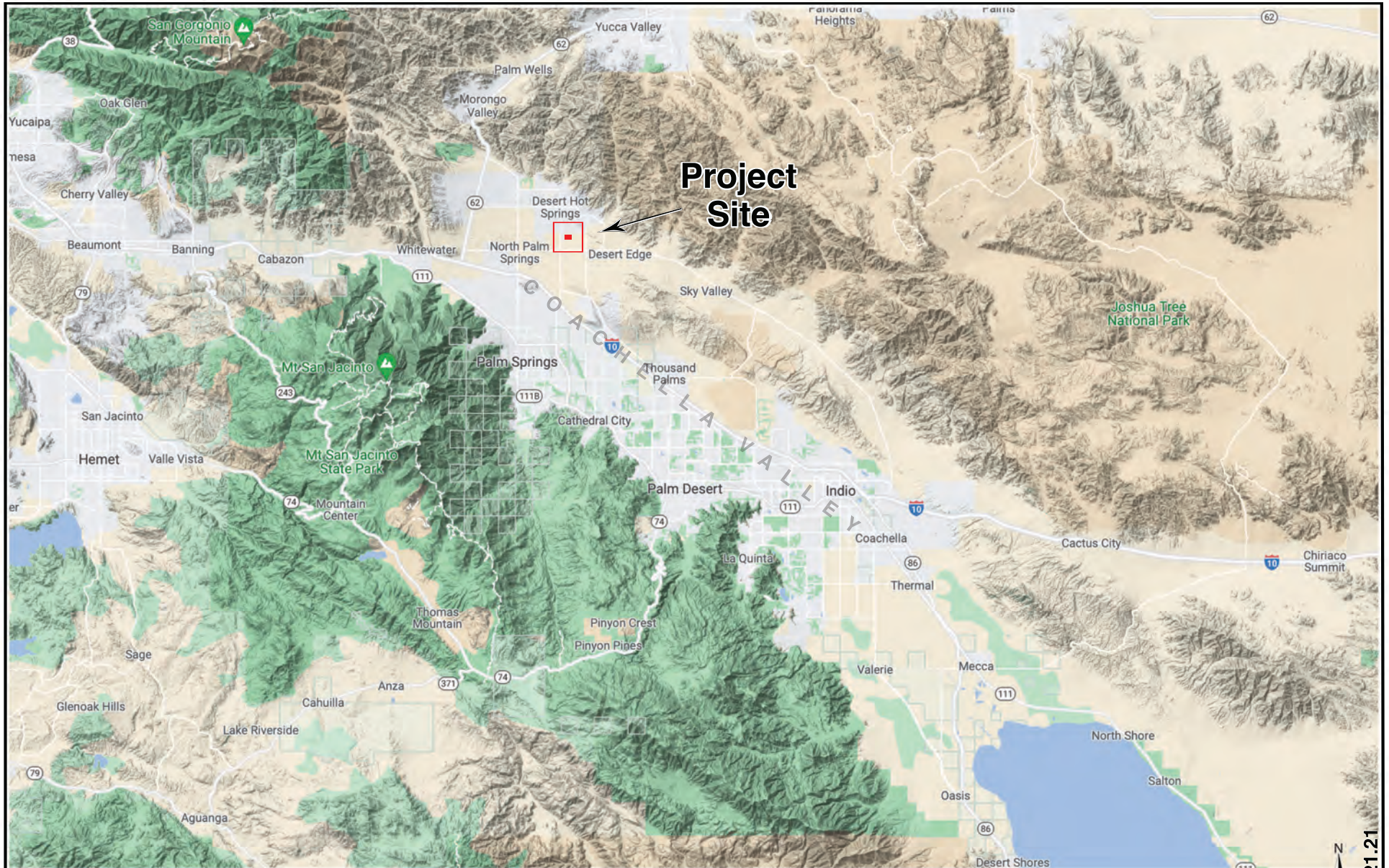
Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 656-080-016 &014, and a portion of 656-400-049

Project Location: The Project site is located on vacant lands located at the southwest corner of Avenida Descanso and Camino Campesino, bounded by Avenida Descanso on the east, Camino Campesino on the north, vacant lands on the west and partially built out Aventura Palms development to the south. Surrounding development includes largely developed single-family residential neighborhoods to the east and south, and the Vista Montana gated community to the north. Lands between the subject property and Palm Drive are vacant. See Exhibit 1, 2, and 3. Avenida Descanso is partially built out and Camino Campesino has not yet been constructed along the property's north boundary. Camino Aventura to the south is also partially constructed, while Palm Drive to the west is improved to provide two travel lanes in each direction.

The applicant proposes to amend the approved Aventura Palms II and rename the project *Rancho Descanso*. The project also includes a new subdivision (TTM 38200) to create 76 single-family lots within a private gated community with one private common area park (see project description below).

The Project site is located within the south 1/4 of the southeast 1/4 of Section 6, Township 3 South, Range 5 East, SBB&M. The location of the Project site is shown below, in Exhibits 2 and 3.





Source: Google Maps, 2021

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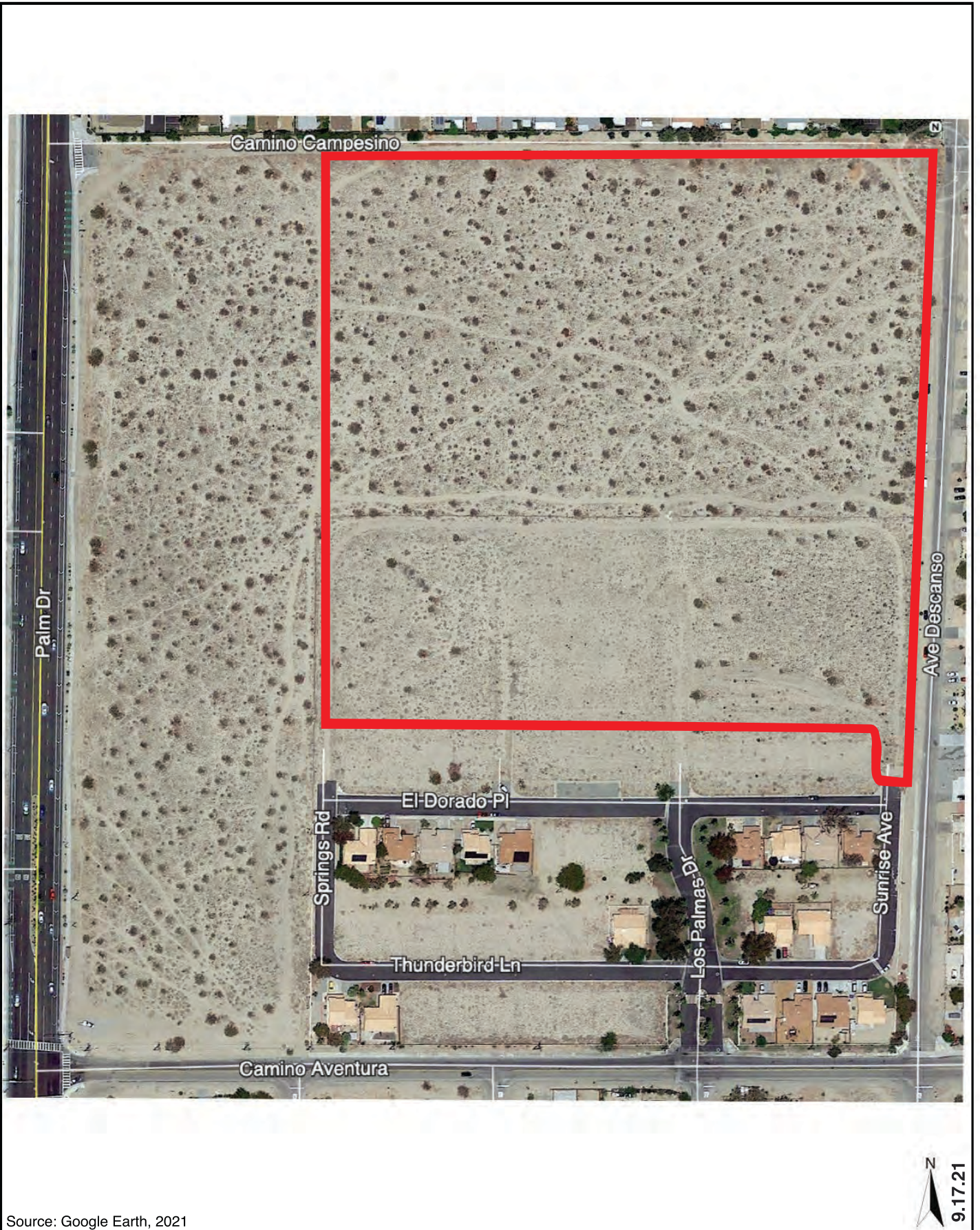
Source: Google Earth, 2021



**Rancho Descanso Specific Plan
Project Location Map
Desert Hot Springs, California**

Exhibit

3



Source: Google Earth, 2021



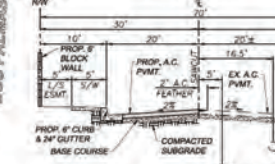
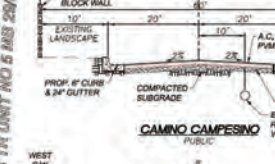
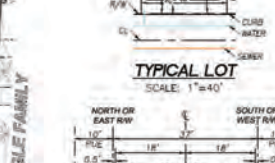
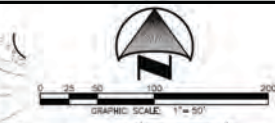
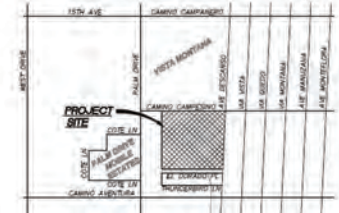
**Rancho Descanso Specific Plan
Project Site Aerial View
Desert Hot Springs, California**

Exhibit

4



TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 38200
RANCHO DESCANSO
 DESERT HOT SPRINGS
 OCTOBER 5, 2021



UTILITY PURVEYORS

DESERT HOT SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT 66575 SECOND STREET DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92240 (760) 324-4448	PRIONER 15500 RUBBING WELLS RD, SP 187 DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92240 (760) 376-9472
30 CALIFORNIA Edison 36100 CATHEDRAL CANYON DR. CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234 (760) 955-0555	30 CALIFORNIA GAS COMPANY 36111 CATHEDRAL CANYON DR. CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234 (800) 427-2262
SPECTRUM 71855 PALM DRIVE DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92240 (760) 376-4171	CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS 17-999 PALM DRIVE DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92240 (760) 376-4171

OWNER/APPLICANT/DEVELOPER
 DPA RANCHO DESCANSO, LLC
 30875 DATE PALM DRIVE, SUITE C-2
 CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234
 TELE: 760.349.1400

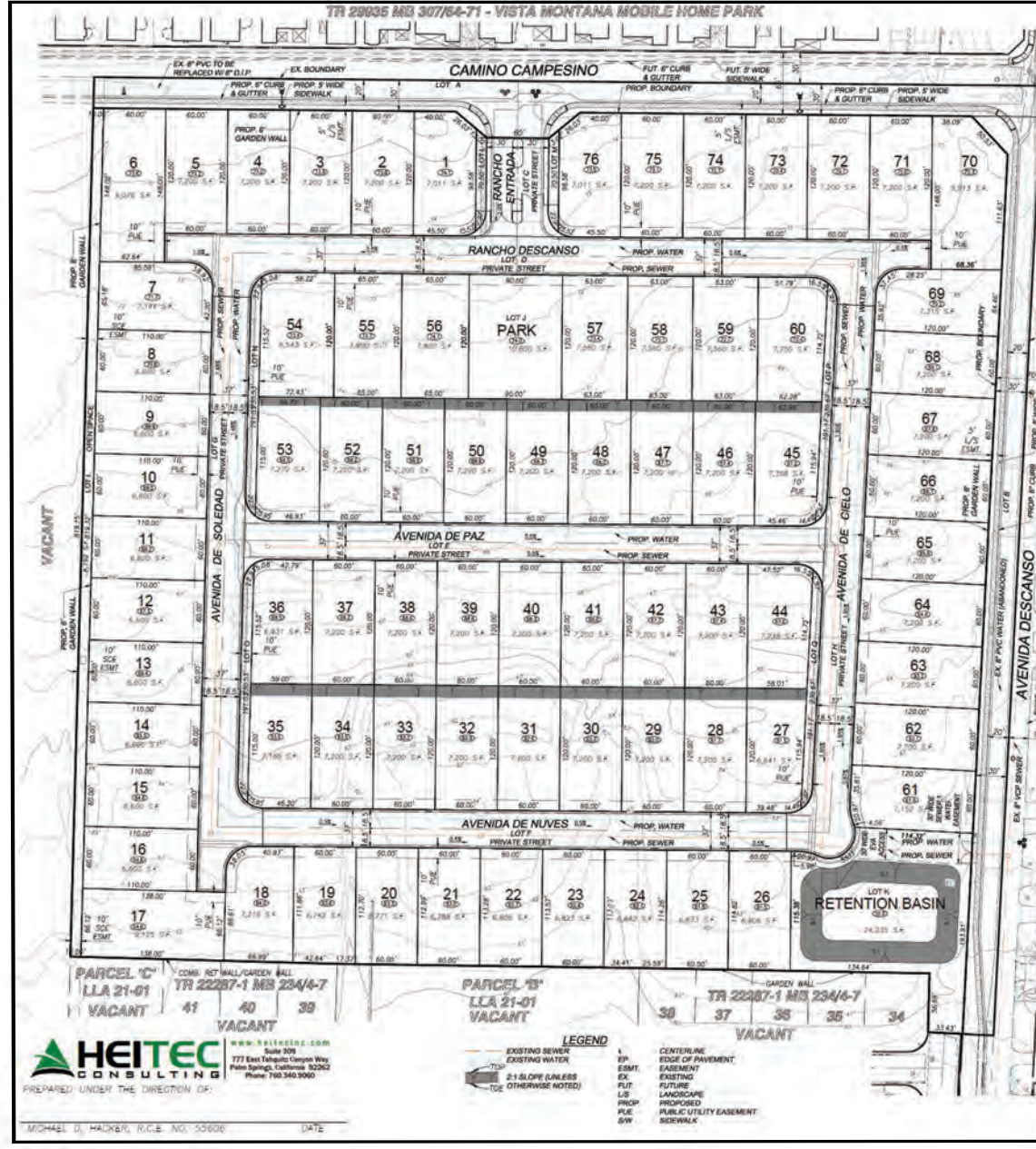
PREPARED BY
 HEITEC CONSULTING
 777 EAST TANDYVILLE CANYON WAY
 SUITE 209
 PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262
 TELE: 760.340.9000

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
 THAT CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 6, TOWNSHIP 3 SOUTH, RANGE 5 EAST, 5 1/4 IN THE CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DESCRIBED AS PARCEL 1A IN LLA 21-1, AS RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF SAID COUNTY, IS HEREBY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
 PARCEL 1A
 BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 34 OF TRACT NO. 22287-1, RECORDED IN BOOK 234, PAGES 4 THROUGH 7, INCLUSIVE, OF MAPS, AS FILED IN THE SAID COUNTY RECORDERS OFFICE;
 THENCE NORTH 88°29'31" WEST, 283.23 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 38 OF SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE NORTH 89°11'48" WEST, 281.79 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 38, OF SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE NORTH 89°29'58" WEST 10 A POINT ON THE NORTHERLY EXTENSION OF THE WEST LINE OF SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1, 287.63 FEET;
 THENCE NORTH 03°03'58" EAST ALONG THE NORTHERLY EXTENSION OF THE WEST LINE OF SAID TRACT 22287-1, 886.14 FEET TO ITS INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF CAMINO CAMPESINO AS SHOWN ON SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE SOUTH 89°29'58" EAST ALONG THE SAID CENTERLINE OF CAMINO CAMPESINO, 915.34 FEET TO ITS INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF AVENIDA DESCANSO AS SHOWN ON SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE SOUTH 02°58'10" WEST ALONG THE SAID CENTERLINE OF AVENIDA DESCANSO, 917.79 FEET TO THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF LOT 37 AS SHOWN ON SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE NORTH 87°29'28" WEST, PERPENDICULAR TO THE SAID CENTERLINE OF AVENIDA DESCANSO, 63.42 FEET TO A POINT ON THE EAST LINE LOT 34 OF SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1;
 THENCE NORTH 01°20'34" EAST ALONG THE EAST LINE OF LOT 34 OF SAID TRACT NO. 22287-1, 98.60 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;
 CONTAINS 1763 ACRES, MORE OR LESS;
 SUBJECT TO ALL EASEMENTS, RIGHT OF WAYS AND COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD.

PROJECT SUMMARY

ACREAGE	17.63 GROSS
	16.67 NET
PUBLIC STREETS (LOTS A & B)	15.31 AC. (86,979 S.F.)
PRIVATE STREETS (LOTS C-H)	2.70 AC. (117,805 S.F.)
OPEN SPACE (LOT I)	0.18 AC. (8,000 S.F.)
PARK AREA (LOT J)	0.26 AC. (10,800 S.F.)
RETENTION BASIN (LOT K)	0.26 AC. (10,800 S.F.)
LANDSCAPE AREA (LOTS L-Q)	0.24 AC. (10,500 S.F.)
RESIDENTIAL LOTS	76 LOTS
LANDSCAPE LOT	1 LOT
AVERAGE SQ. FT.	7,219 SQ. FT.
EXISTING USE	VACANT
PROPOSED USE	SINGLE-FAMILY V SPECIFIC PLAN
EXISTING SPECIFIC PLAN	

FLOOD ZONE
 ZONE X SHADED
 0.1% ANNUAL CHANCE OF FLOOD HAZARD
 MAP 06880C09150, AUGUST 28, 2008



HEITEC CONSULTING
 PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF:
 MICHAEL D. HACKER, R.C.E. NO. 55566

LEGEND

EXISTING SEWER	EXISTING WATER	EXISTING EASEMENT	EXISTING LANDSCAPE	PROPOSED PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT
EXISTING CENTERLINE	EXISTING EDGE OF PAVEMENT	EXISTING EASEMENT	EXISTING LANDSCAPE	PROPOSED PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT
FUTURE CENTERLINE	FUTURE EDGE OF PAVEMENT	FUTURE EASEMENT	FUTURE LANDSCAPE	FUTURE PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT
PROPOSED CENTERLINE	PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT	PROPOSED EASEMENT	PROPOSED LANDSCAPE	PROPOSED PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT
PROPOSED CENTERLINE	PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT	PROPOSED EASEMENT	PROPOSED LANDSCAPE	PROPOSED PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT

10.7.21



Rancho Descanso Specific Plan
Tentative Tract Map 38200
Desert Hot Springs, California

Exhibit

5



RANCHO DESCANSO - CONCEPTUAL OVERALL SITE PLAN
DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA



G2 Collaborative
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

09.28.21 L-2

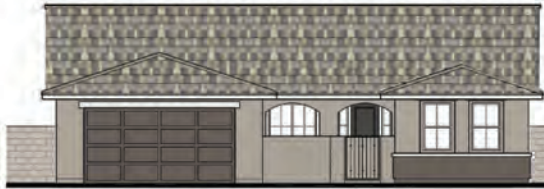
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Rancho Descanso Specific Plan
Master Site Plan
Desert Hot Springs, California



PLAN 2A
SCHEME 3



PLAN 3BR
SCHEME 8



PLAN 1A
SCHEME 1

TYPICAL STREETScape EXAMPLES



PLAN 3A
SCHEME 4



PLAN 2YB
SCHEME 6



PLAN 1BR
SCHEME 7

PLAN DESIGNATIONS:

2XAR



DESCRIPTION:

- CONTEMPORARY MEDITERRANEAN ELEVATIONS:
- * FLAT AND 5° TILE 4:12 CONCRETE TILE ROOFS
 - * HIP AND GABLE ROOFS W/ 1 8" OVERHANG / 12° RAKE
 - * 2x6 WOOD FASCIA & BARGE
 - * STUCCO EXTERIORS W/ ACCENT TRIM
 - * OPTIONAL GATED COURTYARDS



PLAN 1B
SCHEME 5



PLAN 2XAR
SCHEME 4



PLAN 3AR
SCHEME 2



10.7.21

2.2 Project Description

Project History

The original (2006) Aventura Palms II Specific Plan, which the subject Specific Plan and TTM amend, proposed a unit density exceeding the "Residential-Low" ("R-L) allowance of 0-5 dwelling units per acre. The applicant processed the Specific Plan along with a General Plan Amendment and Change of Zone to "Residential-Medium/Specific Plan" ("R-M/SP") with a maximum density of 8 dwelling units per acre. Since the original Specific Plan's approval, the City has adopted a new General Plan, which designates the subject property as "Specific Plan". The City Zoning Ordinance has also been revised and assigns the "Specific Plan" zoning district to the subject property. There are no established residential densities for development within an approved specific plan area.

Proposed Project

Encompassing 17.83 acres, this Rancho Descanso Specific Plan Project proposes an amendment to and renaming of the Aventura Palms II Specific Plan. It also includes Tentative Tract Map No. 38200 and a lot line adjustment that implement the Rancho Descanso Specific Plan and provides for the creation of 76 single-family lots at an overall density of 5 units per acre and a one-quarter acre common area park. The homes will be single-story with multiple sizes of two to four bedrooms and a variety of floor plans and elevations. Both two- and three-car garages will also be offered. Architecture will be of a Mediterranean derivation with stucco walls and tiles roofs. Access to the community will be from a gated entrance located on the future Camino Campesino. Interior streets are private and no thru-traffic will occur allowing the streets to serve pedestrians and bicyclists with safe travel throughout Rancho Descanso.

The original Aventura Palms II Specific Plan allowed individual lot sizes to be as small as 3,300 square feet. This amended Rancho Descanso Specific Plan and associated tentative tract map provide lots ranging from a minimum of 6,600 square feet to a maximum of 9,913 square feet. Average residential lot size will be 7,332 square feet.

The subject property is designated on the City General Plan land use map as "Specific Plan". The City Zoning Ordinance also assigns the "Specific Plan" zoning district to the subject property. There are no established residential densities for development within an approved specific plan area.

Utilities and Service Providers:

The following utilities will provide service to the Project:

1. Sewer: Mission Springs Water District (MSWD)
2. Water: Mission Springs Water District (MSWD)
3. Electricity: Southern California Edison (SCE)
4. Gas: Southern California Gas Company
5. Telephone: Frontier Communications
6. Cable: Spectrum



2.3 Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation measures are included where applicable within each section of the Initial Study checklist and are summarized below. Table 1 Mitigation Monitoring Program outlines the potential impacts and mitigation measures of the proposed Project, and assigns responsibility for the oversight of each mitigation measure. This table shall be included in all bid documents as a part of the Project development.

**Table 1
Mitigation Monitoring Program**

Section Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsible for Monitoring	Timing	Impact after Mitigation
IV. Biological Resources	IV-1 A qualified biologist shall conduct two (2) take avoidance pre-construction burrowing owl surveys onsite. The first shall occur between 14 and 30 days prior to ground disturbance, and the second shall occur within 24 hours of ground disturbance. If burrowing owls are detected, the Project proponent shall consult with CDFW to determine the appropriate action required should burrowing owl(s) continue to occupy the site at the time of Project implementation. Avoidance or relocation may be required, as determined appropriate by CDFW.	Project Proponent, Project Biologist, Planning Department, Building Department.	Prior to the issuance of grading permits.	Less than significant.
IV. Biological Resources	IV-2 For any grading or other site disturbance or tree or vegetation removal occurring during the nesting season between January 15 and August 31, a qualified biologist shall conduct at least one nesting bird survey, and more if deemed necessary by the consulting biologist, immediately prior to initiation of Project-related ground disturbing activities. If nesting birds are present, no work shall be permitted near the nest until the young birds have fledged. While there is no established protocol for nest avoidance, when consulted, the CDFW generally recommends avoidance buffers of about 250 to 500 feet for federally and state listed threatened and endangered avian species and birds-of-prey, and 100–250 feet for songbirds. If ground disturbance occurs outside the nesting season, this requirement shall be waived.	Project Proponent, Project Biologist, Planning Department, Building Department.	Prior to the issuance of grading permits.	Less than significant.



**Table 1
Mitigation Monitoring Program**

Section Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsible for Monitoring	Timing	Impact after Mitigation
V. Cultural Resources	V-1 Earth-moving activities including grading, grubbing, trenching, or excavations at the site shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor at the expense of the applicant. If during excavation, grading or construction, artifacts or other archaeological resources are discovered, the archaeologist and monitors shall recover artifacts quickly to avoid construction delays but shall have the power to temporarily halt or divert construction equipment to allow for controlled archaeological recovery if a substantial cultural deposit is encountered. The monitor shall determine when excavations have reached sufficient depth to preclude the occurrence of cultural resources, and when monitoring should conclude. Work shall resume after consultation with the City of Desert Hot Springs and implementation of the recommendations of the archaeologist and/or tribal monitor. If artifacts are discovered, these shall be processed, catalogued, analyzed, and prepared for permanent curation in a repository with permanent retrievable storage that would allow for additional research in the future.	Project Proponent, Planning Department, Public Works Department.	Prior to the issuance of grading permits, during grading activities and within 30 days of the conclusion of monitoring activities,	Less than significant.
VII. Geology & Soils	VII-1 In the event that paleontological resources or unique geological features are discovered during construction related activities, a qualified paleontological monitor shall observe all ground disturbing activities at all depths. A qualified professional shall be retained to recover and evaluate any significant fossil materials. To avoid construction delays, the paleontological monitor should be equipped to salvage fossils immediately as they are unearthed and to remove samples of sediments that are likely to contain the remains of small fossil vertebrates, in accordance with standards for	Project Proponent, Planning Department, Public Works Department. activities and provide the City with a Responsible party: Project Contractor, Project paleontologist, City Planning and Building Departments.	Prior to the initiation of ground disturbing activities. report of findings within 30 days of the completion of monitoring activities.	Less than significant.



**Table 1
Mitigation Monitoring Program**

Section Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsible for Monitoring	Timing	Impact after Mitigation
	such recovery established by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP). Recovered specimens should be prepared to a point of identification, including washing of sediments to recover smaller fossil remains. Specimens shall be identified and curated into a museum repository with retrievable storage.			



CHAPTER THREE – ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. **Project Name:**
Rancho Descanso Specific Plan Amd. No 1, TTM 38200
Development Permit No. 21-18 and Lot Line Adjustment (LLA)
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**
City of Desert Hot Springs
11999 Palm Drive
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**
Patricia Villagomez
760-329-6411 Ext. 243
4. **Project Location:**

At the southwest corner of Avenida Descanso and Camino Campesino, bounded by Avenida Descanso on the east, Camino Campesino on the north, vacant lands on the west and partially built out Aventura Palms development to the south. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 656-080-016 & 014, and a portion of 656-400-049. The Project site is located within the south 1/4 of the southeast 1/4 of Section 6, Township 3 South, Range 5 East, SBB&M. The location of the Project site is shown below, in Exhibits 2 and 3.
5. **Project Applicants' Name and Address:**
GHA Rancho Descanso, LLC
GHA Enterprises, Inc.
30875 Date Palm Drive, Ste C-2
Cathedral City, CA 92234
6. **General Plan Designation:** SP: Specific Plan
7. **Zoning Designation:** SP: Specific Plan

Description of Project:
8. Amended and renamed Specific Plan and TTM 38200 to create 76 single-family lots on 17.83 acres. These will be single-story homes with up to four bedrooms. Rancho Descanso will be a gated community with private streets and open space. Primary access will be from the entry gate planned on Camino Campesino. It will also be served by one emergency evacuation route onto Avenida Descanso. As noted, Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 656-080-016 & 014, and a portion of 656-400-049 are included in the project area.
9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:**
The Project site is located in a partially developed area of Desert Hot Springs and surrounding county lands. Development to the north, south and east is comprised of single-family homes with about 80% of lots developed with homes. Lands to the immediate west and extending to Palm Drive are vacant.
10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):**

Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mission Springs Water District



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or "Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |



DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____ Date



I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; "California Scenic Highway System Lists," accessed September 2021; Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code; Site survey.

Setting

The Project site lies in the northwestern portion of the Coachella Valley of central Riverside County. A low-lying and relatively flat desert valley, it is bounded by the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains Range to the northwest and north, the San Jacinto Mountains on the southwest, and the Santa Rosa Mountains on the south. The mountains rise steeply over the valley floor. In the southeast and the lowest portion of the valley is the Salton Sea, a terminal lake at an elevation of approximately 240± feet below sea level.

The Project site is located on gently sloping and coalesced alluvial fans that emanate from the canyons to the north at an elevation of 860± above mean sea level. The area topography continues to decline in a south and southwestern direction to the central northwest-southeast axis of the valley. The Project site has substantial panoramic views of the valley floor and surrounding mountains. Views to the north (upslope) are impacted by the existing Vista Montana development, while views to the east and south are somewhat affected by single-family development primarily of single-story.

Ultimate development of the site will result in the construction of a private, gated and walled single-family community of 76 single-story homes with those along public streets being future rear lots. The Project impacts are discussed below.

Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The subject property is located approximately two miles southwest of the Little San Bernardino Mountain foothills and six miles from the San Jacinto Mountains, which are considered scenic vistas for much of the Coachella Valley. As proposed, the Project will place homes approximately 30 feet from the nearest public street right-of-way. All Project homes will be one-story with maximum heights of 20± feet and tile roofs. The



Project site will be bounded by a six-foot decorative masonry wall and parkway landscaping. The effects of the Project on adjacent and nearby scenic viewsheds will be less than significant.

b) No Impact. The subject property is currently vacant and sparsely vegetated with plants of the creosote scrub community. There are no trees, rocky outcroppings, historic buildings or other scenic resources. The surrounding lands are mostly comprised of single-family development and similarly vacant creosote scrub. Development of the subject property, as proposed will not substantially damage any scenic resource, including those within a state scenic highway corridor.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The subject property is not located within a non-urbanized area. The surrounding visual character of the area has been affected by extensive residential development, which have affected and to some extent degraded the visual character of the surrounding desert lands. As proposed, the Rancho Descanso Specific Plan will not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Development will occur within a gated and walled community surrounded by a decorative masonry block wall and parkway landscaping. Proposed homes will be limited to one-story and will have tile roofs. The proposed Project will not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing, nor will it significantly impact scenic quality.

d) Less Than Significant Impact. Development of the Project will result in the creation of new sources of light and possibly glare. Generally, residential communities are not substantial sources of incidental light, which is limited to streetlights, illuminated signage, and incidental on-structure and security lighting. Adherence to the City's light regulations will ensure that light and glare impacts for the proposed Project will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104 (g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the exiting environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2018.



Setting

The Project site is located in an area of the City designated as “urban” and designated “Specific Plan” on the City General Plan Land Use map. There are no agricultural lands in this area of the valley nor is there a source of agricultural irrigation for crop cultivation. Located on the desert alluvial fans of the valley and in an area prone to very dry and strong winds, the area does not harbor any forestry resources and has never been suitable for agriculture.

Discussion of Impacts

a-e) No Impact. According to the Riverside County Important Farmland 2018 Map, the area is considered “Urban” and is not suitable for livestock grazing, confined livestock, or poultry. The site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance by the California Department of Conservation. Nor does the City’s General Plan designate agricultural lands in the area. In addition, the site is surrounded by lands which are not in agricultural uses but rather are in various stages of urbanization. The proposed Project will not result in the conversion of Farmland or forestry lands to non-agricultural use.

In the City’s General Plan, the proposed Project will be located on a parcel that is not on or adjacent to properties with agricultural or forestry uses. The subject property is designated for urban development in the General Plan.

The City of Desert Hot Springs does not contain forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for Timberland production. Thus, the proposed Project will not result in the loss or conversion of forestland to non-forest use. Overall, no impact is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: "Final 2016 Air Quality Management Plan," prepared by South Coast Air Quality Management District, March 2017; "Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology," prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Revised, July 2008; "2003 Coachella Valley PM₁₀ State Implementation Plan," August 1, 2003; CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0.

Setting

The City of Desert Hot Springs, including the Project site, is located within the Riverside County portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB). SSAB is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD is one of the 35 air quality regulatory agencies in the State of California and all development within the SSAB is subject to SCAQMD's 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (2016 AQMP) and the 2003 Coachella Valley PM₁₀ State Implementation Plan (2003 CV PM₁₀ SIP). The SCAQMD operates and maintains regional air quality monitoring stations at numerous locations throughout its jurisdiction. The project site is located within Source Receptor Area (SRA) 30, (Coachella Valley) which includes monitoring stations in Palm Springs, Indio and Mecca.

Criteria air pollutants are contaminants for which state and federal air quality standards (California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)) have been established. The SSAB exceeds state and federal standards for fugitive dust (PM₁₀) and ozone (O₃). Health risks associated with PM and ozone pollution include respiratory issues such as coughing, wheezing, asthma and even high blood pressure. Ambient air quality in the SSAB, including the Proposed Project site, does not exceed state or federal standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxides, sulfur dioxide, lead, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, or Vinyl Chloride.

The SSAB continues to exceed federal and state standards for ozone and PM₁₀. In order to achieve attainment in the region, the 2003 Coachella Valley PM₁₀ Management Plan was adopted, which established strict standards for dust management for development proposals. The project will contribute to an incremental increase in regional ozone and PM₁₀ emissions.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0 was used to project air quality emissions that will be generated by the Proposed Project (Appendix A) and are discussed below.



Discussion of Impacts

a) No Impact. Under CEQA, a significant air quality impact could occur if the project is not consistent with the applicable Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) or would obstruct the implementation of the policies or hinder reaching the goals of that plan. The Project site is located within the SSAB and will be subject to SCAQMD's 2016 AQMP and the 2003 CV PM₁₀ SIP. The 2016 AQMP is a comprehensive plan that establishes control strategies and guidance on regional emission reductions for air pollutants. The AQMP is based, in part, on the land use plans of the jurisdictions in the region. The current zoning and General Plan land use designation for the project site is the Aventura Palms II Specific Plan which allows a medium residential density of 6.7 dwelling units per gross acre. The Project proposes a residential density of approximately 4.3 dwelling units per gross acre. The Proposed Project is less intense but consistent with the land use designation and will result in the development of a low to medium density residential project and is therefore compatible with the 2016 AQMP assumptions.

The SCAQMD works directly with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), county transportation commissions, and local governments, and cooperates actively with all State and federal government agencies. SCAG adopted the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS) to comply with the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) requirements under the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act. The Growth Management chapter of the RTP/SCS forms the basis of land use and transportation controls of the AQMP. Projects that are consistent with the projections of population forecasts are considered consistent with the AQMP. The Proposed Project would be implemented in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations contained in those plans in an effort to meet the applicable air quality standards, because the medium density residential land use was included in the SCAG analysis, and the Project will not exceed population or housing unit growth forecasts.

In conclusion, although the Proposed Project would contribute to impacts to air quality, as discussed below, it would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of an applicable air quality plan because its residential characteristics were included in the development of regional plans. No impact is anticipated.

b) Less Than Significant Impact. A project is considered to have significant impacts if there is a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. As previously stated, the SSAB is currently a non-attainment area for PM₁₀ and ozone. Therefore, if the project's construction and/or operational emissions exceed SCAQMD thresholds for PM₁₀ and ozone precursors, which include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous oxides (NO_x), and volatile/reactive organic compounds (VOC or ROG), then impacts would be cumulatively considerable and significant.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0 was used to project air quality emissions that will be generated by the Proposed Project (Appendix A). Criteria air pollutants will be released during both the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Project, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 summarizes short-term construction-related emissions, and Table 3 summarizes ongoing emissions generated during operation.

Construction Emissions:

For purposes of analysis, it is assumed that construction will occur over a 2-year period with buildout in 2023. The construction period includes all aspects of project development, including site preparation, grading, paving, building construction, and application of architectural coatings.

As shown in Table 2, emissions generated by construction activities will not exceed SCAQMD thresholds for any criteria pollutant during construction. The data reflect average daily unmitigated emissions, the with exception of standards requirements, over the 2-year construction period. Per preliminary earthwork calculations, the analysis assumes a net material (dirt/soil) import of 8,267 cubic yards. Applicable standard requirements and best management practices include, but are not limited to, the implementation of a dust control and management plan in conformance with SCAQMD Rule 403.1, proper maintenance and limited idling of heavy equipment, phased application of architectural coatings and the use of low-polluting architectural paint and coatings per SCAQMD Rule 1113.



Given that criteria pollutant thresholds will not be exceeded, and standard best management practices will be applied during construction, impacts will be less than significant.

Table 2 Maximum Daily Construction-Related Emissions Summary (pounds per day)						
Construction Emissions¹	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Daily Maximum	32.48	49.33	8.64	0.07	9.18	5.63
SCAQMD Thresholds	550.0	100.0	75.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0.
¹ Average of winter and summer emissions. Standard dust control measures have been applied to the PM emissions.

Operational Emissions:

Operational emissions are ongoing emissions that will occur over the life of the project. They include area source emissions, emissions from energy demand (electricity), and mobile source (vehicle) emissions.

According to the Traffic Report prepared for the Proposed Project (Appendix D), the Project will generate approximately 717 daily trips. Table 3 provides a summary of projected emissions during operation of the Proposed Project at build out. As shown below, operational emissions will not exceed SCAQMD thresholds of significance for any criteria pollutants for operations. Impacts related to operational emissions will be less than significant.

Table 3 Maximum Daily Operational-Related Emissions Summary (pounds per day)						
	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Operational Emissions¹	23.90	3.73	5.83	0.04	3.58	1.07
SCAQMD Thresholds	550.0	100.0	75.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0.
¹ Average of winter and summer emissions. Standard dust control measures have been applied to the PM emissions.

Cumulative Contribution: Non-Attainment Criteria Pollutants

A significant impact could occur if the Project would make a considerable cumulative contribution to federal or State non-attainment pollutants. The Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is classified as a “non-attainment” area for PM₁₀ and ozone. Cumulative air quality analysis is evaluated on a regional scale (rather than a neighborhood scale or city scale, for example) given the dispersing nature of pollutant emissions and aggregate impacts from surrounding jurisdictions and air management districts. Any development project or activity resulting in emissions of PM₁₀, ozone, or ozone precursors will contribute, to some degree, to regional non-attainment designations of ozone and PM₁₀.

The SCAQMD does not currently recommend quantified analyses of construction and/or operational emissions from multiple development projects, nor does it provide methodologies or thresholds of significance to be used to assess the significance of cumulative emissions generated by multiple cumulative projects. However, it is recommended that a project’s potential contribution to cumulative impacts should be assessed utilizing the same significance criteria as those for project-specific impacts. Furthermore, SCAQMD states that if an individual development project generates less than significant construction or operational emissions, then the development project would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Basin is in nonattainment.



As shown in the tables above, Project-related PM₁₀, CO, NO_x, and ROG emissions are projected to be below established SCAQMD thresholds. Emissions will be further reduced through required best management practices, which require implementation of a Dust Control Plan in accordance with SCAQMD Rule 403.1. Therefore, the Proposed Project will result in incremental, but not cumulatively considerable impacts on regional PM₁₀ or ozone levels.

Summary:

As shown above, both construction and operation of the Proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Overall, impacts related to construction and operation will be less than significant and are not cumulatively considerable from a non-attainment standpoint.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The purpose of analyzing Localized Significance Thresholds (LST) is to determine whether a project may generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts to the nearest exposed individual or sensitive receptor. Land uses that are sensitive receptors include, but are not limited to schools, churches, residences, hospitals, day care facilities, and elderly care facilities. The nearest sensitive receptors are single family residents located immediately north and south of the Project site.

Analysis of LSTs by a local government is voluntary and is designed for projects that are less than or equal to five acres. The maximum area of disturbance associated with buildout of the proposed Project is approximately 17.83 acres, and it is assumed that buildout would occur over the course of two years. Although the total project area is greater than five acres, the area of daily disturbance (for purposes of LST analysis only) is limited to five acres or less per day at any given location. As such, the five-acre look up table is appropriate under the SCAQMD's methodology to screen for potential localized air quality impacts.

The Mass Rate Look-Up tables for LSTs were used to determine if the proposed Project would have the potential to generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts during construction. The LST for Source Receptor Area (SRA) 30 (Coachella Valley) was used to determine LST emission thresholds. The distance from the emission source and the maximum daily site disturbance also determines emission thresholds. For analysis purposes, the worst-case scenario of a sensitive receptor being within 25 meters was used.

The following table shows that LST thresholds are not expected to be exceeded for any criteria pollutant during construction. Because the proposed land uses do not include major stationary polluters (such as a landfill, chemical plant, oil field, refineries etc.), LST analysis was not conducted or required for Project operation. Therefore, impacts to sensitive receptors will be less than significant.

Table 4				
Localized Significance Thresholds Emissions				
(pounds per day)				
	CO	NOx	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Construction				
Maximum Emissions	32.48	49.33	9.18	5.63
LST Threshold	2,292.00	304.00	14.00	8.00
Exceed?	No	No	No	No
Exceed?	No	No	No	No
Emission Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0.				
LST Threshold Source: LST Mass Rate Look-up Table, SCAQMD.				

Health Impacts

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, construction and operation of the Proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.



With today's technology, it is not scientifically possible to calculate the degree to which exposure to various levels of criteria pollutant emissions will impact an individual's health. There are several factors that make predicting a Project-specific numerical impact difficult:

- Not all individuals will be affected equally due to medical history. Some may have medical pre-dispositions and diet and exercise levels tend to vary across a population.
- Due to the dispersing nature of pollutants, it is difficult to locate and identify which group of individuals will be impacted, either directly or indirectly.
- There are currently no approved methodologies or studies to base assumptions on, such as baseline health levels or emission level-to-health risk ratios.

Due to the limitations described above, the extent to which the Project poses a health risk is uncertain but unavoidable. It is anticipated that impacts associated with all criteria pollutants will be less than significant overall, and that health effects will also be less than significant.

d) Less Than Significant Impact. The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depend on numerous factors, including the nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and the sensitivity of the receptors. While offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they still can be very unpleasant, leading to distress among the public and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and regulatory agencies.

The SCAQMD identifies certain land uses as sources of odors. These land uses include agriculture (farming and livestock), wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting facilities, refineries, landfills, transfer stations, and fiberglass molding. The Proposed Project will be developed with residential uses and is not expected to generate objectionable odors during any phase of construction or at Project buildout. Short term odors associated with paving and construction activities could be generated; however, any such odors would be quickly dispersed below detectable levels as distance from the construction site increases and would occur for short time periods during construction only.

At buildout, residential units will generate typical odors, including cooking odor, but will not generate objectionable odors. The Project is surrounded by existing residential developments, which are not sources of objectionable odors and will not result in a significant impact. Therefore, impacts from objectionable odors are expected to be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; "Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan," 2007; Biological Resource Assessment & Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Compliance Report Rancho Descanso Project & TTM 38200, Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, California, prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc., August 27, 2021.

Setting

The project site is largely undeveloped, with approximate northern 2/3rds of the site appears to be natural desert but is impacted by off-road vehicle usage and trash dumping. The approximate southern 1/3rd of the site was cleared in the past and is slowly revegetating. Historical aerial photography shows that structures were once present in part of this area as well as a probable pool or basin. Although all the structures are gone, an above-ground water pipeline which is presumed to be inoperative, and a basin remain. The basin may temporarily hold water during rain events. It appears that former roads to the structures may channel water in that direction.



The Project site is surrounded by residential development on three sides: east, north, and south. Natural, largely undisturbed desert similar to that on the northern Project site is present to the west, continuing to the northwest across Palm Drive. The subject property is located in the Coachella Valley, which is under the jurisdiction of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP).

A biological resources assessment was conducted by Wood Environment & Infrastructure, Inc on the subject property on August 18, 2021 and included a literature review and field assessment. The proposed Project site is not located within or adjacent to a CVMSHCP Conservation or Linkage Area. Two Conservation Areas are located in the vicinity, including Willow Hole Conservation Area south of Dillon Road and Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area to the west and within the drainage of these creeks.

On-site soils consist of alluvium conveyed from canyons to the north and are comprised primarily of Casitas and Myoma fine sands. There are no obvious drainages crossing the property. On-site and surrounding native vegetation is sparse and consists of creosote scrub community. On-site and nearby wildlife included 13 species (one reptile, nine birds, and three mammals). Sensitive plant species that could occur on site include Coachella Valley milkvetch, Arizona spruce, slender bedstraw, Little San Bernardino linanthus, and slender cottonheads, none of which were detected on site. Sensitive wildlife species with some potential to occur on site and in the vicinity include burrowing owl (one nesting pair found on site), Costa's hummingbird (appropriate habitat, not detected), loggerhead shrike (nesting habitat, not detected), Palm Springs desert wood rat (suitable habitat, not detected).

Ultimate development of the site will result in clearing and grading the 17.83±-acres to accommodate a gated and walled single-family subdivision. Potential Project impacts on biological resources are discussed below.

Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The subject site is currently undeveloped and contains Sonoran creosote bush scrub. No special-status flora was detected on-site during the field assessment. One special status species, the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) was observed onsite, as discussed below (also see Appendix B of this IS).

Of the 11 sensitive plant species that could occur on site, none were detected and five we determined to have inadequate habitat; nonetheless, the most sensitive of these are covered species under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). On-site habitat conditions and surrounding development have degraded habitat. Potential Project-related impacts to sensitive plants species will be mitigated through payment of the CVMSHCP development fees and participation in the Plan. Of the five sensitive plant species with moderate potential to occur on site one is not covered under the CVMSHCP.

The only special status bird species known with the potential or to nest on the Project site is the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). A apparently nesting pair of burrowing owl was observed onsite at an active burrow during the field survey. The burrowing owl is designated as an SSC and protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The burrowing owl is a covered species under the CVMSHCP, but the federal permit for the CVMSHCP does not allow take of this species under the MBTA. For these reasons, the Project biologist recommends two pre-construction take avoidance surveys to ensure that no direct take of burrowing owls occur (Mitigation Measure IV-1). Because a burrowing owl is known to occur on the Project site, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has been contacted to determine the appropriate course of action required should burrowing owl(s) continue to occupy the site at the time of Project implementation. With implementation of Mitigation Measure IV-1, impacts to burrowing owls will be less than significant.

The existing shrubs on and adjacent to the property may provide limited nesting and foraging opportunities for birds covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). MBTA covers virtually all native migratory and resident bird species, including those known to occur in the Project vicinity. Avoidance of impacts to these nesting migratory and resident birds is a requirement of the federal permit issued for the CVMSHCP. To avoid potential impacts, the Project biologist recommends a pre-construction nesting bird survey if any activity to remove vegetation is proposed during the nesting season, as provided in Mitigation Measure IV-2 below. With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to birds covered by the MBTA will be less than significant.



In summary, and with the exception of the burrowing owl, the proposed Project will not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulations. The potential of the Project impacting sensitive plant species is generally low and any potential impacts are adequately address through Project participation in the CVMSHCP. Participation in the CVMSHCP and implementation of mitigation measures set forth below will ensure that impacts to sensitive species is less than significant.

b-c) No Impact. The Project site does not contain any streams, riparian habitat, marshes, protected wetlands, vernal pools or sensitive natural communities protected by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The nearest dry washes are located 3,600± feet to the west away (Mission Creek) and Verbena Wash approximately 2,300 feet to the east. No Project-related impacts will occur.

d) Less Than Significant Impact. According to the Project-specific biological resource assessment, no wildlife corridors or biological linkages are mapped on or adjacent to the Project site. The two Conservation Areas designated by CVMSHCP near the Project site, Willow Hole Conservation Area and Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area are interconnected to the southwest of the Project site. The Project site is located in a substantially developed urban area and the Project area is surrounded by roadways and residential development to the south, east and north. Due to surrounding urban development and related activity and edge effects, the site is unlikely to be suitable for native wildlife nursery sites and development of the site will not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory species. Potential impacts to nesting birds, if any, will be analyzed and mitigated pursuant to the MBTA. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

e - f) No Impact. The subject property does not contain any biological resources that are protected by a local policy or ordinance, such as a tree preservation ordinance. The subject property is located within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP but is outside the boundaries of any of the Plan's Conservation Areas. The developer will be required to pay the Local Development Mitigation Fee to mitigate impacts to covered species. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other related plans. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures would be required.

Mitigation Measures:

- IV-1 A qualified biologist shall conduct two (2) take avoidance pre-construction burrowing owl surveys onsite. The first shall occur between 14 and 30 days prior to ground disturbance, and the second shall occur within 24 hours of ground disturbance. If burrowing owls are detected, the Project proponent shall consult with CDFW to determine the appropriate action required should burrowing owl(s) continue to occupy the site at the time of Project implementation. Avoidance or relocation may be required, as determined appropriate by CDFW.
- IV-2 For any grading or other site disturbance or tree or vegetation removal occurring during the nesting season between January 15 and August 31, a qualified biologist shall conduct at least one nesting bird survey, and more if deemed necessary by the consulting biologist, immediately prior to initiation of Project-related ground disturbing activities. If nesting birds are present, no work shall be permitted near the nest until the young birds have fledged. While there is no established protocol for nest avoidance, when consulted, the CDFW generally recommends avoidance buffers of about 250 to 500 feet for federally and state listed threatened and endangered avian species and birds-of-prey, and 100–250 feet for songbirds. If ground disturbance occurs outside the nesting season, this requirement shall be waived.

Monitoring:

- IV-A Prior to the issuance of any permit to allow ground disturbance on the site, the Project proponent shall furnish the City with pre-construction surveys for burrowing owls and MBTA covered birds.
Responsible Party: Project Proponent, Project Biologist, Planning Department, Building Department.



V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, TTM No. 38200 (APNs: 656-080-014, 656-080-016, and 656-400-049), City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, California, prepared by CRM TECH, September 30, 2021.

Setting

Historic Resources

Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines generally defines a historic resource as a resource that is: (1) listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register); (2) included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code); or (3) identified as significant in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code).

Archaeological Resources

Section 15064.5(a)(3)(D) of the CEQA Guidelines generally defines archaeological resources as any resource that “has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” Archaeological resources are features, such as tools, utensils, carvings, fabric, building foundations, etc., that document evidence of past human endeavors and that may be historically or culturally important to a significant earlier community.

The Coachella Valley is the traditional home of Native Americans of the Cahuilla Tribe, who lived in three small groups: the Pass Cahuilla of the Beaumont/Banning area; the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains; and the Desert Cahuilla of the Coachella Valley. The Cahuilla Indians have occupied the region for several centuries if not millennia, leaving numerous cultural resources. Cultural resources generally include historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources which would reveal ancient civilizations and their way of life.

The oldest cultural resources reported in the City of Desert Hot Springs are from the “Paleo-Indian Period” which dates back to at least 11,000 B.C. Substantial portions of the City have been surveyed by archaeologists. Approximately 32 prehistoric and historic resource sites have been recorded within the City, of which 24 are prehistoric archeological sites and 8 are historic sites. Records searches conducted for studies carried out in 2018-2021 on nearby properties to the north, east, and west identified several additional studies that had been completed within the one-mile radius since 2004. These records searches further indicate that three additional sites had been recorded within the one-mile radius, for a total of eight known cultural resource. Two of these eight sites were of prehistoric (i.e., Native American) origin, both consisting of habitation remains located nearly one mile to the north-northeast. The other six sites dated to the historic period and included refuse scatters, buildings, and roads. Nearest among them is Palm Drive, situated roughly one-tenth of a mile to the west. None of these previously recorded cultural resources were located in the immediate vicinity of the project area. Therefore, none of them require further consideration during this study.



Between August and September 2021, CRM TECH performed a cultural resources study on the Project site through a historical/archaeological resources records search, historical background research, Native American consultation, and an intensive-level field survey. No “historical resources” were identified within or adjacent to the Project area.

Discussion of Impacts

a) No Impact. The Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped and shows signs of previous disturbances such as invasive grasses and scattered refuse in the southern portion of the site. No structures occur on the site, and no previous construction has occurred. According to the cultural resources study conducted by CRM TECH, the Project site and immediate vicinity do not contain any resources identified as historically significant by the Riverside County Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the City. The nearest resource identified in the records search is located roughly a quarter mile south of the Project site, which consists of a segment of Dillon Road and is listed in the California Historical Resources Inventory. The Project will have no impact on this segment of roadway. No Project-related historic resource impacts are anticipated.

b) Less Than Significant Impact. The field survey conducted by CRM TECH on September 3, 2021 encountered no buildings, structures, objects, sites, features, or artifacts more than 50 years of age. The Project site had generally good ground visibility (90%) due to relatively light vegetation growth onsite. Scattered modern refuse was observed on the property, especially along the perimeters, but none of it was of any historical or archaeological interest.

The State Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted in May 2021 by the Project archaeologist, to request a record search in the commission’s Sacred Lands File. NAHC identified no Native American cultural resources within the Project vicinity but recommended contacting 14 local tribes regarding potential Native American Cultural resources. The City also conducted Tribal Consultation in conformance with the AB 52 requirements and contacted the tribes in writing. This process is described in Section XVIII, Tribal Cultural Resources.

The Project archaeologist also invited the nearby Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) to participate in the archaeological field survey. While the ACBCI responded that they were not able to participate in the survey, they requested to be informed of any archaeological discoveries made during the survey. The Project archaeologist sent a summary of the field survey results to the ACBCI representative via email in September 2021. Based on the cultural resource analysis prepared for the Project, potential impacts to archaeological resources are expected to be less than significant. However, the potential exists for resources to be buried on-site which could be uncovered by Project grading activities. To further protect cultural resources that may be encountered during Project construction, the Project archaeologist recommended standard archaeological monitoring as detailed in Mitigation Measure V-1. Implementation of this mitigation measure will ensure that any potential impact on buried archaeological resources remain less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. No cemeteries are reported to occur onsite or in the Project area. It is unlikely that human remains will be uncovered during Project development. Should human remains be uncovered during grading of the site, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code requires that all activity stop, and that the coroner be notified to determine the nature of the remains and whether Native American consultation is needed. If the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission will be contacted, and will determine the appropriate Tribal entity determined to be the likely descendants for contact. This requirement of law assures that there will be no impact to cemeteries or human remains.

Mitigation Measures:

- V-1 Earth-moving activities including grading, grubbing, trenching, or excavations at the site shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and (if requested) a Native American monitor at the expense of the applicant. If during excavation, grading or construction, artifacts or other archaeological resources are discovered, the archaeologist and monitors shall recover artifacts quickly to avoid construction delays but shall have the power to temporarily halt or divert construction equipment to allow for controlled archaeological recovery if a substantial cultural deposit is encountered.



The monitor shall determine when excavations have reached sufficient depth to preclude the occurrence of cultural resources, and when monitoring should conclude. Work shall resume after consultation with the City of Desert Hot Springs and implementation of the recommendations of the archaeologist and/or tribal monitor.

If artifacts are discovered, these shall be processed, catalogued, analyzed, and prepared for permanent curation in a repository with permanent retrievable storage that would allow for additional research in the future.

Monitoring:

V-A The applicant shall provide the City with fully executed agreements with a qualified archaeologist and a Tribal monitor prior to the issuance of any earth moving permit on the property.
Responsible Party: Project Proponent, Planning Department, Public Works Department.

V-B The Project archaeologist shall, within 30 days of the conclusion of monitoring activities, provide the City with a report of findings, to be kept on file by the City.
Responsible Party: Project Proponent, Planning Department, Public Works Department.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: Draft City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, February 2020.

Setting

Natural gas and electricity to the Project site are provided by Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) and Southern California Edison (SCE), respectively. The Project site is currently undeveloped, and utilities, which are located adjacent to the site, will be extended into the Project site as part of the Project’s development. The proposed Project entails the development of 76 single family homes and a ¼ acre private park. It is important to note that the California Energy Commission (CEC) approved the 2022 California Energy Code, which sets the building standards for new construction and requiring builders to install solar and infrastructure to make new homes battery storage ready. The CA Energy Code Energy Code also includes requirements for builders to design single-family homes so battery storage can be easily added to the already existing solar system in the future as well as incentives to eliminate natural gas from new buildings. Single-family homes built in 2020 or later are to be designed to be net zero emitters of GHGs.

Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of the construction of 76 new single family homes ranging in size from about 1,600 to 2,300 square feet and with an average size of 67,332 square feet. The proposed new homes would be built to current California Building Code standards, including the installation of roof-top PV solar to meet the calculated annual energy load, and wired and equipped to add battery storage (battery-ready). Also, improved insulation and high efficiency HVAC systems are also required.



During construction, there would be a temporary consumption of energy resources for operation of construction equipment, lighting and other construction-related activities. The duration of the construction period is expected to be approximately two years and is limited due to the relatively limited scale of the Project. Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations (e.g., limit engine idling times, require the recycling of construction debris, etc.) would reduce short-term energy demand during Project construction, and Project construction would not result in a wasteful or inefficient use of energy.

During occupation of the subject homes, there are no unusual Project characteristics that would require the use of equipment that would be more energy intensive than is used for comparable homes, or the use of appliances that would not conform to current emissions standards and related efficiencies.

The Project will generate 717 trips per day (see Section XVII), which will not result in high fuel consumption. While not subject to any mandate, the adoption of electric vehicle (EV) use is expected to substantially reduce the consumption of fossil fuels in coming years. Furthermore, through compliance with applicable requirements, including the California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6–Energy Efficiency Standards, as well as the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) discussed below, individual Project elements (e.g., building design, HVAC equipment, roof-top PV solar, etc.) would be consistent with state and local energy reduction policies and strategies, and would not consume energy resources in a wasteful or inefficient manner.

b) No Impact. State and local agencies regulate the use and consumption of energy through various methods and programs (e.g. Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6–Energy Efficiency Standards, and the California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11– California Green Building Standards (CALGreen). Per the latest CALGreen (2019) requirements for residential construction, the Project homes will be constructed with roof-top PV solar and will be battery-ready.

At the local level, the City enforces the applicable requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standards and Green Building Standards in Title 24. In addition, the City’s General Plan adopted in 2020 identifies specific strategies and measures for the conservation of the energy within the City. The Project would be required to comply with City policies and programs.

No impact related to compliance with applicable energy standards would result because the proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct State or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Draft EIR, February 2020; "County of Riverside Environmental Impact Report No. 521 Public Review Draft, February 2015; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, accessed August 23, 2021; Geotechnical Investigation – Proposed residential Development (APNs: 656-080-014 & 016 and 656-400-049), prepared by Sladden Engineering, July 7, 2021; Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report for TTM 38200 (APNs: 656-080-014, 656-080-016, and 656-400-049), City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, California, prepared by CRM TECH, September 30, 2021.



City of Desert Hot Springs

Date: October 2021

Project Name: Rancho Descanso Specific Plan, TTM 38200, Dev Permit 21-18

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Setting

Geology and Soils

The valley is bounded by the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the north, San Jacinto Mountains on the west and southwest, and the Santa Rosa Mountains on the south. The Coachella Valley is partially covered by alluvial and sand deposits some exceeding 20,000 feet in depth. The sources of sands found on the subject property are alluvial materials carried by fluvial action from the mountain canyons to the north with substantial deposits of aeolian transported sand and dust. These deposits are subject to northwest winds, including air movements flowing through the San Gorgonio Pass. The prevailing winds sift out the finer materials and move them southward, creating dunes during transport.¹

Regional geology and seismicity in the Coachella Valley are primarily influenced by the tectonics of the San Andreas and San Jacinto fault systems. The San Andreas Fault extends roughly 750 miles through California. It forms the tectonic boundary between the Pacific and the North American Plates. The San Jacinto Fault Zone (SJFZ) runs through San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial Counties in Southern California. The SJFZ is a component of the larger San Andreas transform system, which is considered the most seismically active fault zone in the region.

The City of Desert Hot Springs designates Fault Investigation Study areas along the sides of active and potentially active faults to establish specific fault locations and areas of potential hazard due to fault rupture. The City's Municipal Code (Chapter 15.04 Building Code) requires new construction in the City to at least meet the most current California Building Code (CBC).

The City of Desert Hot Springs is bisected by several splays of the San Andreas Fault. The Project site is not crossed by any active or inactive faults, and is therefore not located within or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone. The subject property is located closest to the Banning Branch of the San Andreas Fault system, being located 1.8± Km northeast of this fault, and is approximately 1.8 Km to the south is the Mission Creek branch of the San Andreas.

Paleontological Resources within the City of Desert Hot Springs

Paleontological resources (fossils) are the remains and/or traces of prehistoric plant and animal life exclusive of human remains or artifacts. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and wood can be found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) in which they were originally buried. The majority of the City consists of active channel deposits, Holocene flood plain deposits and active alluvial fan deposits, which extend from the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino foothills south to Interstate-10 and east. Older geologic units in the City include Holocene surficial sediments deposited on the valley floor, Holocene and Late Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits and Pleistocene deposits. These sediments can be classified as either stream-deposited (alluvium), or wind-deposited (aeolian) and have low potential to contain paleontological resources.

Discussion of Impacts

a.i) No Impact. The purpose of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act is to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting by preventing the construction of buildings used for human occupancy over an area with known faults. The Project site is not located within or adjacent to any fault or included in any Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The nearest earthquake faults are the San Andrea Fault – Banning Branch and Coachella Strand/Mission Creek Fault, which run approximately 1 mile southwest and northeast of the site, respectively. These faults are capable of generating earthquakes of maximum magnitude 7.5 on the Richter scale. No impact is anticipated because no fault rupture is expected on the Project site.

a.ii) Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation. The Project site, like most of southern California, could be subject to moderate to strong ground shaking in the event of an earthquake on one of the many active Southern California faults. As discussed above, the closest active faults are the San Andrea Fault – Banning and Coachella

¹ "Sand Forms in the Coachella Valley, Southern California" by Salah A. Beheiry, 1967 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Volume 57, 1967 - Issue 1.



branches, which run approximately 1 mile southwest and northeast of the site, respectively. A major earthquake on either of these faults could generate ground shaking as strong as 0.875g (g=acceleration of gravity).

The Project would result in 76 single-family homes of single-story design and built on slab foundations. The Project geotechnical analysis sets forth specific recommendations to help reduce the effects of strong ground shaking on these structures. Construction of the proposed buildings will meet the 2019 California Building Code (CBC) and other standards and requirements on seismic design to provide adequate mitigation against ground shaking anticipated from those faults. Therefore, with the application of geotechnical recommendation, impacts from ground shaking are expected to be less than significant.

a.iii) Less Than Significant Impact. Liquefaction occurs when soil materials are saturated by water during a seismic event and strong ground shaking. In order for liquefaction to occur, groundwater generally must be within 50 feet of the ground surface. According to the General Plan (May 2020), liquefaction potential in the Desert Hot Springs area is generally considered low to moderate due to the relatively deep groundwater. Subsurface investigations by the project geologists indicate that groundwater is at a greater depth than 50 feet and, with the distance from causative faults, the liquefactions hazard at the site is “negligible”. It was also determined that the potential for subsidence is low.

The proposed Project will be required to implement appropriate measures identified in the 2019 CBC including specific provisions for seismic design of structures. While the Project site is located in an area with low to moderate potential for liquefaction (Figure SN-3, General Plan), with implementation of existing policies and standards, and adherence to the recommendation in the Project geotechnical report, impacts associated with liquefaction or other ground failure would be less than significant.

a.iv) No Impact. The Project site sits on gently sloping alluvial plain. It consists of and is surrounded by relatively flat and gently sloping terrain. The nearest hillsides and mountainous slopes are approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the property. No impacts associated with landslides will occur.

b) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project site sits on gently sloping alluvium, which is susceptible to wind erosion. Grading and construction may involve removal of the topsoil; however, Project-related impacts are expected to be less than significant because the Project will be required to implement measures to control fugitive dust (see Air Quality, Section III), which will minimize potential adverse impacts associated with wind erosion. In addition, the City will require preparation and submittal of a dust control plan before the grading plan will be issued. The implementation of best management practices associated with stormwater flows on the Project site will also help address the potential for wind erosion. These standard requirements assure that erosion resulting from storm flows are controlled on and off site. Overall impacts associated with soil erosion will be less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The site is not susceptible to landslides due to its relatively flat terrain and distance from mountainous slopes. Lateral spreading is a phenomenon associated with liquefaction, which is discussed above in a.iii). Land subsidence is considered a regional issue in the Coachella Valley due primarily to extensive groundwater pumping. According to Section 4.12 of County of Riverside Environmental Impact Report No. 521 prepared for the County’s 2015 General Plan update, the subject site does not lie within an area of documented subsidence.

According to the USDA Web Soil Survey, the Project site is underlain by Carsitas and Myoma fine sands the parent material of which is sandy alluvium derived from granite. Due to the composition, deposition, and relatively youthful age of the on-site earth materials, the soils may be subject to collapse. The effects of collapsible soils can be neutralized through proper foundation engineering for the structural improvements. Standard practices, including design parameters required in the grading plan would reduce the potential for collapse or any other unstable soil conditions. As a result of these standard requirements, impacts of unstable soils would be less than significant.

d) No Impact. Expansive soils are typically associated with fine-grained clayey soils that have the potential to shrink and swell with repeated cycles of wetting and drying. The Project site soils are composed of sands and silty sand and do not contain clay. Due to the granular nature of the earth materials onsite, no expansive soils are present in near-surface soils and the expansion potential is considered “very low”. No impact is anticipated.



e) No Impact. The Project site is located in the wastewater service boundary of Mission Springs Water District (MSWD). MSWD operates the Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant located north of the subject property. The District has an 8-inch VCP sewer line in the Avenida Descanso right-of-way to which the proposed Project will be able to connect. On-site soils will not affect sanitary sewer associated with this Project. No impact is anticipated.

f) Less Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Project site does not contain any unique geologic feature. According to the City's General Plan, the majority of the City is designated as having a low, with some areas designated undetermined, potential for containing paleontological resources. The Riverside County General Plan Draft EIR (Figure 4.9.3) designates the City as a low sensitivity area for paleontological resources. The Project construction is expected to cause a maximum depth of ground disturbance of 5± feet. The likelihood for uncovering paleontological resources during Project development is low. In the unlikely event that such resources are encountered during excavation and other ground disturbance and qualified professional shall survey and evaluate these resources for proper deposition.

Mitigation Measures:

VII-1 In the event that paleontological resources or unique geological features are discovered during construction related activities, a qualified paleontological monitor shall observe all ground disturbing activities at all depths. A qualified professional shall be retained to recover and evaluate any significant fossil materials. To avoid construction delays, the paleontological monitor should be equipped to salvage fossils immediately as they are unearthed and to remove samples of sediments that are likely to contain the remains of small fossil vertebrates, in accordance with standards for such recovery established by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP). Recovered specimens should be prepared to a point of identification, including washing of sediments to recover smaller fossil remains. Specimens shall be identified and curated into a museum repository with retrievable storage.

Monitoring:

VII-A Should paleontological resources be identified and a monitor required, the monitor shall observe ground disturbing activities and provide the City with a report of findings within 30 days of the completion of monitoring activities.
Responsible party: Project Contractor, Project paleontologist, City Planning and Building Departments.



VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: "Final Environmental Impact Report: Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment." Desert Hot Springs, May 1, 2020; Desert Hot Springs Climate Action Plan. Adopted 2013; "Interim CEQA GHG Significance Threshold for Stationary Sources, Rules and Plans," SCAQMD, December 5, 2008. CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0.

Setting

Certain gases in the earth’s atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth’s surface temperature. Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are CO₂, methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated compounds. Sources of GHGs include both natural and anthropogenic (human-caused) processes. Anthropogenic emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and have led to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth’s climate, known as global climate change or global warming.

State laws such as Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) require all cities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020 and 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, respectively.

The City of Desert Hot Springs adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2013 that sets forth a series of strategies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets. According to the City’s CAP, Desert Hot Spring’s 2010 communitywide emissions baseline is 100,654 metric tons of CO₂e (MTCO₂e), which is equivalent to 6.6 MTCO₂e per year per service population.² Based on this historical emissions profile, the CAP established its annual Year 2020 GHG emission reduction goal to be 64,047 MTCO₂e, which would require an approximately 48,769 MTCO₂e decrease from its BAU forecasted scenario for the Year 2020. More recently, and to remain consistent with SB 32, the City’s General Plan Update (GPU) readjusted the GHG efficiency target to 2.6 MTCO₂e per year per service population by 2040.³ Therefore, the GPU, including projects consistent with the GPU, would achieve per capita thresholds for the year 2040 as established by SB 32.

GHG Thresholds⁴

On December 5, 2008, the SCAQMD formally adopted a greenhouse gas significance threshold of 10,000 MTCO₂e/yr that only applies to industrial uses’ stationary sources where SCAQMD is the lead agency (SCAQMD Resolution No. 08-35). This threshold was adopted based upon an October 2008 staff report and draft interim guidance document that also recommended a threshold for all projects using a tiered approach.

It was recommended by SCAQMD staff that a project’s greenhouse gas emissions would be considered significant if it could not comply with at least one of the following “tiered” tests:

- Tier 1: Is there an applicable exemption?
- Tier 2: Is the project compliant with a greenhouse gas reduction plan that is, at a minimum, consistent with the goals of AB 32?
- Tier 3: Is the project below an absolute threshold (10,000 MTCO₂e/year for industrial projects; 3,000 MTCO₂e/year for residential and commercial projects)?
- Tier 4: Is the project below a (yet to be set) performance threshold?
- Tier 5: Would the project achieve a screening level with off-site mitigation?

² Final Environmental Impact Report: Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment. May 1, 2020.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Interim CEQA GHG Significance Threshold for Stationary Sources, Rules and Plans," SCAQMD, December 5, 2008.



Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project will generate GHG emissions during both construction and operation. As described in Section III, Air Quality, above, the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0 was used to quantify air quality emission projections, including greenhouse gas emissions (Appendix A).

Construction

Construction activities will result in short-term GHG emissions associated with operation of construction equipment, employee commute, material hauling, and other ground disturbing activities. As shown in Table 4, the project will generate 824 MTCO₂e during the 2-year construction period. There are currently no construction-related GHG emission thresholds for projects of this nature. To determine if construction emissions will result in a cumulatively considerable impact, buildout GHG emissions were amortized over a 30-year period and added to annual operational emissions to be compared to applicable GHG thresholds (see Table 5, below).

Operation

At buildout, there are five emission source categories that will be contributing either directly or indirectly to operational GHG emissions, including energy/electricity usage, water usage, solid waste disposal, area emissions (pavement and architectural coating off-gassing), and mobile sources. Table 5 provides a summary of the projected short-term construction and annual operational GHG generation associated with buildout of the Proposed Project.

Table 5 Projected GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons)	
Phase	CO₂e (MT/YR)
Construction	
2021	177.90
2022	377.56
2023	268.48
Construction Total	823.94
Operation	
Area	2.55
Energy	223.30
Mobile	575.61
Waste	50.51
Water	24.41
Construction: 30-year amortized ¹	27.46
Total Operational	903.84
Tier Compliance	Tier 3
1. Buildout construction GHG emissions were amortized over 30-years then added to buildout operational GHG emissions. $823.94/30 = 27.46$	

As shown in the table above, the Proposed Project will generate less than 3,000 MTCO₂e, consistent with the Tier 3 threshold for residential projects. The Project is also consistent with the GPU and existing Specific Plan, meaning the Project is expected to achieve per capita thresholds for the year 2040 as established by SB 32. Therefore, impacts associated with the generation of greenhouse gases will be less than significant.



b) Less than Significant. Buildout of the Project will result in emissions that are consistent with the communitywide per capita emissions threshold set forth in the General Plan, as established by AB 32/SB 32. The City's GPU supports and is consistent with the CARB 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan and SCAG's 2020 RTP/SCS. All components of construction and operation, including equipment, fuels, materials, and management practices, would be subject to the CAP, GPU policies, and current SCAQMD rules and regulations related to greenhouse gases, as discussed above. Based on these findings, the Proposed Project will not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation with the purpose of reducing GHG emissions and impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; State Water Resources Control Board, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/>, accessed on September 1, 2021; California Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=desert+hot+springs>, accessed September 21, 2021.

Setting

There are only a few identified hazardous/toxic material generators In the City of Desert Hot Springs and these are associated with commercial, quasi-industrial and medical operations which have the potential to be associated with accidental spills, purposeful illegal dumping, air emissions, and other uncontrolled discharges into the environment. Currently, there are several potentially hazardous waste users that are generally restricted to the “small quantity generators.” These include medical clinics and facilities, gasoline service stations, equipment and fuel storage yards, and waste haulers. The City of Desert Hot Springs is responsible for coordinating with the appropriate county and state agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup.



“GeoTracker” is the State Water Resources Control Board’s Internet-accessible database system used by the State Board, regional boards, and local agencies to track and archive compliance data from authorized or unauthorized discharges of waste to land, or unauthorized releases of hazardous substances from underground storage tanks. The GeoTracker online database provides access to statewide environmental data and tracks regulatory data for the following types of sites:

1. Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) cleanup sites
2. Cleanup Program Sites (CPS, also known as Site Cleanups [SC] and formerly known as Spills, Leaks, Investigations, and Cleanups [SLIC] sites)
3. Military sites (including Military UST sites, Military Privatized sites, and Military Cleanup sites [formerly known as Department of Defense (DOD) non-UST])
4. Land Disposal sites (Landfills, Surface Impoundments, Waste Piles, Land Treatment Units, Mining Units)
5. Permitted Underground Storage Tank (UST) facilities (Note: Permitted UST information is now being maintained by California Environmental Reporting System (CERS) (<http://cers.calepa.ca.gov/>); information in GeoTracker related to Permitted USTs is no longer current)
6. Composting Operations
7. Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) sites
8. Confined Animal / Concentrated Animal Feed Lots facilities
9. Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) sites
10. Oil and Gas Monitoring sites (Aquifer Exemption, Produced Water Ponds, Underground Injection Control, Well Stimulation Projects)

According to GeoTracker, there are no hazardous materials sites within the Project site and vicinity.

EnviroStor is the Department of Toxic Substances Control’s data management system for tracking the department’s cleanup, permitting, enforcement and investigation efforts at hazardous waste facilities and sites with known contamination or sites where there may be reasons to investigate further. According to EnviroStor, there are no hazardous materials sites within the Project site or the vicinity.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project will result in the development of a 76 home gated residential community on 17.83± acres on largely undisturbed desert lands and surrounded primarily by single-family development, and on the west by vacant lands designated for future mixed-use commercial development. Construction of the Project will involve grading and excavation equipment, water and haul trucks, concrete and other delivery vehicles and miscellaneous cars and trucks. A staging area will be identified and equipment storage and maintenance will be within a secured area of the site. Potentially hazardous materials to be used during construction include gasoline and diesel fuels, as well as other petroleum-based lubricants and materials. Post-construction, potentially hazardous materials are expected to be limited to household, garden and pool chemicals and materials.

In addition, State and federal laws (e.g. the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations implemented by Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations) also impose strict regulation for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. The Project will be subject to these state, federal, and local laws and regulations during construction and operation.

Overall, compliance with all applicable laws and regulations during Project construction and the community’s operation as a residential neighborhood would reduce the potential impacts associated with the routine transport, use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials to less than significant levels. No mitigation is required.

c) Less Than Significant. The Project has a less than significant potential to emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste during or following construction of the subject single-family community. The nearest school is the Bubbling Wells Elementary School, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site. No school is located within ¼ mile of the site. No impact is anticipated.



d) No Impact. No impact is anticipated because the Project site is not included in a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

e) No Impact. The Palm Springs International Airport is located approximately 5.9 miles south of the subject property. The subject site is not located within the boundaries of the airport land use compatibility plan. The site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. The Project will not result in safety hazards for people living or working in the area. No impact is anticipated.

f) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project will not alter the existing circulation pattern in the Project area or adversely impact evacuation plans. The Project will result in the buildout of the west right-of-way of Avenida Descanso and partial or complete construction of Camino Campesino on the north, which will improve area connectivity to the Palm Drive major arterial and emergency access. Impacts to emergency access will be less than significant.

g) No Impact. The Project site is not located in a wildlands area and surrounding vacant lands are very sparsely vegetated with creosote scrub. The site and vicinity are not within or near a wildland fire hazard zone, and are thus not susceptible to wildfires. Therefore, the proposed Project will not expose people or structures to significant risks associated with wildland fires. No Project related impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: Draft City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, February 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Draft EIR, February 2020; "County of Riverside Environmental Impact Report No. 521 Public Review Draft, February 2015; Mission Springs Water District 2015 Urban Water Management Plan, June 20, 2016; New Wastewater Plant Addresses Development/Growth; <https://www.mswd.org/article.aspx?id=11>; accessed April 2020; Final - Preliminary Design Report- Interstate 10 and Indian Avenue Area-Sewer System," prepared by Mission Springs Water District in 2012; Preliminary Hydrology and Drainage Report for TTM No. 38200/Rancho Descanso, prepared by Heitec Consulting, August 2, 2021.

Setting

Domestic Water

The Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) provides domestic water to the Project site. The District's water service area consists of 135 square miles. The District's water supply source is 100 percent groundwater produced from District-owned and operated wells. The District provides water service to approximately 37,600 people in their water



service area (Mission Springs Water District 2015 Urban Water Management Plan). The District also provides sewer service to approximately 26,000 people in Desert Hot Springs, Desert Crest Country Club and Dillon Mobile Home Park.

MSWD's water supply comes from groundwater produced from subbasins within the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, which underlies the District's water service area. MSWD primarily produces groundwater from the Mission Creek Subbasin via 10 active wells. To a lesser extent, the District also produces groundwater from the San Geronio Pass Subbasin via four active wells; and from the Garnet Hill Subbasin via one active well.

The existing MSWD distribution system consists of three independent water systems: 1) Desert Hot Springs and surrounding area system, 2) Palm Springs Crest System, and 3) West Palm Springs Village System.

As development within the MSWD service area occurred, numerous storage tanks were constructed at varying elevations to provide adequate pressure to its various service areas. The MSWD system, inclusive of all three distribution systems, has approximately 1.26 million linear feet of pipeline with total storage capacity of 19.65 million gallons (MG) (Mission Springs Water District 2015 Urban Water Management Plan).

Wastewater Treatment

MSWD also provides wastewater collection and treatment services to the City of Desert Hot Springs. The existing wastewater collection system for the water service area consists of a network of approximately 89 miles of sewers, which are concentrated in the central portion of the City where the majority of the populace and businesses reside.

MSWD has an ongoing program to connect existing residences currently on septic systems to sewer collectors that have been constructed or are in the process of being constructed. Since 2005, 4,215 parcels have been converted from septic to sewer service for a total of 7,700 parcels. An additional of 695 parcels was converted in 2016 from septic to sewer service. MSWD operates two wastewater treatment plants serving 9,100 connections and a population of approximately 20,400. The Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant (Horton WWTP), located on Verbena Drive about a half mile south

of Two Bunch Palms Trail, has a capacity of 2.3 million gallons per day (mgd). The Desert Crest Wastewater Treatment Plant, located about a half mile southeast of the intersection of Dillon Road and Long Canyon Road, has a capacity of 0.18 mgd and serves a country club development and mobile home park.

MSWD is planning to develop a new West Valley Water Treatment Plant (WVWTP) in the City, which will be located near I-10. The I-10 and Indian Avenue area will ultimately be served by this new regional wastewater treatment facility. According to MSWD, the first phase of the plant will process about 1.5 million gallons of wastewater per day and will include the construction of a collection system to bring flows from areas now utilizing septic tanks. The District currently does not have recycled water use within their service area, however, there are plans to use recycled water for the irrigation of golf courses, parks, medians and greenbelts upon operation of the WVWTP with tertiary treatment facilities.

The Project site is located 1,600± feet south of the Horton plant, to which wastewater generated by the proposed Project will be conveyed for treatment. There is an existing 8-inch VCP sewer line in the Avenida Descanso right-of-way along the east side of the subject property.

Flood Control/Drainages

The Mission Creek, Big and Little Morongo Creeks, Blind Creek, and Long Creek are the main drainages in the City. These drainages are substantial in area and discharge onto sloping alluvial fans and can generate high velocities. The Riverside County Flood Control District is responsible for the management of regional drainages within and in the vicinity of Desert Hot Springs, including rivers, major streams and their tributaries, and areas of significant sheet flooding. The District is empowered with broad management functions, including flood control planning and construction of drainage improvements for regional flood control facilities, as well as watershed and watercourse protection related to those facilities (General Plan – Flooding and Hydrology Element).

The Project site is located in a FEMA-designated 500-year flood plain with a 0.2% annual chance of flooding. The City implements standard requirements for the retention of storm flows, and participates in the National Pollution



Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to protect surface waters from pollution. Development projects must retain the increase in runoff from and 100-year storm flow on site.

Surface Water Quality

The surface water quality of regional surface waters is largely dependent upon land uses that affect runoff, such as agriculture, urban development, and industrial land uses. Runoff from storm water and agricultural irrigation can transport pollutants that collect on the ground surface and affect water quality of receiving streams, rivers, and channels. Tributary flood flows are not expected to traverse the subject property. The planned development will rely mostly on desert landscaping and will be bounded by a 6-foot decorative masonry wall.

Regional Water Supplies

The Regional Urban Water Management Plan 2020 Update demonstrates that the District and its water management partners has groundwater resources and sources of groundwater re-use and recharge sufficient to serve additional development in the Plan service area. Regionally, the 2040 projected retail water supply is 230,600 acre-feet.

The annual water demand at Project buildout is approximately 28.1 acre-feet, which is approximately 0.001% of the 2040 projected retail water supply. The proposed Project is consistent with the General Plan designation in which it occurs. This General Plan designation was used by MSWD to determine water demand for the future. Therefore, the Project's water demand is consistent with MSWD projections for future water needs in the area.

The Project area is located in the Mission Creek Subbasin of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is not adjudicated, rather it is jointly managed by CVWD and Desert Water Agency (DWA) under the terms of the 1976 Water Management Agreement. According to the 2020 Regional UWMP, Mission Creek Subbasin has been in overdraft for many years. After two decades of groundwater recharge and source substitution by CVWD and collaborating agencies, Mission Creek Subbasin has exhibited increased storage despite the drought.

Managers are averting overdraft conditions in the Mission Creek Subbasin through groundwater replenishment with Metropolitan imported water (artificial recharge). A replenishment program using Metropolitan State Water Project SWP exchange water was established for the Mission Creek Subbasin with recharge commencing in 2003. The existing replenishment program is effectively increasing water levels and is expected to stabilize or reverse the water level decline. Currently, MSWD, DWA and CVWD jointly manage the Mission Creek subbasin under the terms of the Mission Creek Settlement Agreement (December, 2004). This agreement and the 2003 Mission Creek Groundwater Replenishment Agreement between CVWD and DWA specify that the available SWP water will be allocated between the Mission Creek and Whitewater River Subbasins in proportion to the amount of water produced or diverted from each subbasin during the preceding year. In 2015, production from the Mission Creek Subbasin was about 7 percent of the combined production from these two subbasins.

Description of Impacts

a, e) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project site is located in the Whitewater River watershed. All water providers in the watershed are required to comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) standards for the protection of water quality, including the preparation of site-specific Water Quality Management Plans for surface waters. MSWD is required to meet water quality requirements in its production and delivery of domestic water. Installation of water lines on the Project site will comply with MSWD and RWQCB standards for domestic water conveyance.

The proposed Project will consist of a 76-lot single-family subdivision with private streets and bounded by a masonry wall. The conditions of approval and Project design features will require the Project to comply with all applicable sanitary sewer system connection requirements. A Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) per the Colorado River Basin Regional Board Order No. R7-2008-0001 will also be prepared for this Project. To minimize the pollutant load associated with urban runoff, the Project will be required to comply with NPDES regulations, including a SWPPP. The imposition of conditions of approval, and local and state requirements will ensure that the proposed Project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or conflict with any water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, a less than significant impact is expected.



- b) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will require water for domestic residential use by 76 future single-family homes and associated landscape irrigation. The per capital water demand figure of 331 gallons per person per day (2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan) to calculate water demand that could result from buildout of the Project. Based on unit count and related factors, and assuming an average household size of three (3) persons, it is estimated that Project-wide water demand will be approximately 25,156 gallons per day or 28.1 acre-feet per year. This calculation is inclusive of on-site landscape demand and the aggregation of indirect demand (employers, schools, services, etc.) generated by household formation. Actual per household demand is expected to be less given stringent water conservation measures that have been put into place, including requirements for native desert and other drought-tolerant landscaping. Impacts to local and regional groundwater supplies in the near and long-term is expected to be less than significant.
- c, i-iv) Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject site is located on a large alluvial fan that gentle slopes to the south and southeast. There are no obvious patterns of on-site or tributary off-site flows traversing the site. No major drainages pass near the site. Site development will involve the application of best management practices to control runoff and avoid excessive erosion of siltation on site or downstream. The Project will be a walled and gated community with an on-site stormwater retention basin that will retain excessive flows on site. No runoff will be discharged that would exceed the capacity city of nearby drainage or flood control facilities or generate additional sources of polluted runoff. There are no substantial tributary flows entering or passing through the subject property. The Project site is located in a FEMA Flood Zone X, which is subject to 0.2 percent annual chance of flooding and is not designated a special flood hazard area. Public street improvements will include concrete curb and gutter that will control and convey street runoff. The proposed Project will neither impede or redirect flood flows. Therefore impacts will be less than significant.
- d) No Impact.** The Project site is located inland, well outside of any tsunami zones. There are no water storage reservoirs or other water bodies in the Project area, and therefore, no seiche would occur. The proposed site is not located in the Wide Canyon Dam inundation area (General Plan Figure SN-4) and will not be subject to any hazard from dam failure. Therefore, potential impacts related to release of pollutants due to project inundation will be less than significant.
- e) No Impact.** The subject property is not located in proximity of any facilities that are part of a water quality control plan nor would it affect, obstruct or conflict with any sustainable groundwater management plan?

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Site Survey.



Setting

The subject lands are designated “Specific Plan” on both the General Plan Land Use Map and the City Zoning Map. An existing Specific Plan (Aventura Palms II) is established on the subject property, which will be rescinded and superseded by the subject Rancho Descanso Specific Plan. The proposed Project is on a contiguous holding and its development will not separate, isolate or divide any community or neighborhood. The proposed Project is consistent with the City General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and will not cause any conflicts with these or other land use policies affecting the subject property.

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **No Impact.** The Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. It is self-contained and a contiguous holding the development of which will not divide any neighborhood or community. Therefore, the Project will have no impact of this nature.
- b) **No Impact.** The subject lands are designated “Specific Plan” on both the General Plan Land Use Map and the City Zoning Map. An existing Specific Plan (Aventura Palms II) is established on the subject property, which will be rescinded and superseded by the subject Rancho Descanso Specific Plan.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?
- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Mineral Land Classifications: Aggregate Materials in the Palm Springs Production-consumption Region, Riverside County, California. Special Report 159 (SR 159) by California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology.

Setting

In the Coachella Valley, mineral resources are largely limited to aggregates, such as sand, gravel, and crushed stone. These are major components of concrete, plaster, stucco, road base and fill, which are essential to the construction industry. The Palm Springs Production-Consumption (P-C) Region is a 631 square mile area in the Coachella Valley that is heavily mined for aggregate. According to the California Geological Survey, the Palm Springs P-C Region has 30,072 acres classified as lands where significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. The Palm Springs region contains 3.2± billion tons of aggregate resources.

According to California Geological Survey Special Report 198, the average local annual per capita consumption rate for aggregate in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region is 9.6 tons. While the Coachella Valley has an abundant, high-quality local supply of PCC-grade aggregate, a desirable commodity for development markets,



transportation costs are a major component affecting cost competitiveness. Given the widespread deposition of aggregate materials in southern California, demand for local resources is expected to remain largely local. The reserves are expected to meet local demand and provide adequate supply at current rates of consumption through the year 2038.

The sand and gravel deposits within the City are an important economic resource, used for road base and similar applications. Other mineral deposits occurring in the region include copper, limestone, specialty sands, and tungsten. These deposits are limited to rocky outcroppings occurring in the Little San Bernardino Mountains and have not been exploited.

The Project site is designated as Specific Plan in the General Plan Land Use Map. No existing sand or gravel operations occur in the vicinity of the Project site. Surrounding lands are largely in urban development and the nearest minable drainage is approximately 067 miles to the west in the Mission Creek/Morongongo Wash drainage.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) No Impact. The City of Desert Hot Springs occurs primarily on alluvial fans, which are sand and gravel deposits discharged by the surrounding canyons. Sand and gravel are often used as road bases and other foundation materials. Per the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines classification, the Project site is located in MRZ-3, which indicates areas containing known or inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. There are no other state-designated Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) or permitted mining operations in the vicinity of the Project site (General Plan Figure OS-4). The Project site is located in a sparsely developed area designated for industrial and residential development, and is not zoned for mineral resource extraction. No impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, Volume 1: Policy Document, October 14, 2004; Rancho Descanso Noise Impact Analysis, prepared by Urban Crossroads, Inc September 20, 2021.

Setting

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), the main sources of noise include road traffic, aircraft, railroads, construction, industry, noise in buildings, and consumer products (EPA Clean Air Act Title IV - Noise Pollution). Primary sources of noise in the City include traffic on major roadways. The City has established goals, policies, and programs to limit and reduce the effects of noise intrusion on sensitive land uses and to set acceptable noise levels for varying types of land uses. As part of the development of the Noise Element of the General Plan, noise level measurements were collected at various locations throughout the City to help characterize noise conditions and to set standards for normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, and generally unacceptable noise levels (Table SN-2; General Plan).

The Project site is located approximately 350 feet east of the six-lane Palm Drive arterial, which is the primary access to the City from US Interstate-10. It is bounded on the east by the existing and partially built-out Avenida Descanso and on the north by the future Camino Campesino local roadway. A noise study was prepared for this Project and noise monitoring was conducted at five locations, including on the west side of Palm Drive, and the north, south and east boundaries of the subject property. Impact significance criteria are set forth in the table below.



Analysis	Condition(s)	Significance Criteria	
		Daytime	Nighttime
On-Site Traffic	Exterior Noise Level Criteria ¹	65 dBA CNEL	
	Interior Noise Level Standard ²	45 dBA CNEL	
Construction	Noise Level Threshold ³	80 dBA L _{eq}	
	Vibration Level Threshold ⁴	0.3 PPV (in/sec)	

¹ City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan Noise and Safety Element.

² California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Building Standards Administrative Code, Part 2.

³ Federal Transit Administration, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual.

⁴ Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Manual.

"Daytime" = 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; "Nighttime" = 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Construction Noise

The potential impacts resulting from the short-term construction activities associated with the development of the Project were also evaluated. According to the Municipal Code Section 9.04.030, noise associated with any construction, erection, alteration, or repair, addition to or improvement of any building, structure, road or improvement to realty between the hours of 5:00 p.m. of each day and 7:00 a.m. of the next day, except when daylight savings time is in effect. During such time as daylight savings time is in effect in the City, no such activities are permitted between the hours of 6:00 p.m. of each day and 6:00 a.m. of the next day.

In addition, neither the General Plan or Municipal Code establish numeric maximum acceptable construction source noise levels at potentially affected receivers for CEQA analysis purposes. Therefore, a numerical construction threshold based on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* was used for analysis of daytime construction impacts. The FTA considers a daytime exterior construction noise level of 80 dBA L_{eq} as a reasonable threshold for noise sensitive residential land use.

Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project site is currently undeveloped. The main noise source is vehicular traffic from nearby roadways (Palm Drive, Avenida Descanso). The nearest existing sensitive receptors are single-family homes to the north, south and east. Palm Drive has the highest existing noise levels and has been modeled to calculate noise levels in 2040.

To satisfy the City of Desert Hot Springs exterior noise level standards for residential land use, the construction of the planned minimum 6-foot-high noise barrier is required for the private outdoor living area (backyards) of units closest to Palm Drive, Camino Campesino and Ave Descanso. With the planned noise barriers the future exterior noise levels will range from 54.4 to 60.2 dBA CNEL. This noise analysis shows that the planned noise barrier will satisfy the City of Desert Hot Springs 65 dBA CNEL exterior noise level standards for residential land use.

The proposed noise control barriers shall be constructed so that the top of each wall and/or berm combination extends to the planned height above the pad elevation of the lot it is shielding. When the road is elevated above the pad elevation, the barrier shall extend to the recommended height above the highest point between the residential home and the road. The barrier will be comprised of concrete masonry block and will provide no decorative cutouts or line-of-sight openings between shielded areas and the roadways.

The impacts associated with construction noise were also modeled and evaluated, analysing a wide range of construction equipment types, including grader and compactors. Based on this modeled analysis and as measured 50 feet from the noise source, none of the construction activities will generate sustained noise levels in excess of 80 dBA. Therefore, there will be neither a substantial temporary nor permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project that would exceed of standards established in the City General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

b) Less Than Significant Impact. Ground-borne vibration and/or ground-borne noise may be produced during construction of the proposed Project. The human threshold of perception for vibration is 0.0018 inches/second, and Caltrans set significant thresholds of 0.3 inches/second PPV. Construction of the proposed Project would not necessitate the use of pile drivers, which are known to generate substantial construction vibration levels. The



highest degree of ground-borne vibration would be generated by large bulldozers and during the paving phase from the operation of a vibratory roller.

Based on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) data, vibration velocities from vibratory roller operations are estimated to be approximately 0.1980 inches/second PPV at 26 feet from the source of activity. Therefore, the vibration levels beyond a 26-foot distance from the construction site would be below the Caltrans threshold for human annoyance and impact on structures. The nearest sensitive receptor is a single-family dwelling located at least 60 feet north of the Project; therefore, no construction would occur within 26 feet of the dwelling. As such, no structure or people in the Project vicinity would experience levels of ground-borne vibration or noise above the Caltrans thresholds. Construction-related impacts will be temporary and only occur during the less sensitive daytime hours. Long-term operation of the project is not expected to generate ground-borne vibrations or noise. Overall, impacts would be less than significant regarding generation of ground-borne vibration and noise.

c) No Impact. The Palm Springs International Airport is located approximately 5.9 miles south of the subject property. The site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip and outside of existing and modeled future airport noise contours. Therefore, no impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures would be required.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; CA Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, Report E-5: Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, January 1, 2011-2021; 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, adopted September 3, 2020.

Setting

As of 2021, the City has a population of 30,086, which is projected to grow to 61,000 by 2045. The City is composed of a mix of single- and multi-family residential units, but the majority of housing units are single-family units. Commercial activity is concentrated along Palm Drive in the City’s core. Of the estimated 11,702 dwelling units in the City, approximately 7,433 or 63% are single-family homes (CA Dept. of Finance 2021 Estimates). The proposed project will add 76 single-family homes or an additional 1% of single-family homes to the City’s housing stock. These will units are expected to help the City meet its need for moderate income housing.



Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project will increase the City’s stock of single-family homes by 1%. While supplying new housing, some of this development may modestly induce further development in the City, although this effect is considered to be less than significant since the Project in and of itself is modest in scale and will have limited effect on employment. For the large part, existing roads and utilities will serve the project site and no new utility extensions are needed to serve the Project. Therefore the Projects effects will be less than significant.

b) No Impact. No structures, housing or persons will be displaced as a result of the Project, the subject property being vacant.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Final EIR, May 2020; City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2013).

Setting

Fire Protection: Riverside County Fire Department is responsible for fire protection within the City. The Project site is not located within a state responsibility area. The City contracts for fire protection and prevention services with the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) under contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Riverside County Fire Department operates two fire stations: Station 36 (11535 Karen Avenue) and Station 37 (65958 Pierson Boulevard) in Desert Hot Springs. The nearest fire station is Station #37 at 65958 Pierson



Boulevard, approximately 2.3 miles northwest of the subject property. The subject property lies within or close to a five minute response time from Station 37.

Police Protection: The City Police Station is located at 65950 Pierson Boulevard, approximately 2.3 miles northwest of the subject property, and is staffed full-time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All police emergency response calls are dispatched from this station. The Department also maintains mutual aid agreements with the California Highway Patrol, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, and all other law enforcement agencies in Riverside County.

Schools: The City and the Project site are located within the boundaries of the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD). There are five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school, as well as the Wenzlaff Education Center, a continuation school, within the City. The nearest school is the Bubbling Wells Elementary School, approximately 0.6 miles northeast of the Project site.

Parks: According to the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan (Table HW-1), a total of 71.31 acres are dedicated for parks. The City prepared its Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2013 to guide the City's delivery of parks and recreation facilities and services for 10 years (2013 to 2023). The four types of parks serving the Desert Hot Springs area are community, neighborhood, and mini parks, as well as special use parks. Currently, approximately 39.31 acres of land is developed as parks. The nearest parks to the Project site are Mission Springs Park and Desert Hot Springs Soccer Park, both located approximately 1,600 feet north of the subject property.

Discussion of Impacts

Fire Protection:

Less Than Significant Impact. The development of the Project will generate a limited increase the demand on fire service in the City. The subject 76 single-family homes will be of new construction applying the latest in fire safety standards. According to the Final EIR to the City's General Plan, the Riverside County Fire Department has a trigger of 2000 dwelling units for a fire station; although new developments, for example, near an existing fire station would not require the construction or expansion of facilities. Given the proximity of the nearest fire station, fire personnel should be able to reach the site within the target five-minute response time. Emergency access will be provided to the property via an emergency access drive to be located at the southeast corner of the site and connected to Avenida Descanso. The existing public roadway network will be somewhat enhanced with at least the partial construction of Camino Campesino west of Avenida Descanso and from which the residents will take access. Although the Project will be walled and gated, two Knox Box devices will be installed at each gate in accordance with the requirements of the City Fire Marshall. The Fire Department will review the Project site plan to ensure it meets applicable fire standards and regulations. No construction of new or expanded fire services or facilities are required for the proposed Project. Project-related fire protection impacts will be less than significant.

Police Protection:

Less Than Significant Impact. Police personnel will be able to access the site using Palm Drive, Avenida Aventura, Avenida Descanso and the future Camino Campesino. According to the Final EIR to the City's General Plan, the law enforcement standard is 1.5 sworn officers for every 1,000 residents, consistent with General Plan Policy SN-2.2 Staff Ratio. As of 2019, the Police Department provided 1.3 sworn officers for every 1,000 residents. The Police Department staffing will need to expand over time to continue to meet the changing needs of the growing Desert Hot Springs community. However, the ultimate development of the site will result in a limited and less than significant increase in demand for police services and will generate a permanent population of 228 persons or less. Less than significant impact is anticipated.

Schools:

No Impact. The Project will be required to pay the State mandated school fees in place at the time that building permits are secured. These fees are designed to offset the impacts of new development, and their associated employees, on schools. The proposed Project will not make a significant contribution to the existing student population, therefore, will have a less than significant impact on schools.



Parks/ Other Public Facilities:

No Impact. Project buildout is expected to have a modest and less than significant impact on local and/or regional parks. The Project consists of 76 single-family homes in a gated community with private park lands. The site is also in easy walking distance of the Mission Springs Park and Desert Hot Springs Soccer Park. The site is also located in proximity to existing and planned trails, including the existing Long Canyon and Kim Nicol Trails to the northeast and southeast, respectively. The Project will also pay development impact fees that will help to fund existing and future parks. Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant impact on parks.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XVI. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Project Plans and Draft TTM 38200.

Setting

The City of Desert Hot Springs is currently operating three mini parks (Veteran’s Memorial Park, Hot Springs Park, and Constitution Park), three neighborhood parks (Guy J. Tedesco Park, Wardman Park, and Rotary Park), one community park (Mission Springs Park), and four special use centers (Carl May Community Center, Henry V. Lozano Community Center, Cabot's Pueblo Museum, and Community Health & Wellness Center) on 39.31 acres.

For future development within the City, park acreage standards are generally established through an acreage requirement per 1,000 residents. The Subdivision Map Act and the Quimby Act (Section 66477 of the Govt. Code) relating to parkland dedication allows a city or town to adopt a local ordinance establishing a citywide park standard and the requirement of parkland dedication, or fair market value in-lieu fees, when there is residential development. According to the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan (Table HW-1), a total of 71.31 acres are dedicated for parks. The City prepared its Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2013 to guide the City’s delivery of parks and recreation facilities and services for 10 years (2013 to 2023). The four types of parks serving the Desert Hot Springs area are community, neighborhood, and mini parks, as well as special use parks. Currently, approximately 39.31 acres of land is developed as parks. The nearest parks to the Project site are Mission Springs Park and Desert Hot Springs Soccer Park, both located approximately 1,600 feet north of the subject property.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) Less Than Significant. Project buildout is expected to have a modest and less than significant impact on local and/or regional parks. The Project consists of 76 single-family homes in a gated community with private park



lands. The site is also in easy walking distance of the Mission Springs Park and Desert Hot Springs Soccer Park. The site is also located in proximity to existing and planned trails, including the existing Long Canyon and Kim Nicol Trails to the northeast and southeast, respectively. The Project will also pay development impact fees that will help to fund existing and future parks. Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant impact on parks. No additional parks and other recreational facilities are required to accommodate the employees. Impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Final EIR, May 2020; Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition; Rancho Descanso Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by Trames Solutions, Inc., 8.23.21

Setting

The Project site is located in the City of Desert Hot Springs where the roadway network is comprised of a hierarchy of streets that provide access to and through the City. All roadways in the City are classified into seven roadway types (Urban Arterial, Primary I, Primary II, Secondary I, Secondary II, Collector, and Local Collector streets). The City’s acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for both roadway segments and intersection operations is LOS D or better during peak hour periods. Most area roadways and intersections currently operate at LOS D or better.

Roadways that could be affected by the proposed Project include the currently unimproved Camino Campesino, Avenida Campesino, Avenida Aventura and Palm Drive. Four adjacent and nearby intersections have been analysed as part of the traffic impact analysis prepared for this project, which is included in Appendix D of this IS. They include Palm Drive intersections with Camino Aventura, Camino Campesino and Camino Campanero; and the Project entry planned on Camino Campesino. Currently, the subject roadways and intersections are operating at Levels of Service of B or better.



Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project is consistent with the City General Plan Land Use and Zoning designations of “Specific Plan”. The Amendment No. 1 Specific Plan project constitutes a 20%± reduction in the number of dwelling units compared to the previously approved Specific plan which is currently in effect. The existing land use designations and previously approved project were established at the time of traffic impact analysis was prepared for the 2020 General Plan update. The proposed Project is consistent with the General Plan Circulation Element in terms of traffic generated, access to transit and other multi-modal facilities, some of which are planned but have not yet been developed. In summary, the proposed Project will not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the City or regional circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and impacts will be less than significant.

b) Less Than Significant Impact. According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) requires amendments to the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts.⁵ Particularly within areas served by transit, those alternative criteria must “promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.” (Public Resources Code Section 21099(b)(1).) Measurements of transportation impacts may include “vehicle miles traveled, vehicle miles traveled per capita, automobile trip generation rates, or automobile trips generated.” CEQA Guidelines were amended to require all lead agencies to adopt vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a replacement for automobile delay-based level of service (LOS) for identifying transportation impacts. This statewide mandate went into effect July 1, 2020.

Regulations or thresholds pertaining to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the reduction of GHG emissions have not been adopted by the City of Desert Hot Springs. Therefore, the following Project VMT analysis is based on the adopted County of Riverside’s Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service & Vehicle Miles Traveled (December 2020), which the City utilizes for this analysis.

The Riverside County’s VMT Guidelines describe specific screening criteria based on the location/project type that can be used to identify when a proposed land use project is anticipated to result in a less than significant impact without conducting a more detailed project level VMT analysis. A land use project need only meet one of the screening thresholds to result in a less than significant impact:

- Small Projects, which includes General Light Industrial buildings with area less than or equal to 179,000 SF
- Projects Near High Quality Transit
- Low VMT Area

The Project proposes development of a gated 76-unit single-family subdivision on 17.83± acres at a location 350 feet east of the Palm Drive arterial roadway and within one mile of elementary and middle schools, and numerous services and recreational facilities. The proposed residential uses are consistent with the City’s General Plan Specific Plan designation and results in a ±22% reduction in density and related trips and VMTs. Therefore, the Project meets the threshold of Small Projects in the County VMT guidelines and can be determined to have less than significant impacts on circulation. The Project will not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

Alternative Transportation

There are currently no bike lanes, transit routes, or other multi-modal facilities within the Project area; however, bicycle facilities are planned along Dillon Road and 15th Avenue in the General Plan (Figure MI-5). The CV Link multi-modal pathway will come within 0.50 miles of the Project site. It will extend north on Palm Drive to Dillon Road and then proceed west to the Morongo Wash/Mission Creek drainage where it will continue north along these drainages.

⁵ Transportation Impacts (SB 743) by Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), <http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/sb-743/>, accessed September 2021.



SunLine Transit Agency provides bus transit services to the Coachella Valley, including the City of Desert Hot Springs. There are established bus routes to the east of the Project area on Palm Drive, and future bus routes are planned in the Project area. There is a SunLine bus stop located approximately 500 feet southwest of the Project site on Palm Drive. Residents and visitors will have access to alternative transportation, and the impacts are expected to be less than significant.

d) No Impact. The Project site is currently accessed via Avenida Descanso and Camino Aventura. Access to the area will be improved by the at least partial development of Camino Campesino which bounds the Project site on the north and is currently unimproved and will ultimately connect to Palm Drive. These roadways will provide emergency access to the proposed Project. The Project will be developed in accordance with City design guidelines and will not create a substantial increase in hazards due to a design feature. The Project’s access points will be located with adequate sight distances and driveway stacking will be constructed to City standards. Project-generated traffic will be consistent with existing and projected traffic in the area. No Project-related impact is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Final EIR, May 2020; Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, TTM 38200, City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, California, prepared by CRM TECH, September 30, 2021.

Setting

As discussed in the Section V, Cultural Resources, the City of Desert Hot Springs is located in the Coachella Valley where the most recent identifiable native culture to evolve is the Desert Cahuilla. The oldest cultural resources reported in the city are from the “Paleo-Indian Period” which dates back to at least 11,000 B.C.

According to the City’s General Plan, prehistoric resources may occur in the vicinity of fault-related mesquite and palms, as well as resources associated with mountain washes, streams and canyons. The Mission Creek and Banning fault zones should be considered sensitive potential resources areas. Mesquite thickets that generally occur in dune areas are also sensitive areas since mesquite and screwbean pods were staples in the diet of the region’s Cahuilla Indians. These resources are sparsely distributed within the City boundaries.

Discussion of Impacts

a i, ii) Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above in Section V, Cultural Resources, no historical or archaeological resources are known to occur on the subject property or the vicinity, nor are any expected because the property is not located in any area identified to be sensitive for the occurrence of cultural resource sensitivity. An intensive site survey was conducted on the subject property, which did not encounter either significant historical or archaeological resources.

The Project archaeologists concluded that the Project site does not contain any tribal cultural resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), as confirmed by the City of Desert Hot Springs as the lead agency. However, excavation at the site could extend to 4 feet deep, which could result in uncovering of buried resources. During grading, any discovered cultural resources would be qualified as a resource defined under Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k).

The City conducted Tribal Consultation in conformance with the AB 52 requirements and contacted 14 tribes in writing. As of October 5, 2021, no responses have been received. Once the consultation concludes, any requests and input from consultation will be included in conditions of approval and/or added to this Initial Study prior to completion of the environmental review process.

To protect potential tribal cultural resources, Mitigation Measure V-1 is included in Section V Cultural Resources to assure protection of resources uncovered during construction. With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to tribal cultural resources would remain less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:
See Section V. V-1.

Monitoring:
See Section V. V-A.



XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020, Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Final EIR, May 2020; CalRecycle <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>; Accessed September 2021; Desert Valley Disposal Inc. (DVD), <http://www.desertvalleydisposal.com>; Accessed September 2021.

Setting

Domestic Water

The Project site is located within the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) service area for domestic water. The District's primary water source is groundwater extracted through a system of wells from the Mission Creek Subbasin. In addition to groundwater, MSWD relies on imported water brought to the region by regional canals, which is stored or recharged into the Mission Creek aquifer at basins to the northwest and adjacent to the Mission Creek Wash. MSWD owns and operates the water distribution system within its service area, which is generally located under existing streets in the public right-of-way. The Project will connect to the existing water line within Avenida Descanso in the Project vicinity. In the most recent Urban Water Management Plan (2015 Update), a more intense residential land use was approved and was considered in the water demand estimates for the City and the MSWD service area. The proposed Project represents a net ±22% reduction in the number of residences, which is expected to result in a proportionate water demand reduction. Therefore, it is demonstrated that the District has available, and can supply in the future, sufficient water to serve additional development in its service area.



Wastewater Treatment

The Project site is located within the MSWD sanitary sewer district, which has wastewater collection facilities located in the Avenida Descanso right-of-way and to which the proposed Project will connect. According to the City General Plan, MSWD has an ongoing program to connect existing residences currently on septic systems to sewer collectors that have been constructed or are in the process of being constructed.

The MSWD Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant (Horton WWTP), located on Verbena Drive about 2,000 feet north of the Project site, has a capacity of 2.3 million gallons per day. The Desert Crest Wastewater Treatment Plant, located about one-half mile southeast of the intersection of Dillon Road and Long Canyon Road, has a capacity of 0.18 million gallons/day and serves a country club development and mobile home park. The Horton plant will serve the Project site. Current wastewater facilities are not adequate to serve the anticipated growth in the City. To provide for the type and scale of development planned in the City, substantial expansion of wastewater facilities is planned.

Storm Water Management

Storm water drainage infrastructure within the City consists of a network of natural and improved streams, storm drains, storm channels, and catch basins intended to manage stormwater that flows into the Whitewater River. The Project site is located in a FEMA Flood Zone X, which represents 0.02 percent annual chance flood (500-year flood hazard) and is not a special flood hazard area. The Project area is subject to City requirements relating to flood control. The City implements standard requirements for the retention of storm flows, and participates in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to protect surface waters from pollution. Development projects must retain the incremental runoff from the 100-year storm flow on site. See discussion in Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Solid Waste

Desert Valley Disposal, Inc. (DVD) provides solid waste disposal through a franchise agreement with the City. DVD is the only authorized, franchised waste collection hauler for the City. Services include complete residential, commercial and roll-off trash disposal. Trash and recycled materials are collected from customers in the City and transported to the Lambs Canyon Landfill, located at 16411 Lamb Canyon Road, Beaumont. Lambs Canyon Landfill is operated by the County of Riverside.

Utility Providers

The Project area is currently served by the following utilities and service providers:

Electricity: Southern California Edison
Gas: Southern California Gas Company
Telephone: Frontier
Cable: Spectrum

Discussion of Impacts

a & c) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project area is currently served by existing water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication services. The proposed Project will require connection to the MSWD's sewage collection system, which includes an 8-inch line within the Avenida Descanso right-of-way (see TTM No. 38200). The proposed Project will connect to existing local utility network for water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication services within Avenida Descanso adjacent to the Project site, and will not require the construction of any additional facilities for these services, as the proposed Project will not significantly increase demand for these services. As discussed in Section X c, ii-iii) above, the proposed drainage facility onsite and compliance with existing regulatory programs would ensure that the Project will not create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. The Project is not expected to require or result in the construction or relocation of new or expanded utility facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.

b) Less Than Significant Impact. Project domestic water will be provided by the MSWD utilizing existing wells, distribution system MSWD's primary water source is groundwater extracted through a system of wells from the Mission Creek Subbasin. In addition, MSWD benefits from groundwater recharge in the upper Mission Creek aquifer from the Metropolitan Water District's Colorado River Aqueduct. The Project will connect to the existing water line within Avenida Descanso. In the most recent Urban Water Management Plan (2015 Update), a more intense



residential land use was approved and was considered in the water demand estimates for the City and the MSWD service area. The proposed Project represents a net ±22% reduction in the number of residences, which is expected to result in a proportionate water demand reduction. Therefore, it is demonstrated that the District has available, and can supply in the future, sufficient water to serve additional development in its service area.

d & e) Less Than Significant Impact. Desert Valley Disposal, Inc. provides solid waste services to the City of Desert Hot Springs. Currently, the City utilizes the Edom Hill Transfer Station, which serves as a local collection point to the final disposal site and does not have a limit of daily transfer amount. Lamb Canyon Landfill is permitted to receive 5,000 tons per day and has a total capacity of 38.9 million cubic yards. As of 2015, the landfill is estimated to have a remaining capacity of 19.2 million cubic yards (49% of total capacity). Lamb Canyon Landfill is estimated to operate until 2029.

Construction of the proposed Project would generate solid waste in the form of construction waste and debris. The Project applicant would be required to submit a construction and demolition (C & D) waste plan as part of the building permit application. The plan would need to demonstrate that the diversion requirements of Municipal Code Section 8.08.040 are met, including diversion of at least 50 percent of all construction waste for new construction. Non-hazardous construction materials that cannot be reused or recycled would be accepted for disposal at municipal Riverside County landfills. Compliance with the City’s requirements will assure that impacts associated with construction waste remain less than significant.

Any hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals, oils, fuels, lubricants, paints, and solvents) used during construction would be recycled, treated, and/or disposed of in accordance with federal, State, and local laws (See Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials). Desert Valley Disposal is responsible for maintaining standards that assure that all waste is handled in a manner that meets local, state and federal standards. These requirements will assure that impacts associated with solid waste disposal remain less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Sources: City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, May 2020; Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update and Zoning Amendment Final EIR, May 2020.

Setting

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) prepares maps that identify state responsibility areas (SRA) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). These maps show that the majority of Desert Hot Springs is located in local responsibility areas and outside fire hazard zones. According to Figure SN-5: Wildfire Hazards in the City’s General Plan, the Project area is not located within or near any locally or state designated fire hazard zones or SRAs. In addition to the City’s implementation of the California Fire Code, development standards from the Riverside County Fire Department also apply. These standards are implemented through the review of development proposals by the RCFD in coordination with the City staff’s review.

Discussion of Impacts

a) No Impact. The Project site is not located in or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The primary emergency evacuation routes in the City include I-10, Indian Canyon Avenue, Dillon Road, Pierson Boulevard, and Palm Drive. The Project site has good access to emergency evacuation routes of Dillon Road and Palm Drive via Camino Campesino and Camino Aventura.

Currently, the site is undeveloped and surrounded by single-family residential development in gated and ungated neighborhoods. Project primary access will be on the future Camino Campesino with secondary emergency access from Avenida Descanso. These access points will be subject to review and approval by the City of Desert Hot Springs Fire Marshall. No impact is anticipated because no change in emergency response or evacuation plans is expected for the proposed Project.

b, c) No Impact. The Project site is not located within a wildfire hazard severity zone or a wildland-urban interface (WUI). The urban area in which the Project is located has a very low threat from wildland fires because of lack of vegetation, distance from mountain slopes, and intervening urban development. Development of the site would not expose people or structures to significant wildfire risks. The proposed Project will include road easement and have paved access to urban arterial roadways in the Project area. No new wildfire risk infrastructure will be required. No impacts would occur.

d) No Impact. The Project site is located on the lower alluvial fan of the Little San Bernardino Mountains where there is very low potential for flooding (see Section X c-d), landslide, or post-fire slope instability. Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks such as downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impact is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

Monitoring:

None required.



XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Does the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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b) Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a Project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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c) Does the Project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Discussion of Impacts

a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.

Biological Resources: The Project site is not located within a CVMSHCP-designated conservation area and does not contain any wildlife corridors or biological linkage areas. On-site vegetation is limited to scattered plants of the Creosote scrub community and herbaceous plants. The site does provide habitat for desert owl; therefore, pre-construction surveys will be required to avoid impacts to owls and other nesting birds covered by the MBTA. In addition, the site is subject to payment of the Development Mitigation Fee to mitigate potential impacts to covered species under the CVMSHCP.

The proposed Project will not significantly reduce fish or wildlife habitat or otherwise adversely impact a fish or wildlife species. The construction of the Project has the potential to impact nesting birds, but the Mitigation Measures IV-1 through IV-3 and monitoring program IV-A included in this document will reduce those impacts to less than significant levels.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known to exist within or adjacent to the Project site. Since the Project will require excavation, there is a low potential for unknown resources to be uncovered. Mitigation Measure V-1 and monitoring program V-A provided in this document will ensure that impacts to cultural and/or tribal resources are less than significant in the unlikely event that resources are discovered during Project development.

Overall, there will be no significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated. Project related impacts, including cumulative impacts, are considered less than significant.



b) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project will contribute to the cumulative impacts of development in the City of Desert Hot Springs and broader Coachella Valley. No other projects are known or scheduled to occur in the Project area. However, the proposed Project's impacts will be consistent with the General Plan designation for the property, and no significant cumulative impacts are expected. All environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the proposed Project would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures included herein, and when viewed in conjunction with other closely related past, present or reasonably foreseeable future projects, would not be significant.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project will not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, with the implementation of the City's Municipal Code, other standard requirements and requirements of law, as described in this document.



APPENDIX A
CalEEMOD Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Modeling

Prepared by

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APPENDIX B

**Biological Resource Assessment &
Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Compliance Report**

Prepared by

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Riverside, CA 92507**



APPENDIC C

Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report

Prepared by

**CRM TECH
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Colton, CA 92324**



APPENDIX D

Rancho Descanso Traffic Impact Analysis

Prepared by

**Trames Solutions, Inc.
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Oceanside, CA 92056**



APPENDIX E

Rancho Descanso Geotechnical Report

Prepared by

**Sladden Engineering
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