



INITIAL STUDY/NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Coachella Housing Element Update

Applicant:

City of Coachella
53990 Enterprise Way
Coachella, CA 92236

Lead Agency:

City of Coachella
53990 Enterprise Way
Coachella, CA 92236

CITY OF COACHELLA
CEQA Environmental Checklist & Environmental Assessment

	<p>INITIAL STUDY/NEGATIVE DECLARATION</p>
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Project Title:	Coachella Housing Element Update	
Case No.	GPA 21-02	
Assessor's Parcel No.	All	
Lead Agency Name and Address:	City of Coachella – Planning Division 53990 Enterprise Way Coachella, CA 92236	
Project Location:	City-wide	
Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	City of Coachella	53990 Enterprise Way Coachella, CA 92236
General Plan Designation(s):	All	
Zoning:	All	
Contact Person:	Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director City of Coachella 53990 Enterprise Way Coachella, CA 92236	
Phone Number:	(760) 398-3502	
Date Prepared	October, 2022	

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" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency) On the basis of this initial evaluation:

X	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 analyzed adequately 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.

Gabriel Perez

Digitally signed by Gabriel Perez
DN: C=US, E=gperrez@coachella.org, O=City of Coachella, OU=Planning Division - Development Services Dept, CN=Gabriel Perez
Date: 2022.10.18 11:38:19-0700

10-18-22

Gabriel Perez
City of Coachella

Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures, which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
- a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impacts to less than significance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Housing Element is a mandatory Element of the City's General Plan. It analyzes the City population and existing housing stock, evaluates efforts in the previous Housing Element, identifies housing constraints, and considers the future needs for housing in the City, with a particular focus on affordable housing and housing for special needs households, including seniors, disabled persons, large families, single parent households, farmworkers and the homeless. It also provides the City's decision makers with Goals, Policies and Programs intended to facilitate the development and preservation of adequate housing supply to meet these needs. This Update addresses the sixth cycle from 2021 to 2029. During this timeframe, the City has been allocated the following housing units under the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG):

Table 1
Regional Housing Needs Allocation, 2021 to 2029

Income Category	Number Of Units
Extremely low income	516
Very low income	517
Low income	999
Moderate income	1,367
Above moderate income	4,487
Total	7,886

Note that the extremely low and very low income categories are 50% each of the 1,033 units assigned for the very low category.
Source: SCAG

This is a comprehensive Update that allocates sites available for the construction of housing for all income levels, provides Goals, Policies and Programs to assure that the City's housing plan can be implemented, and provides direction for decision-makers and City staff in assuring that the City can facilitate the development of the units allocated in the RHNA. This Update added sites identified for future housing, based on criteria of being currently vacant, allowed for residential use under zoning and/or General Plan designations, not on tribal land, not zoned for agricultural or manufacturing use, and adjacent to existing infrastructure. In order to accommodate the RHNA, policies and programs are included that will require changes in the Zoning Map and Zoning text. The rezoning is necessary to assure consistency with the 2015 General Plan, and to prioritize lower income housing sites identified in the Element.

Other changes in policies and programs address changes in the requirements of law since the City last updated its Housing Element in 2013. These changes in law addressed various housing-related issues. The most recent update to Housing Element law occurred in 2017, when a series of bills were passed into law to address the statewide housing crisis. For example, AB 686 was passed by California Legislature in 2018 requiring that all housing elements due on or after January 1, 2021 must contain an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) consistent with the core elements of the analysis required by the federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Final Rule (2015). This Update includes an AFFH analysis that covers, and is built upon, several other required components of the Housing Element, including the Needs Assessment, Site Inventory, and Constraints Assessment. The Update analyzes patterns of segregation and equal access to opportunity within the City, consistent with AFFH Final Rule.

Current Conditions

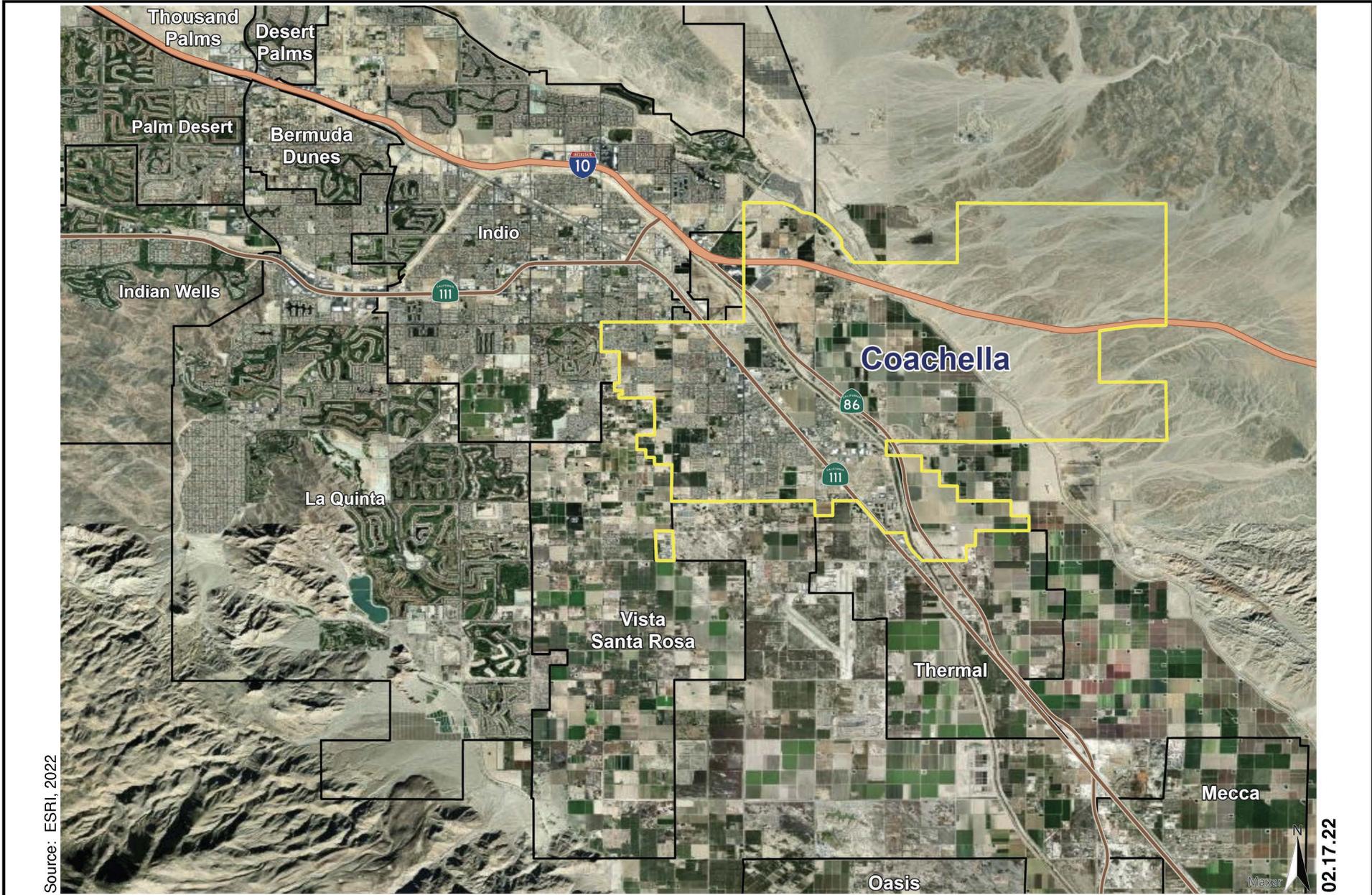
The current Housing Element of the City's 2015 General Plan applies to the 2014-2021 planning period. The current Element facilitates housing development and preservation throughout the City consistent with residential land use designations in the Land Use and Community Character Element and Zoning Code, to meet the RHNA assigned to the City at the time.

Project Location and Limits

The City is in Township 5 South & Township 6 South, Range 7 East, Range 8 East & Range 9 East, San Bernardino Base & Meridian.

Surrounding Land Uses

Not applicable. The Housing Element applies to all lands throughout the City.



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?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
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?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella is located in the eastern Coachella Valley, which is a low desert basin flanked by the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains to the southwest and west, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast. Scenic resources in the City mainly consist of mountain views of the Santa Rosa Mountains (up to 8,715 feet at Toro Peak) and Little San Bernardino Mountains (up to 5,267 feet), as well as the open spaces at the base of Mecca Hills. Views from the valley floor also include several rock outcroppings in the hillside areas to the east.

There are no state designated or eligible scenic highways in the City. Locally recognized scenic corridors include sections of Dillon Road (old Highway 99), Harrison Street (old Highway 86), and Grapefruit Boulevard (old Highway 111).

Discussion of Impacts

a-d) No Impact. The Housing Element Update is a policy document and will have no impact on aesthetics, scenic vistas or light and glare. As individual housing projects are proposed in the future, they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for potential effects on scenic vistas and scenic resources.

The General Plan contains policies to limit development and their density/scale in the eastern City which is near scenic resources including open spaces and scenic roadways. Future projects will be required to adhere to applicable zoning and other regulations on scenic quality including building height limits, and this Update proposes no change to these regulations.

The Housing Element will have no impact on light and glare. The design of future projects consistent with the Element will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for consistency with City lighting standards. The City's Zoning Code regulates lighting for all new development in Chapter 16.28.150(L) Improvements and Grading, Chapter 17.56.010(J)(2)(e) Signs, and Chapter 17.54.010 (K) Off-Street Parking and Loading. These regulations require shading of outdoor lighting and height limits for light poles. These are designed to limit illumination to only the site on which it occurs.

No impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; Coachella Zoning Code; California State Scenic Highway System Map, Caltrans.

II. AGRICULTURE 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 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	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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources 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))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
e) Involve other changes in the existing 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?				X

Setting

Agriculture is integral to the City's economy, and agricultural land accounts for approximately 29 percent of the General Plan Planning Area, though more than half of the agricultural land is in the Sphere of Influence (SOI). While the General Plan includes a comprehensive agricultural

conservation program with multiple avenues to protect agricultural resources and agricultural operations, buildout of the General Plan would still result in conversion of 5,662 acres of Prime Farmland, 587 acres of Unique Farmland, and 3,613 acres of Farmland of Local Importance to urban uses. The General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) determined that buildout of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on the loss and conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

The General Plan Planning Area contains approximately 994 acres of Williamson Act contracted lands, and an additional 1,480 acres under Williamson Act contracts that are set to expire. These expiring contracted lands are designated with urban uses in the General Plan, as part of the City's strategy to manage the transition from agricultural to urban uses.

Discussion of Impacts

a-e) No Impact. All sites identified in the Site Inventory in this Housing Element Update are zoned for urban uses and designated for non-agricultural urban uses in the General Plan. All sites will be developed according to their General Plan designations.

According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) by the California Department of Conservation, the Site Inventory includes some sites classified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Local Importance. However, the Site Inventory contains currently vacant sites only and none of the sites are zoned for agricultural use. Because they have not been in agricultural production nor designated for such uses, but rather have been zoned for urban uses for many years, the loss of those sites as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Local Importance is considered to have already occurred. The Housing Element Update will not result in any new or increased impact regarding conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

According to the General Plan EIR, lands designated with urban uses may have expiring Williamson Act contracts, which would apply to future housing sites in the Site Inventory. However, the Housing Element Update does not change agriculturally designations for any site and will not result in any new impact regarding Williamson Act contracts. No impact will occur.

Under the General Plan, future urban development may result in indirect impacts to adjacent farmland in the central City. However, the General Plan sets forth goals and policies to address such impacts, including right to farm and buffer requirements between agriculture and urban uses. According to the General Plan EIR, these policies will reduce indirect impacts from other changes on the conversion of farmland to less than significant levels. Future development under the Housing Element Update will be subject to all General Plan guidelines, and no new impact would occur regarding conversion of farmland due to other changes.

There is no land zoned for forest land or timberland in the City. There is open space in the eastern City; however, native vegetation consists primarily of Creosote Bush Scrub and Saltbush Scrub. The arid desert climate does not support forest growth beyond the native shrubs, and there is no forestland or timberland in the City. No impact would occur regarding loss of forest land or conversion to non-forest uses.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014; California Important Farmland Finder, California Department of Conservation, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, accessed November 2021.

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. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
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				X
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella is in the Coachella Valley portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB) and governed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). All development in the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is subject to the 2016 SCAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and 2003 Coachella Valley PM₁₀ State Implementation Plan (SIP). The subject portion of SSAB is currently a non-attainment area for PM₁₀ and ozone. The Coachella Valley is designated as a serious nonattainment area for PM₁₀ and is subject to the 2003 SIP and local dust control regulations and guidelines.

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. At the time the 2016 AQMP was developed, its land use and transportation controls were based on the Growth Management chapter of the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) adopted by SCAG to comply with metropolitan planning organization (MPO) requirements under the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act. Projects that are consistent with the projections of population forecasts are considered consistent with the AQMP.

In 2020, SCAG adopted the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS) that will form the basis for land use and transportation controls of the

2022 AQMP, which has yet to be adopted. However, the 2016 RTP/SCS is consistent with the current 2016 AQMP and thus is the appropriate document to reference for air quality analysis at this time.

Discussion of Impacts

a-d) No Impact. The Housing Element Update will have no direct impact on air quality. The Update is a policy document and will not generate any construction or development. To meet the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 7,886 units in the next planning period by 2029, the Housing Element Site Inventory identified sites for future housing that will be developed according to their General Plan designations.

In 2021, the City's population was 47,825, with an average 4.66 persons per household. SCAG projects the City's population will grow to 129,300 in 2045. The addition of 7,886 units would increase the population by 36,749 to a total of 84,574, which is under the 2045 forecast. Therefore, the Housing Element is consistent with the 2 RTP/SCS projections, and thus consistent with the growth assumptions in the 2016 AQMP. The Update will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP.

When individual housing projects are proposed, the City will undertake CEQA review, and assess potential impacts for each project, including emissions of criteria pollutants, pollutant concentrations near sensitive receptors, and emissions of odors. All future projects will be required to adhere to SCAQMD rules and regulations and City requirements for construction related activities to ensure compliance with the 2016 AQMP and 2003 SIP. Typical measures include, but are not limited to, the implementation of fugitive dust control measures (SCAQMD Rule 403.1, Municipal Code Chapter 8.20 and Section 15.40.010) and the use of low VOC content coatings (SCAQMD Rule 1113).

The City's General Plan Sustainability and Natural Environment Element Goal 11 and associated policies require a minimum distance of 500 feet between sensitive receptors and potential polluters, mitigation of potentially significant air quality impacts through the CEQA process, and health impact assessments for sensitive land uses in proximity to highways. The Housing Element Update will facilitate development and rehabilitation of residential units, which typically do not emit odors that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. Mitigation measures will be implemented, where necessary, in accordance with SCAQMD rules and City requirements to reduce potential impacts of specific projects to less than significant levels when the impacts of those projects can be quantified.

Overall, no impact associated with adoption of the Housing Element is expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: SCAQMD AQMP, 2016; Coachella Valley PM₁₀ SIP, 2003; South Coast Air Quality Management District CEQA Handbook, 1993; E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, California Department of Finance, January 1, 2021; 2020 RTP/SCS, Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, adopted September 3, 2020; 2021-2045 RTP/SCS.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potential y Significant t Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
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?				X
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
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?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
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?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella is in the eastern Coachella Valley in the Sonoran Desert subunit of the Colorado Desert. The valley floor experiences extreme heat and aridity, and hosts limited vegetation communities compared to the higher plant diversity and density in hillsides, alluvial fans, and mountainous areas. The City is bisected by the Whitewater River and Coachella Canal, both of which traverse generally northwest to southeast. The General Plan Planning Area consists of the urban core area in the City, agricultural land, and a few stands of undisturbed and disturbed Sonoran Creosote Bush Scrub and Colorado Saltbush Scrub.

Discussion of Impacts

a-f) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update, a policy document, will have no impact on biological resources. This Update does not expand new housing sites beyond what is currently allowed under the General Plan.

According to the General Plan EIR, there are limited areas of riparian habitat along the Whitewater River in the City. However, these habitats are too limited and dispersed to support any sensitive species. There are no other sensitive habitats in the City. The sites identified for housing in the Site Inventory do not contain wetlands or riparian habitats, nor will they encroach on the Whitewater River. The City will require sensitive species surveys if housing projects are proposed in certain areas of the City (generally west of and along the Whitewater River) and implementation of necessary mitigation measures if sensitive species are present. These measures would be prescribed by a qualified biologist in order to receive necessary City permits. This standard requirement will ensure no significant impacts on sensitive species, their habitat and wildlife nursery sites will occur.

The General Plan EIR identified two migratory bird species that reside seasonally in the City, which migrate through undeveloped areas, grasslands and agricultural lands in the area. The parcels identified in the Sites Inventory do not occur on these lands. Rather, the General Plan concentrates development in urbanized areas, and the Housing Element proposes development within these areas for all types of housing. The General Plan will preserve a significant portion of open space for habitat protection and low impact recreation and promote land use efficiency within the developed areas, and no significant impact on wildlife migration would occur.

The City of Coachella is within the boundary of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The City is required to assess development impact fees on new development to mitigate potential impacts to covered species. The Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area overlaps a small portion of the northeast City. This area is designated as Open Space under the General Plan. The sites identified for future housing are not located in or near the Conservation Area. Future housing projects will be required to pay the development fee imposed by the CVMSHCP, which will assure consistency with the Plan.

The City does not have a tree preservation or similar ordinance that protects trees or other biological resource. The General Plan has multiple policies that encourage preservation and use of native desert landscaping. With implementation of the CVMSHCP and other standard requirements, no new impact would occur as a result of this Update on biological resources.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014; Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and EIR/EIS, 2007.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				X
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X

Setting

In the City of Coachella, the only registered historical resource is the Coachella Valley Water District Building along Highway 111 and Grapefruit Boulevard, which is designated as a California Point of Historical Interest and a Riverside County Historical Landmark (General Plan EIR). Many other sites are considered eligible for formal designation. The City’s historic core is considered highly sensitive for historic resources, generally between Harrison Street and State Route 111 (EIR Figure 4.4-2).

Given the long history of Coachella as Native American land, the City contains significant archaeological resources, none of which are designated by any state or national register but may be considered eligible.

The Mecca Hills, Thermal Canyon, and washes north of Thermal Canyon host archaeologically significant trails, mining sites, and other artifacts from previous settlements. There are also possible sites along the west side of the Whitewater River, and in the downtown area.

Discussion of Impacts

a-c) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on cultural resources. The sites identified for future housing in the Site Inventory are vacant and do not contain historic structures.

Archaeological resources, located on the surface or below parcels identified in the Sites Inventory could occur. As individual projects are proposed in the future, the City will require site-specific cultural resource surveys, and will consult with local interested tribes on potential cultural resources pursuant to AB 52 and/or SB 18. The results of these surveys will require proper preservation and mitigation of archaeological resources, if identified on a housing site. The consultation process for AB 52 and SB 18 is detailed in Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources. Should housing development be proposed on sites with archaeological resources in the future, any potential impact will be addressed in the project-level environmental review in compliance with standard requirements and General Plan policies.

According to the General Plan EIR, there is potential for human remains to occur on Tribal Lands, which are in the SOI. There are no known burial sites or cemeteries on sites designated for housing, which are all within the City limits. The City will require future projects to abide by California law, should human remains be identified on a site being prepared for housing development. The General Plan Sustainability and Natural Environment Element Policy 12.6 supports the requirement of law regarding discovery of human remains. California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 requires that if remains are uncovered, all work in the vicinity of the site should be stopped and that there will be no deposition of the remains unless proper procedures are followed as required by the law. These requirements of law apply to any development in the City.

Overall, no impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

VI. ENERGY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X

Setting

Primary energy sources include fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas), nuclear, and renewable sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower. The City of Coachella is served by the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) for electricity. The Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) provides natural gas to the City. The City adopted its Climate Action Plan in April 2015, which provides additional measures on energy efficiency and conservation.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update, a policy document, will have no impact on energy resources and energy efficiency. Construction and rehabilitation of housing are required to conform to the California Building Code, including the California Energy Code and California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), which serves to ensure the economical and wise use of energy resources during construction and operational phases. Future housing development will be required to conform to the Building Code standards in effect when development occurs, which currently require solar panels for residential development, and are aiming for zero-net energy for the future. These requirements will assure that future housing projects are energy efficient and do not waste energy.

The City's energy providers, IID and SoCalGas, have both committed to increasing efficiency and renewable energy generation and enforce relevant state energy standards. The Housing Element identifies energy conservation opportunities for City residents and future housing development, including government and utility programs for energy efficiency upgrades and solar photovoltaic systems. Goal 3 and its associated policies and programs are specifically aimed at energy efficiency.

Future housing developments would generate traffic and require the consumption of petroleum-based fuels for vehicular travel. Although future housing projects have the potential to result in a direct increase in City VMTs, the Update will not interfere with evolving fuel efficiency standards and will not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of transportation energy resources.

Implementation of the California Building Code and both voluntary and state-mandated energy efficiency and renewable energy programs will ensure that no wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources will occur. The Update promotes energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for future housing development and rehabilitation and will not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for energy efficiency or renewable energy.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii) Seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
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?				X
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?				X
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?				X
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella is located in the eastern Coachella Valley, which forms the northerly part of the Salton Trough, a structural and topographic depression related to complex interactions with the San Andreas Fault system. The San Andreas, San Jacinto, and Whittier-Elsinore fault zones are seismically active and can generate strong ground shaking up to magnitude 7.9 within the Coachella area. Three Alquist-Priolo Earthquake fault zones traverse in a northwest to southeast direction in the eastern City and SOI.

The Coachella Valley is underlain by a thick sequence of sedimentary deposits from erosion of surrounding mountains, including the Indio and Mecca hills along with deposition from the Gulf of California and Colorado River. Soils of different ages and compositions have developed on these sedimentary units, and on the younger alluvial units filling the valley floor. Mountains surrounding the valley include the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the northeast, the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains to the northwest, and the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains to the southwest.

Discussion of Impacts

a-f) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update, a policy document, will have no impact on geology. The sites identified for future housing in the Site Inventory are not located in or near an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake fault zone. According to the General Plan EIR, implementation of the Alquist-Priolo Act, California Building Code (CBC), and General Plan policies will ensure that future development not be sited within the vicinity of a fault trace and be constructed with appropriate seismic upgrades if likely subject to fault rupture threat. These standard requirements will ensure that no significant impact will occur.

The City can also sustain considerable damage in structures not designed to withstand strong ground shaking caused by nearby active faults. The General Plan provides policies on more stringent requirements than the CBC for new development to adhere to and mitigation to protect people in buildings identified as most susceptible to earthquake damage. During the review of individual applications, the City will evaluate proposed housing projects against General Plan policies for consistency based on project vulnerability to seismic ground shaking and grant approval only upon adequate consistency.

The most destructive types of ground failure due to seismic shaking include liquefaction and slope failure. The valley portion of Coachella, west of the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, is underlain by soils that could liquefy during an earthquake, generally due to an elevated groundwater basin. The City requires a site-specific analysis through the development review process, to determine if structures are allowable and to assess building design against existing regulations and applicable codes, as well as implementation of the engineering recommendations, such as foundation designs, to offset liquefaction impacts.

Slope instability, including landslides, would pose a potential hazard as development encroaches into the hills in the northeastern City. Overall, the probability for landslide, rock fall and debris flow is considered low in the City. The sites identified for future housing are not in or adjacent to hillside areas, and would not be impacted by landslides.

The City will impose dust control/PM₁₀ management and NPDES standards on all development in the future, which will mitigate for potential soil erosion from wind or flooding hazards, respectively. These standard requirements include the installation of wind fences and site watering to prevent wind erosion; and on- and off-site best management practices (BMPs) such as sand bags and bio-swales for water erosion.

Subsidence has been documented in other parts of the valley (Palm Desert, Indian Wells and La Quinta), but the potential for regional subsidence in the Coachella area is unclear. The General Plan includes policies to limit development in high-risk areas such as steep slopes and require site-specific studies to determine individual risk and develop appropriate design strategies. The General Plan also calls for groundwater resources protection to prevent over-drafting and regional subsidence due to excessive extraction. These General Plan policies assure that future projects for housing facilitated by the Housing Element will be applied to individual projects as they are proposed.

The valley portion of Coachella is underlain by unconsolidated, young alluvial deposits and artificial fill that are potentially compressible and/or collapsible. A small portion of the southeastern City is subject to potential expansive soil hazards in the vicinity of the airport and along the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. Future housing development in the City will be subject to the California Building Code to ensure structures are sound and engineered to reduce impacts from expansive soils. The General Plan includes policies that require site-specific geotechnical investigations to determine if the development site is subject to expansive soils and other geological/soil hazards and recommend measures to reduce potential impacts, such as structural mitigation or excavation and foundation improvements.

The Housing Element Update Program 1.2 requires that all new residential developments are provided with adequate public and private facilities and services through environmental and other development review procedures. Future housing development on sites in the Site Inventory will connect to municipal sewer infrastructure in the site vicinity and will not require any septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal. No impact would occur.

According to the General Plan EIR, in general, the western and southern City have a low sensitivity, or probability, for having paleontological resources. The eastern City has high sensitivity for occurrence of paleontological resources, but much of this area is designated as Open Space under the General Plan, which limits or prevents development. State law prevents the removal or destruction of any resource without presenting the findings and restricting and preserving the resources, or determination of resources not being worthy of reporting (Public Resources Code Section 5097.5). The General Plan also requires reporting of any paleontological artifacts found within the City and subsequent procedures. None of the parcels on the Sites Inventory are located in an area of high sensitivity. Future development would be required to comply with the existing regulations and General Plan policies to obtain development permits. No new impact would occur under the Housing Element Update.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

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

Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHG), such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated gases (hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride), are released into the atmosphere through natural and anthropogenic processes. These gases are termed “greenhouse gases” due to their common ability of trapping heat, and they are believed to be responsible for the global average increase in surface temperatures of 0.7-1.5°F that were observed during the 20th century. The quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased significantly over a relatively short period. Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that has raised the most concern of atmospheric scientists due to current and projected emission levels.

State law mandates that all cities decrease their GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. Executive Order B-30-15 set an interim target goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 to keep California on its trajectory toward meeting or exceeding the long-term goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, as set forth in Executive Order S-3-05.

The City of Coachella completed its first Greenhouse Gas Inventory in conjunction with the Climate Action Plan in 2015. The plan guides City policies and planning to achieve energy efficiency and comply with state mandates on emission reduction.

GHG Thresholds

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?

The City currently uses this approach in considering project-specific greenhouse gas emissions under CEQA.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) No Impact. The Housing Element Update is a policy document and will have no impact on greenhouse gas emissions. The Update will not generate any construction or development, but rather identifies sites for future housing development, many of which are centrally-located near transit, shopping and employment. The Housing Element also identifies opportunities for energy conservation including government and utility programs that will help reduce GHG emissions under Goal C and its associated policies and programs.

When individual housing projects are proposed, the City will undertake CEQA review, and assess potential impacts for each project on greenhouse gas emissions with regards to GHG thresholds set by SCAQMD.

The City adopted a Climate Action Plan (2015) that establish energy efficiency and GHG reduction policies and implementation measures for development projects that are generally more stringent than building codes. These measures will effectively reduce City-wide GHG emissions including at the individual project level.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; SCAQMD AQMP, 2016; California Air Resource Board, website, <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ccms/ccms.htm>; Draft Guidance Document – Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Thresholds, South Coast Air Quality Management District, October 2008; City of Coachella Climate Action Plan, April 2015.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
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?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
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?				X
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?				X
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.				X

Setting

In the City of Coachella, the use, storage, disposal, and cleanup of hazardous waste is regulated by an extensive framework of state and federal laws, such as those implemented by the US and California EPA, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and regional agencies

including the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board. Coachella Fire Services, as part of the Riverside County Fire Department supports the Riverside County Health Department in maintaining a permit program that applies to anyone operating a hazardous occupancy or using, storing, or transporting substantial amounts of hazardous materials.

Discussion of Impacts

a-g) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will not impact hazards or hazardous materials. Future housing development will be required to assess potential impacts as part of the CEQA process, but these impacts are likely to be negligible, since housing development does not generate significant use, storage or transport of hazardous materials.

There are many schools in the City, including adjacent to or near sites designated for housing. However, as previously stated, housing development generates minimal hazardous materials which are governed by local and regional regulations.

The sites identified for housing in the Site Inventory do not occur on sites identified by the state as now having or previously having hazardous materials issues. There may be permitted underground storage tanks and other active cleanup sites in the vicinity, but such sites are under the jurisdiction of local agencies such as the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health and required to comply with requirements of law. No impact is expected regarding listed sites.

The Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located approximately one mile south of the City of Coachella. There are no private airstrips in and around the City. The airport is approximately 1.26 miles southeast of the closest housing site in the Site Inventory. Some of the housing sites in the southern City fall in the Compatibility Zone D/E on the airport compatibility map. None of the sites are located in or adjacent to the airport noise contours. The Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Policy Document outlines compatibility policies on residential densities in Zone D, which future housing projects will be required to comply with. The General Plan Land Use and Community Character Element contains policies that require new development to conform to the airport land use and safety plans, facilitates regional coordination and Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission review of planning documents and regulations. No impact will occur regarding airport-related hazards.

The Housing Element Update will not impair or interfere with the City Fire and Emergency Medical Services Master Plan (2007), City of Coachella Emergency Operations Plan (2007), and the City of Coachella Annex Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2012). Housing projects will occur on the City's existing street system, which is already developed. For each individual project, a construction traffic control plan may be required in coordination with the City's Engineering Department to ensure traffic safety and preservation of emergency/secondary access during all development activities. The site plans and emergency access for each individual project will be subject to approval by the Fire and Police Departments to ensure adequate emergency access. No impact to emergency access or evacuation routes is anticipated.

According to the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps by CALFire, the City of Coachella consists of primarily local responsibility area (LRA) and some federal responsibility area (FRA). There is no designated fire hazard zone in or near the City. No impact is anticipated on wildfire hazards.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014; California Department of Toxic Substances Control “EnviroStor” Database, accessed November 2021; Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Policy Document (Amended September 2006); Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) maps, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				X
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;				X
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;				X
(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				X
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				X
(d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				X
(e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				X

Setting

The dominant drainage feature in the Coachella Valley is the Whitewater River. The Whitewater River watershed is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Whitewater River has perennial flow in the mountains, but becomes

dry further downstream due to diversions and percolation into the groundwater basin. The Whitewater River is channelized downstream from La Quinta, and known as the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) and serves as drainage for irrigation return flows, treated community wastewater, and storm runoff.

Under the Clean Water Act, the Colorado River Basin RWQCB is responsible for regulating water quality and implementing the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The City of Coachella operates under a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit, which requires implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants in urban storm water discharge and monitoring of ambient water quality to determine effectiveness of BMPs.

The Lower Whitewater River Basin water is extracted by the Coachella Valley Water District and other water agencies including the City's Coachella Water Agency (CWA). CWA is the water supplier for the entire City of Coachella. The Valley Sanitary District (VSD) and Coachella Sanitary District (CSD) manage wastewater treatment facilities that serve the City and implement regulations imposed by the Colorado River Basin RWQCB. CSD covers the majority of the City except a small area in the northwestern corner.

Discussion of Impacts

a-e) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on water resources. The Update is a policy document and does not involve the construction of any new housing units. The City, CWA, VSD and CSD implement all water quality standards and waste discharge requirements to prevent contamination of water sources during construction and operation.

According to the City of Coachella 2015 Sewer System Master Plan, the existing sewer infrastructure does not cover the entire City, and many properties currently rely on septic tanks, which are regulated by the RWQCB to ensure they do not pollute the groundwater basin. The Housing Element Update Program 1.2 requires that all new residential developments are provided with adequate public and private facilities and services through environmental and other development review procedures, including sanitary sewer service. As described in the Housing Element, all parcels in the Sites Inventory are served by water and sewer. Future housing developments will be reviewed under CEQA to assure that they meet the standard requirements and connect to existing facilities, in order to assure compliance with waste discharge requirements.

According to the 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan, available water supplies are sufficient to meet the anticipated demand for 2025 through 2045 during normal, single dry, and multiple dry years. Housing sites identified in the Site Inventory are consistent with the General Plan, on which the CWA bases its demand and supply projections. Future projects will be required to comply with Title 24 provisions on efficient use of water. Because the sites identified in the Update will be developed according to their General Plan land use designations, CWA will have adequate water supplies to serve those sites.

Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permit, the City will require all qualifying new and redevelopment projects to submit a water quality management plan (WQMP) for approval by the City engineer. The WQMP must identify all BMPs that will be incorporated into the project to

control stormwater and stormwater pollutants during and after construction and must be revised as necessary during the life of the project (Municipal Code Chapter 13.16). The General Plan Sustainability + Natural Environment and Infrastructure + Public Services Elements include policies to preserve natural land features and require drainage studies for new development to prevent on- or off-site flooding. Implementation of these standard requirements will prevent any significant impact on runoff and stormwater drainage.

Areas designated as a 100-year flood hazard zone in the City occur within the banks of the CVSC. Housing sites in the City are not located in the 100-year special flood hazard areas. The sites identified in the Site Inventory fall within Flood Hazard Zone X, which indicates areas of minimal flood hazard.

The City is located inland and would not be subject to tsunamis. The City is located over 10 miles away from Salton Sea, the closest large water body, and is thus outside the area that could be affected by seiches. Minor seiches may occur within the City in smaller ponds or lakes, however the water level rise is unlikely to exceed 1.6 feet (General Plan EIR).

The City of Coachella Engineering Department manages levees, channels, and dikes within the City, including channelization and levees of the Whitewater River and the East Side Dike. The General Plan requires the City to carefully monitor and mitigate development in areas that are prone to flooding risks from possible infrastructure failure and create disaster response plans to protect users of critical facilities. Compliance with the standard requirements will minimize any potential impacts regarding hydrology and water quality, and no new impact would occur under the Housing Element Update.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014; 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan, June 2021.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant w/ Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
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?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella and SOI consist of urban settlement (residential, industrial, and commercial land uses), agricultural land, open space, and undeveloped land. The 2015 General Plan envisioned that the City would transform from a small town to a mid-sized city at buildout (2035).

Most of the urban and residential development is within the western City, including Coachella's downtown, civic buildings, commercial corridors, and major residential development. The eastern City and SOI consist mostly of open space, agriculture, and tribal land.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on land use and planning. The sites identified for future housing in the Sites Inventory are designated for residential uses in the General Plan and will be developed under the applicable provisions. The City has not conducted a comprehensive Zoning Code update to be consistent with the 2015 General Plan. Under Program 1.1 of the Housing Element Update, the City will update the Zoning Code to be consistent with the 2015 General Plan and prioritize creating zones and rezoning lower-income sites identified in the Site Inventory. Program 1.2 requires priority re-zoning for land on the Sites Inventory, to assure that these parcels are available for affordable housing.

The identified sites are currently vacant, either surrounded by independently operated uses or individual parcels in a larger residential neighborhood. The sites within existing neighborhoods are planned for development to build out these communities, not divide them. Future housing projects will not divide an established community, nor conflict with any plans, policy, or regulation on land use and planning.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

Setting

The California Mineral Land Classification System, developed by the State Geologist, identifies Mineral Resources Zones (MRZs) for mapping and reporting purposes under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). The western portion of the City is classified as MRZ-1, where available geological information indicates that little likelihood exists for presence of significant mineral resources. The northeastern portion of the City is classified as MRZ-3, which indicates the area has known mineral deposits that may qualify as mineral resources (MRZ-3a), or the area may have inferred deposits which may qualify as mineral resources (MRZ-3b). Two permitted mining operations occur in the MRZ-2 area in the SOI, but none occur in the City.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) No Impact. The adoption and implementation of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on mineral resources. No active mining or extraction sites occur in the City, nor are any proposed. None of the sites identified for housing in the Site Inventory occur on lands designated for mineral resource extraction.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

XIII. NOISE Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of 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?				X
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a primate 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?				X

Setting

The predominant noise source in the City of Coachella is traffic. Other major noise sources in Coachella include the railway, manufacturing processing and distribution facilities. Other, less significant noise sources in Coachella include aircraft overflights, air conditioning units and other mechanical equipment on buildings, and landscaping equipment. Title 7 of the City’s Municipal Code governs noise control in the City. The sound level limits for fixed noise sources are 55 dBA from 6 AM to 10 PM, and 45 dBA from 10 PM to 6 AM for all residential zones.

Discussion of Impacts

a-c) No Impact. The Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not generate construction or development. As future housing projects are proposed, they will be required to analyze noise impacts during the CEQA review and building permit processes. Project-level noise studies may be required by the City to assess impacts from roadway and surrounding development, where necessary. The City may require noise analysis to verify noise standard compliance with standards set in Title 7 of the Municipal Code and Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix (General Plan Figure 10-1) during building plan check reviews. Should noise levels at future housing sites exceed City standards, mitigation would be required through architectural features, building design and construction, rather than site design features such as excessive setbacks, berms and sound walls (General Plan Policy 1.2).

Construction of future housing development will create temporary noise and/or vibration sources. Construction noise is exempt from the noise standards set forth in Section 7.04.030 of the Municipal Code; however, it is restricted to certain days of the week and times of day that are considered less sensitive (Municipal Code Section 7.04.070). As noted, under CEQA review, individual projects will need to assess whether their construction will potentially impact surrounding uses and any sensitive receptors. In the long term, housing development will be required to comply with the noise levels established for fixed noise sources in the Municipal Code for residential zones, and are not expected to cause significant impacts on noise and vibration.

The nearest airport to the City is Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, located approximately one mile south of the City at its closest point. All sites identified for future housing development in the Housing Element are located well outside the noise contours of the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport. The Bermuda Dunes Airport is located at least four miles northwest of the City limits, and due to distance will not impact noise levels within the City.

No impact will occur regarding exposing people to excessive noise levels.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; Coachella Municipal Code.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella has a population of approximately 42,178 persons, which is expected to grow to 129,300 in 2045.¹ Currently, the City is composed of a mix of single-family, multi-family, and mobile home development, but the majority (73.9%) of housing units are single-family homes.

Discussion of Impacts

a-b) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on population and housing. The Element provides goals, policies and programs to facilitate housing development and preserve the existing housing stock, but does not create any immediate need for housing. As population grows in the City, demand for housing will increase and the sites identified for future housing in the Site Inventory will be developed under the provisions of the General Plan, including the Housing Element, and the Zoning Code.

The Housing Element will not induce substantial unplanned growth, insofar as the identified sites are located on existing streets, and utilities and public facilities are available in the immediate area. Because the identified sites are vacant, future housing development would not displace any existing housing or require replacement housing elsewhere. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — January 1, 2021-2022*. Sacramento, California, May 2022.

¹ 2020-2045 RTP/SCS Demographics and Growth Forecast by Southern California Association of Governments.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in:

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:

Potentially Significant Impact **Less Than Significant with Mitigation** **Less Than Significant Impact** **No Impact**

Fire protection?				X
Police protection?				X
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X

Setting

Fire Protection

Fire protection services are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department and CALFire via a cooperative agreement. The Riverside County Fire Department Station 79 is a full-service public safety department which has provided fire suppression and emergency medical services to Coachella residents, businesses and visitors since 1990 from its location at 1377 6th Street. The City may consider new stations to serve the growing entertainment district and northern area as well as the central area in the future as development occurs.

Police Protection

The City of Coachella contracts with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to provide comprehensive law enforcement services. The City Police Department is comprised of the Investigations, Patrol, Traffic, and Forensics Divisions with overlapping personnel. The Department consists of 32 sworn officer positions, 19 of which are dedicated to the Patrol Division with the remaining officers dedicated to special assignments such as the Community Action Team (C.A.T.), School Resource Officers, along with Gang and Narcotics Enforcement.

Schools

There are two school districts providing public education to students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Coachella: Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD) and Coachella Valley Unified School District (CVUSD). The majority of the City occurs within CVUSD's service area. Both

districts receive funding from state funds and local property taxes. The districts are authorized to collect school facilities fees as provided for in Government Code Section 53080 *et. seq.* and 65995 *et seq.* on a per square foot basis for new residential development.

Parks

The City of Coachella currently operates ten parks and recreational facilities that support uses such as sports, community activities and playground. The City's Municipal Code Section 16.36.060 provides for the dedication of land or the payment of fees in lieu thereof for park and recreational facilities as a condition of approval of a tentative map or parcel map. All residential developments subdivisions containing five or more parcels are required to dedicate land, pay a fee, or both. Section 16.36.060 set a minimum of three acres per 1,000 population in a subdivision for neighborhood and community park and recreational facilities.

Discussion of Impacts

No Impact. The Housing Element Update is a policy document and will not directly generate any development. The adoption of the Update will have no impact on public services. As future housing projects are proposed, they will be reviewed to determine potential impacts on public services during the CEQA review process. Sites identified for future housing in the Site Inventory are mainly urban infill sites. All inventory sites will be developed under the allowable densities in the General Plan and Zoning Code. The majority of the City is well served by public services, and thus new development on the inventory sites are least likely to have significant impacts on public services.

The sites identified for future housing are not located in or near a fire hazard zone. As future housing projects are proposed, they will be required to provide adequate emergency access and safety design following the Riverside County Fire Department's design guidelines.

Future housing development will be required to pay development impact fees toward fire, police, library and general government facilities upon development approval and school developer fees in place at the time development occurs. Future housing projects will also be required to dedicate land and/or pay an in-lieu fee for provision of park and recreational facilities, if they involve subdivisions containing five or more parcels. These standard requirements, including fee payments, will offset impacts associated with public services and facilities generated by new residents.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Source: City of Coachella General Plan 2015.

XVI. RECREATION Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
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?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella provides a variety of recreation facilities and currently has eight parks that host various sports fields, a boxing club and swimming pools, as well as a tot lot and a community center, which total approximately 59.6 acres.

The Desert Recreation District (DRD) also provides recreational services throughout the Coachella Valley. DRD manages, maintains and assists in maintaining over 30 parks and recreation facilities in the valley. DRD also offers a variety of quality programs, services and classes on physical fitness, mental wellness and arts and crafts.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update, a policy document, will not generate any new development or redevelopment directly. No impact on recreation will occur. Future housing projects will be reviewed for their potential impacts on recreational resources during the CEQA review process. However, the City's standards for private and common area open space will provide for on-site recreation options for most projects built in the future. Applicable parkland dedication and/or in-lieu fees and development impact fees will be assessed on new housing development to cover the additional costs of providing recreational services to new residents. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Source: City of Coachella General Plan 2015.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	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?				X
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?				X
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella General Plan Mobility Element shows the City's intended future roadway network and sets standards on various Street Typologies and the street network. The Mobility Element policies aim to achieve goals including complete streets, traffic calming, a pedestrian and bicycle trail network, and sustainable transportation. The General Plan Environmental Impact Report analyzed impacts on roadways and intersections using a threshold of Level of Service (LOS) D.

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 sets forth guidelines for implementing SB 743 (stats. 2013, ch. 386), which requires amendments to the CEQA Guidelines (pre-2019) to provide an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts. Changes to CEQA Guidelines were adopted in December 2018, which require all lead agencies to adopt vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a replacement for automobile delay-based LOS as the new measure for identifying transportation impacts for land use projects. This statewide mandate went into effect July 1, 2020. The City of Coachella has not adopted its own VMT policy yet; land use projects are analyzed using the County of Riverside's Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service & Vehicle Miles Traveled (December 2020).

Discussion of Impacts

a-d) No Impact. The Housing Element Update is a policy document that will not generate any development directly or propose any changes to transportation in the City. No impact will occur regarding transportation.

As future housing projects are proposed, they will be required to analyze potential traffic impacts and prepare traffic impact studies that include VMT analysis, where necessary. As currently adopted, affordable housing projects are assumed to have a less than significant impact on VMTs in the County's policy, and therefore would not generate significant impacts. Other projects for above moderate income households would be analyzed individually, but given the location of sites identified in the Housing Element, the majority are urban areas where efficiencies including proximity to employment and services will reduce potential impacts and shorten vehicle trips.

The projects will also be required to meet City standards on roadway improvements, parking, and emergency access through conditions of approval. The project site plan will be subject to review by both the Fire Department and Police Department on safety measures and design to ensure adequate emergency access and proper geometric design.

The sites identified for future housing occur on the City's developed street system, and will not interfere with the system. Most sites are relatively close to bus stops served by SunLine bus routes, existing and proposed bicycle facilities, as well as multi-use trails. No impact is anticipated on alternative transportation.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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

X

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.

X

Setting

The Cahuilla Indians are the first known human inhabitants of the Coachella Valley. The Cahuilla were hunters and gatherers, generally divided into three groups based on their geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the Beaumont/Banning area; the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains; and the Desert Cahuilla from the Coachella Valley, as far south as the Salton Sea. Today, Native Americans of Pass or Desert Cahuilla heritage are mainly affiliated with the Indian tribes of the Coachella Valley, including the Cabazon, Augustine, Torres Martinez, Twentynine Palms, Agua Caliente, and Morongo.

Discussion of Impacts

a) i, ii) No Impact. In the Coachella area, the Mecca Hills, Thermal Canyon, and washes north of Thermal Canyon host archaeologically significant trails, mining sites, and other artifacts from previous settlements. There are also possible sites along the west side of the Whitewater River, and in the downtown area. State regulations and General Plan policies protect against impacts to unique archaeological resources. The General Plan requires new development to implement strategies to protect or reduce impacts on archaeological resources.

The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on tribal cultural resources. The City conducted AB 52 and SB 18 consultation and sent out letters to 12 tribes. The City received 1 response, and no consultation was requested.

As individual projects are proposed in the future, the City will conduct government-to-government consultations with local tribes pursuant to AB 52 and SB 18 regarding potential tribal cultural resources that could occur on individual project sites.

There are no historic resources on sites identified in the Site Inventory. Should future housing development be proposed on sites with historic resources or potential tribal cultural resources, any potential impact will be addressed in the project-level CEQA process in accordance with state law and General Plan policies.

Overall, no impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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?				X
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?				X
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?				X
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?				X
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

Setting

The City of Coachella is served by the following utility providers:

Utility	Service Provider(s)
Electricity	Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
Natural gas	Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas)
Water	Coachella Water Agency (CWA)

Wastewater	Coachella Sanitary District (CSD) (majority of the City), Valley Sanitary District (VSD)
Solid Waste	Burrtec
Telecommunications	Spectrum, Frontier

Discussion of Impacts

a-e) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on utilities and service systems because it will not generate construction or development directly. Lands identified in the Housing Element are served by water and sanitary sewer lines. As future housing projects are proposed, their potential impacts on utilities will be considered during the entitlement process and CEQA review.

CWA is responsible, under the California Water Code, for analyzing its current and future water supply, and assuring that sufficient supply is available to serve land uses within its service area, through the preparation of an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). CWA participated in the 2020 Coachella Valley Regional UWMP, which used the City's General Plan land uses as a basis for planning. CWA has demonstrated sufficient water supplies to serve the City through 2045 during normal, single dry, and multiple dry years.

CSD conducts long-range planning for sewer services based on the General Plan land uses in its Sewer System Master Plan (SSMP, 2015). CSD has indicated sufficient capacities at the wastewater treatment plant and force mains, although certain pipes and pump stations are identified for necessary upgrades to accommodate growth under the General Plan. The City and CSD are responsible for programming projects recommended in the SSMP, which are expected to be funded under a combination of development impact fees and rate increases.

Burrtec provides solid waste services to the City on a contract basis, and will charge a per unit fee on future housing units. Regional landfills have sufficient capacity to accommodate future development in the City.

The energy and telecommunications service providers also plan their infrastructure according to local development and population growth to provide adequate services. All future housing projects will be required to analyze their demand for utility services at the individual project level.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Sources: City of Coachella General Plan 2015; City of Coachella General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR, SCH No. 2009021007), October 2014; 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan, June 2021.

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	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
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?				X
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?				X
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?				X

Setting

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) ranks fire hazards of wildland areas in the state using four main criteria: fuels, weather, assets at risk, and level of service. There are no state responsibility areas (SRA) or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) in or near the City.

Discussion of Impacts

a-d) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update will have no impact on wildfire. The City of Coachella consists of primarily local responsibility area (LRA) and some federal responsibility area (FRA). There are no SRA, VHFHSZ, or any other designated fire hazard zones in the City. There is no substantial vegetation within the City to generate a high wildfire risk, nor are any sites identified in the Element near wildlands or forested lands. No impact will occur regarding wildfires.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

Source: Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) maps, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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)?				X
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				X

a-c) No Impact. The adoption of the Housing Element Update, a policy document, will not impact the environment. As discussed above, sites identified for future housing are not located within or near a CVMSHCP designated conservation area. The Update will not impact biological or cultural resources, nor human beings directly or indirectly.

The sites identified for future housing will be developed in accordance with General Plan designations and policies, and such development will not impact long term environmental goals. Cumulative impacts of future development have been addressed in the General Plan and its Environmental Impact Report where necessary, and will also be considered during CEQA review for individual projects as they are proposed under the Housing Element.