

Project Title:	Avenue 44 Apartments
Case No.	DR-22-08-508
Assessor's Parcel No.	692-060-019 and 692-060-020
Lead Agency Name and Address:	City of Indio 100 Civic Center Mall Indio, CA 92201
Project Location:	North of Avenue 44 and west of Golf Center Parkway in the City of Indio, Riverside County, California
Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	Pacific West Communities, Inc. 430 East State Street, Suite 100 Eagle, Idaho 83616
General Plan Designation(s):	Mixed Use Neighborhood
Zoning:	Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN)
Contact Person:	Manuel Rocha, Assistant Planner
Phone Number:	760-391-4099
Date Prepared	October, 2022

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Project Location

The Avenue 44 Apartments (referred to hereafter as the Project and/or the proposed Project) are located on the north side of Avenue 44, approximately 350 feet west of the Golf Center Parkway and Avenue 44 intersection, and 150 feet east of the Aztec Street and Avenue 44 intersection, in the City of Indio, California (Exhibits 1 and 2).

The property is currently vacant, with a relatively flat, dirt surface and limited vegetation. It is primarily surrounded by residential development and vacant land designated Mixed Use Neighborhood. The Project site consists of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 692-060-019 and 692-060-020. The total planning area is approximately 5.7 acres (264,000 square feet) in a rectangular configuration.

Project Description

The Project proposes the development of 180 units of affordable, multi-family housing. The site is designated as Mixed Use Neighborhood on the City's General Plan Land Use Map and is classified as Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN) according to the City of Indio's Zoning Update Map.¹ The MUN designation is designed to provide "moderate- to higher-intensity neighborhood development that features a variety of multifamily housing choices and limited neighborhood-serving commercial uses in a walkable environment".²

According to the MUN zoning designation, the Project is permitted a maximum density of 40 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC). The Project proposes the development of 180 units of affordable multi-family housing on the 5.7 acre lot, at a density of 32 DU/AC. The proposed development will consist of 87 one-bedroom units, 48 two-bedroom units, and 45 three-bedroom units, distributed across eight three-story apartment buildings with a maximum height of 35 feet.

As shown in Exhibit 3, the eight apartment buildings are arranged in two rows, oriented in an east-west manner. The spaces between the two rows of buildings provide outdoor common open space for residents, while also breaking up the massing and providing ample view corridors of the mountains surrounding the Coachella Valley. In addition to the common open space distributed throughout the property, a shared clubhouse, fitness center, and pool/spa will be provided in the center of the development. The common open space will also include areas designated as dog parks and tot lots.

The eight residential buildings and one clubhouse building will be constructed in a modern style, using a mix of warm and cool color schemes. These color schemes will be primarily rendered in stucco, with accents in metal and stone veneer to emphasize the surface articulation and visually break up the massing.

¹ The site is designated as Mixed Use Neighborhood according to the Zoning Update Map, which was developed in order to be consistent with the approved 2040 General Plan Update.

² City of Indio Draft Unified Development Code, p. 3.1

Access to the proposed development will be provided through the center of the site, at the main entrance on Avenue 44. A separate exit onto Avenue 44 will be provided on the west side of the site. Two additional access points will be provided for emergency vehicles only: one on the southeast corner of the site, onto Avenue 44, and one on the northeast corner of the site, onto Mojave Drive. Internal streets, along which parking will be provided, will occur along the northern and western boundaries of the site, as well as north-south running streets through the center and eastern side of the property. A total of 238 parking stalls will be provided, including both standard stalls and covered carports.

Table 1		
Project summary		
Units	Quantity	Total
1 bedroom	87	180
2 bedroom	48	
3 bedroom	45	
Parking	Quantity	Total
Standard stall	121	238
Carport	117	
Common Open Space	Square Footage	Total
Clubhouse	4,668	111,406 SF (2.6 acres)
Fitness Center	814	
Pool/Spa	797	
Dog Park	939	
Tot Lot	1,520	
Private Open Space	8,781	8,781

The unit mix, parking, and open space proposed for the Project are summarized in Table 1, above. Based on analysis of the Project as proposed, this Initial Study will examine the potential environmental impacts resulting from the development of the Avenue 44 Apartments.

Utilities and Service Providers

The following agencies and companies will provide service to the Project site:

- a) Sanitary Sewer: Valley Sanitary District (VSD)
- b) Water: Indio Water Authority (IWA)
- c) Electricity: Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
- d) Natural Gas: Southern California Gas Company
- e) Telephone: Frontier Communications
- f) Trash disposal: Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services

Surrounding Land Uses:

North: Vacant land (water retention basin), residential properties, Mojave Drive and single-family residential properties along residential streets.

South: Avenue 44 and vacant properties.

East: Vacant properties and Golf Center Parkway.

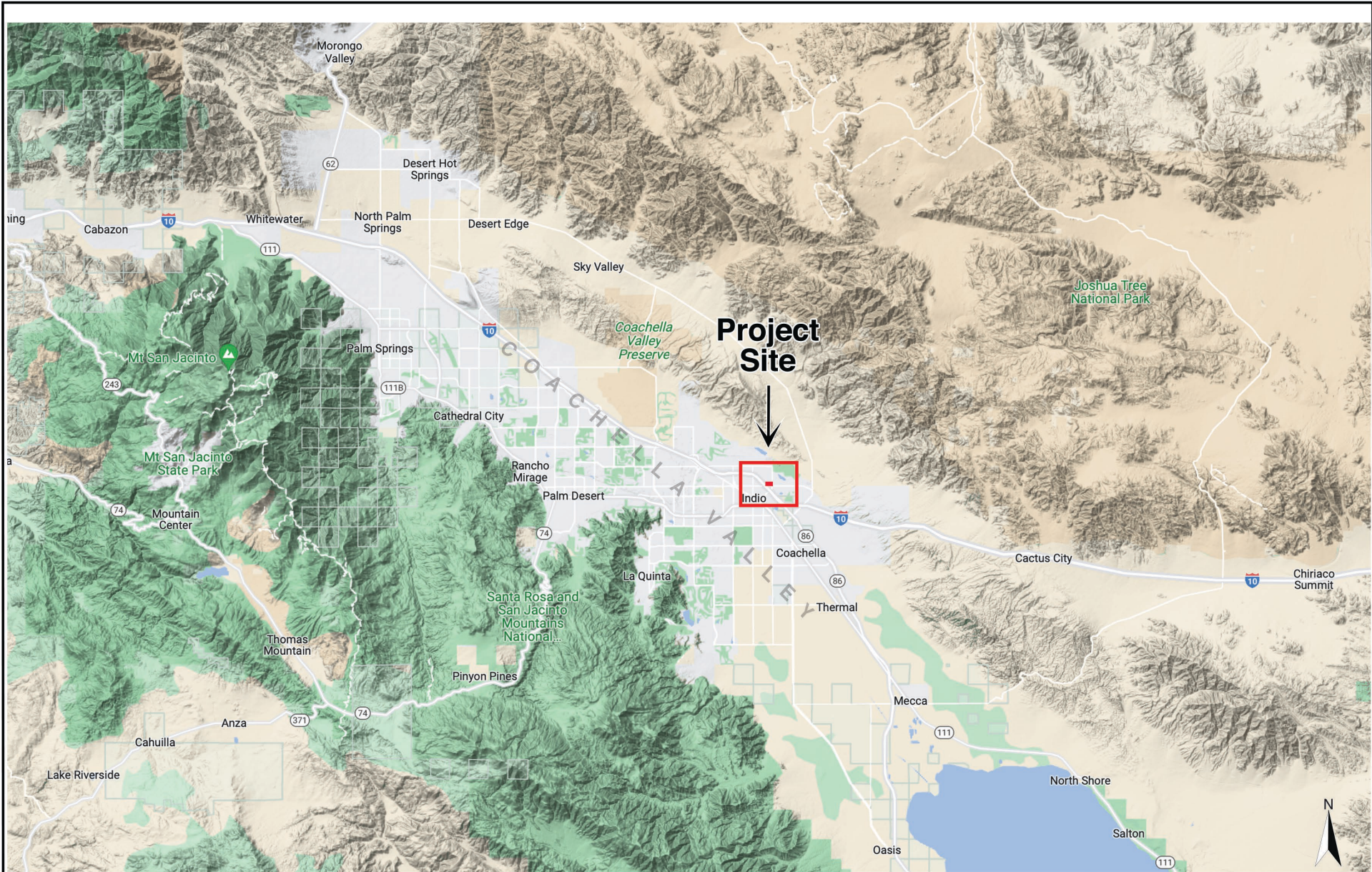
West: Single family residential properties, Aztec Street.

Other public agencies whose approval is required.

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Valley Sanitary District

Indio Water Authority



Source: Google Maps, 2022

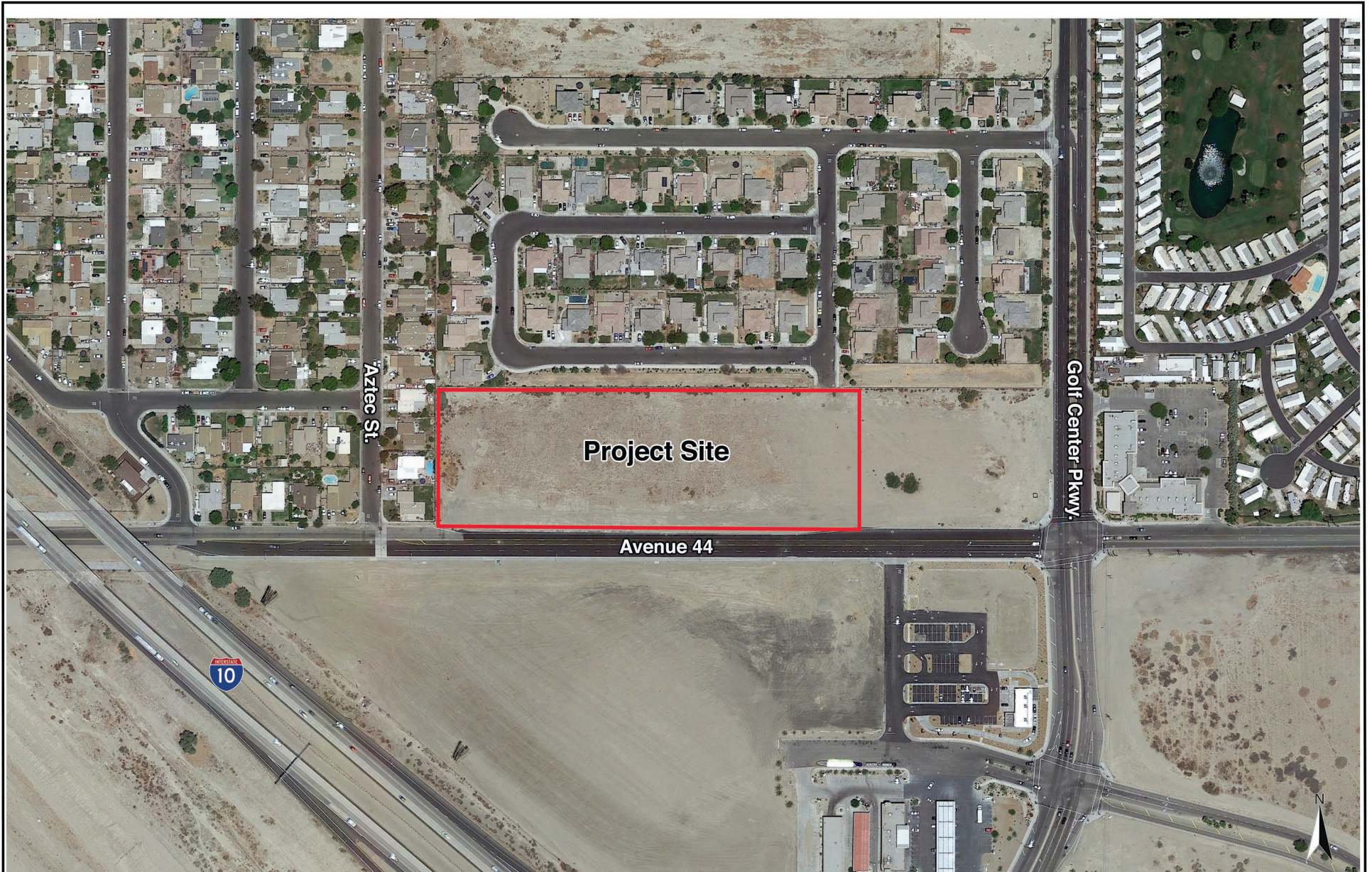
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**Pacific West Avenue 44 Apartments
Vicinity Map
Indio, California**

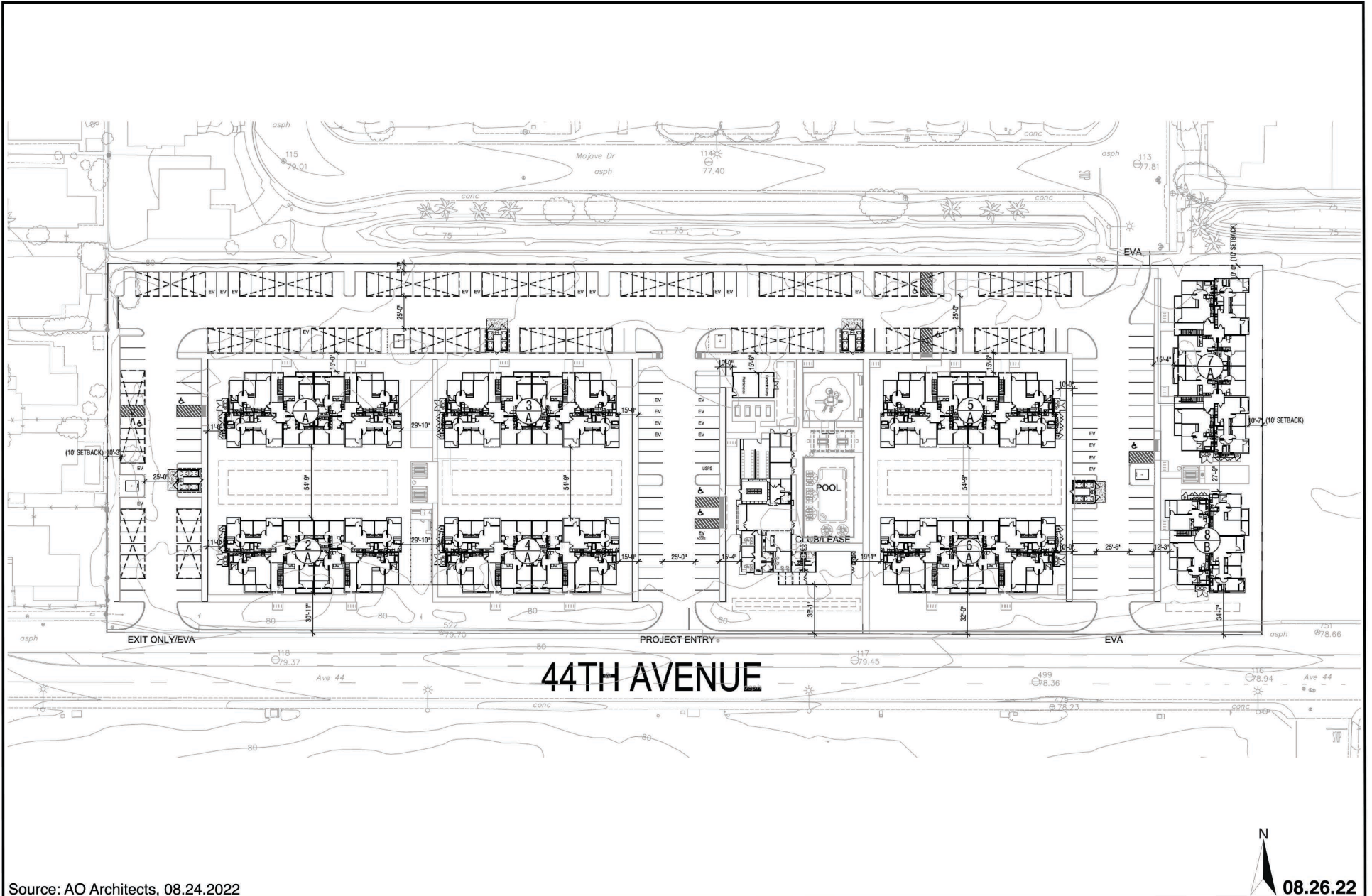
Exhibit

1



Source: Google Earth, 2022

08.26.22



Source: AO Architects, 08.24.2022

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08.26.22

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.

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

CHAPTER 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION

DETERMINATION: The City of Indio Planning Department finds

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been 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.



Manuel Rocha, Assistant Planner
City of Indio

10/18/22

Date

PURPOSE OF THIS INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study has been prepared consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, to determine if the Project, as proposed, may have a significant effect upon the environment. Based upon the findings contained within this report, the Initial Study will be used in support of the preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

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.

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

Sources: City of Indio Public Works Engineering Standards.

Environmental Setting

The Project site is located in the northeastern portion of the City of Indio. Indio is situated in the Coachella Valley, an approximately 45-mile-long desert valley within Riverside County. The valley is southeast of the San Bernardino Mountains and north of the Salton Sea. The Project site occurs in an urban environment which currently includes single family homes and retail, as well as major arterials and the I-10 freeway.

The San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains, Indio Hills, and San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains provide scenic views throughout the City. The San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains are located to the north and northeast of the City, respectively. The Indio Hills are also northeast of the City. The San Jacinto range is located to the northwest of the City, and the Santa Rosas occur to the south and southwest of the City. There are no state-designated scenic highways in the City of Indio. However, Interstate-10 (I-10) and Dillon Road are identified by the Riverside County General Plan as County-eligible scenic highways.

The Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. Development of the proposed Project will result in the construction of 180 multi-family residential units in the form of three-story apartments in a modern architectural style, as shown in Exhibit 4.



FRONT ELEVATION 1



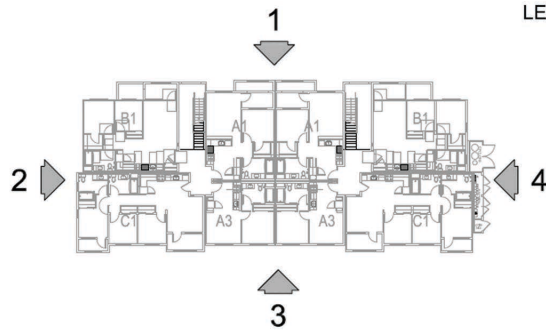
RIGHT ELEVATION 2



REAR ELEVATION 3



LEFT ELEVATION 4



Source: AO Architects, 08.24.2022

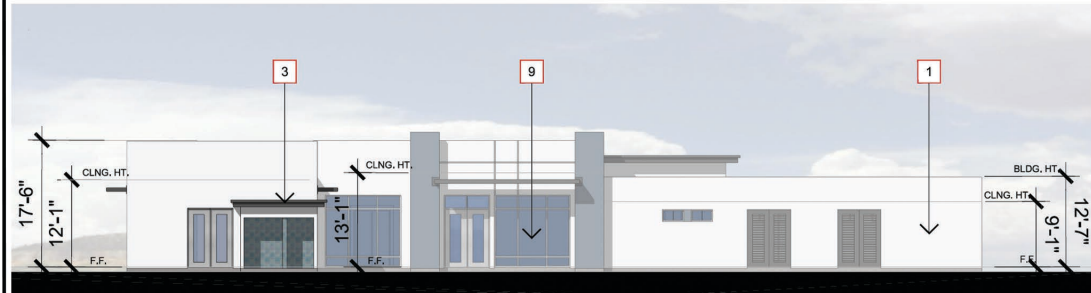
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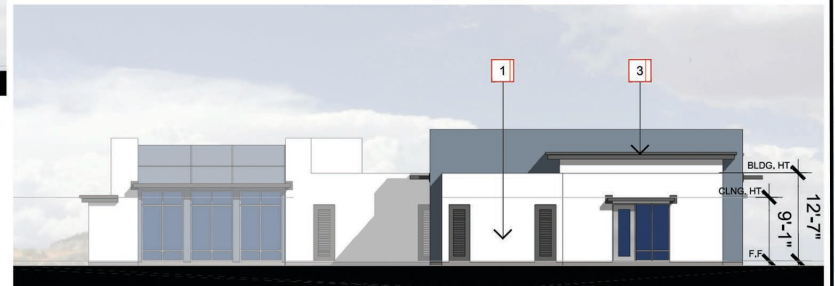
FRONT ELEVATION 1



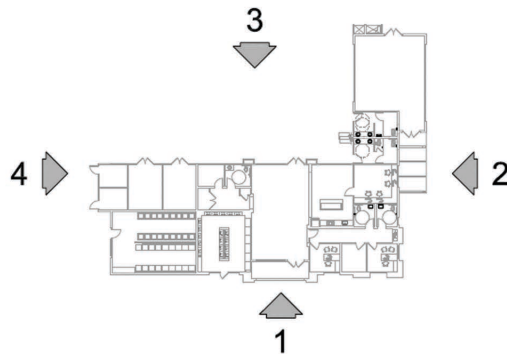
RIGHT ELEVATION 2



REAR ELEVATION 3



LEFT ELEVATION 4



Source: AO Architects, 08.24.2022

08.30.22

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project site is located in an urbanized area of Indio that supports a mix of development, including residential and commercial land uses. The Project proposes multi-family residential uses with a maximum building height of 3 stories or 35 feet. The Project site is located approximately 6 miles northeast of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountain foothills, and approximately 5 miles southwest of the Indio Hills.

Scenic views of the San Bernardino Mountains, Little San Bernardino Mountains, and Indio Hills are to the northwest, north and east of the Project site. Views of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains are to the west and south. The lower elevations of the mountains are partially blocked by intervening development to the north, east, and west of the site, and thus are not fully visible.

The lands immediately to the north and west of the Project are currently developed as single-family residential neighborhoods. The lands immediately to the east of the site are currently vacant, and the south of the property is bound by Avenue 44. The mountains are partially visible in all directions, but are more distant, so their immediate scenic value is diminished.

The Project proposes the development of residential buildings no taller than 35 feet. The residential developments to the north and west of the site consist of one- and two-story buildings. These existing homes will have no impact to their current views of the San Bernardino Mountains and Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northwest, but will have their partial southern and southwestern views of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains further obstructed by Project buildings. However, the eight Project apartment buildings are mostly arranged in two rows, oriented parallel to Avenue 44. The alignment and spacing between the Project buildings will create north-south view corridors. These corridors will reduce impacts to the southern views from the existing residential development to the north of the Project. Furthermore, the clubhouse and common areas in the center of the site create a wide view corridor for homes to the north, which will remain substantially unobstructed for residents to the north. An additional, partial view corridor will exist looking east from the residences situated west of the Project. While the clubhouse and eastern most Project buildings will partially obstruct this view corridor, they are, respectively, lower in height and more distant from the neighboring development, which will help reduce impacts to the eastern views.

The layout of the Project includes parking and driveways along the north and west of the site, creating a substantial buffer between the proposed buildings and the existing residential developments. As a result, the space between an existing residence and proposed building is, at a minimum, approximately 110 feet. This ample spacing will further reduce the visual impacts of the Project from the adjacent housing.

The mountains are located sufficiently far enough away from the site that the proposed development will have a minimal impact on the existing vista, conserving views of most of the mid-range and tops of the mountains. With the construction of the proposed Project, views of

the foothills will be reduced in some directions but not eliminated, views of the mid-range and tops of the surrounding mountains will remain. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

- b) **No Impact.** The Project site does not contain any scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings. No impact to these resources will occur.

The Project site is located in proximity to the I-10 freeway which is a County-eligible scenic highway according to the Riverside County General Plan. However, there is sufficient intervening space such that views north and northeast from the freeway towards the Little San Bernardino Mountains and Indio Hills will be minimally affected by the proposed 3-story buildings.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project site is currently vacant and is located in an urban environment. The ultimate development of the site will result in the construction of multi-family residential buildings of up to 3 stories. The proposed Project includes landscaping and high-quality mid-century modern inspired design, and will not cause any visual degradation of the site. The Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN) zoning encourages multi-family housing types, including missing middle housing types such as multiplexes which provide options along a spectrum of affordability.³ The MUN zone provides moderate- to higher-intensity development, including residential buildings of up to three stories and within a density range of 20 to 40 DU/AC. The proposed development of 3 stories at 32 DU/AC is consistent with the parameters and objectives for the MUN zone, and less intense than the maximum allowable density of 40 units per acre.

The Project proposes 8 apartment buildings and a single story clubhouse, with driveways and parking lining the rear and western side of the site. The front setbacks will be a minimum of 30 feet between the property line at Avenue 44 and the Project buildings, which exceeds the minimum setback of 15 feet for the MUN zone in the Development Code.⁴ Side and rear setbacks between the property line and Project carports will range from 5 feet 7 inches to 10 feet 7 inches. This complies with the City's minimum rear and side setback of 3 feet for accessory structures.⁵

The proposed Project is thus not in conflict with the City's zoning code or other regulations governing scenic quality, and therefore, impacts associated with visual character are expected to be less than significant.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project is located in an urban environment that includes existing sources of light and glare associated with nearby land uses. Nearby sources of light include exterior lighting on adjacent residential buildings, building lighting on nearby commercial structures, street lighting on Avenue 44, Golf Center Parkway and surrounding residential streets, as well as passing vehicle headlights. The Project site is vacant and has no existing sources of light.

³ City of Indio Draft Unified Development Code, 2022.

⁴ City of Indio Draft Unified Development Code, Table 2.03.03-2

⁵ City of Indio Draft Unified Development Code, Table 3.02.04-1: Accessory Structure Setbacks and Height Limits, Detached Garage.

Buildout of multi-family residential buildings on the site can be expected to generate increased levels of light from interior and exterior building lighting, safety and security lighting, landscape lighting, and vehicles accessing the site during the day and nighttime. The Project will not, however, require the use of high intensity outdoor lighting.

Glare can also be expected from building windows during the day and nighttime. However, lighting and glare levels are not expected to exceed typical levels within the surrounding urban environment. The proposed Project will be required to comply with the City's Public Works Engineering Standards (Indio-200, Street Light Residential Area)⁶ in order to properly shield light fixtures to minimize spillage onto adjacent properties. The Zoning Ordinance design standards will be incorporated to assure that the proposed Project's light and glare impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Non required.

Monitoring: Non required.

⁶ City of Indio Public Works, Engineering Standards, INDIO-200, Street Light Residential Area, https://www.indio.org/your_government/pwd/engineering_div/engineering_standards.htm, Accessed 8/15/2022.

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES				
<p>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.</p>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>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?</p>				✓
<p>b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</p>				✓
<p>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))?</p>				✓
<p>d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>				✓
<p>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?</p>				✓

Sources: Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Finder; Riverside County – Map My County; Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared by KCE Matrix, June 27, 2022.

Environmental Setting

The City of Indio played a historically important role in agricultural production for the eastern Coachella Valley, despite decreases in production over time. Some areas of limited agricultural activity remain, primarily in the southern and eastern areas of the City. These areas include 3,327 acres of State-designated Prime or Unique Farmland, also known as Farmland of Local Importance.⁷ More than half of that land (1,729.7 acres) is not in agriculture and has been disturbed or developed.

The City's General Plan does not include Forestry or Forest Production designations, nor does the City have lands zoned for these uses. The City occurs on the Coachella Valley floor, and no forestry of forest production lands occur in the desert climate.

The Project site is zoned as Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN); therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will have no impacts on Agriculture or Forestry Resources.

Discussion of Impacts

a-c) No Impact.

Conversion of farmland: According to the California Resources Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the Project site is not designated as Farmland of Local Importance.⁸ The City's General Plan EIR analyzed important farmlands, and field-verified those lands identified by the State as Prime, Unique, or Locally Important. It categorizes the Project site as "Other Land."⁹

An investigation by KCE Matrix found that the subject property has been vacant from at least 1949 and through to the present, with the exception of a short period in which the site might have been used as agricultural land in approximately 1959.¹⁰

The site is not designated for agricultural uses and has not been used for agricultural purposes since the late 1950s. The development of this site will have no impact on farmlands. Additionally, none of the parcels adjacent to the proposed Project are designated as Farmland of Local Importance, and thus the proposed development will have no additional impacts on farmlands.

Williamson Act: The Project site is not under Williamson Act contract.¹¹ The Project site is zoned for mixed-use development, and has been zoned for urban development for many years.

⁷ Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update (March 2019), Table 4.2-1

⁸ California Important Farmland Finder, California Department of Conservation.
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>

⁹ Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update (March 2019), Figure 4.2-1

¹⁰ Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared by KCE Matrix, June 27, 2022.

¹¹ Riverside County – Map My County v10. https://gis1.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public

The proposed Project will not conflict with zoning for agricultural uses or a Williamson Act contract. No impact is anticipated.

d-e) No Impact.

Forest Land: The City of Indio does not contain any forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for Timberland production. Thus, the proposed Project will not result in the loss or conversion of forestland to non-forest use.¹²

As discussed above, the Project site has not been used for agricultural purposes for decades, and thus the Project will not result in the loss of farmland to non-agricultural use. The Project site does not contain any forest land, and thus the proposed development will not result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

¹² Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update – Page 7-1.

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

Sources: California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0; South Coast AQMP (2022); South Coast Air Quality Management District Current and Future Air Quality – Desert Nonattainment Areas (2012).

Environmental Setting

The City of Indio, including the Project site, is located within the Riverside County portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB). The SSAB is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the local agency responsible for air quality assessment and improvement in the Coachella Valley and one of 35 air quality regulatory agencies in the State of California. All development within the SSAB is subject to SCAQMD’s 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (2016 AQMP)¹³ as well as the 2003 Coachella Valley PM State Implementation Plan (2003 CV PM10 SIP).

The SCAQMD operates and maintains regional air quality monitoring stations at numerous locations throughout its jurisdiction. The Project site is location within Source Receptor Area (SRA) 30, (Coachella Valley) which includes monitoring stations in Palm Springs, Indio and Mecca.

Criteria air contaminants (CACs) are pollutants for which state and federal air quality standards (i.e. California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)) have been established. The SSAB exceeds state and federal standards for fugitive dust (PM10) and ozone (O3).¹⁴ Health risks associated with PM and ozone pollution include respiratory issues such as coughing, wheezing, asthma and even high blood pressure. Ambient air quality in the SSAB, including the proposed Project site, does not exceed state or federal standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxides, sulfur dioxide, lead, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, or Vinyl Chloride.

¹³ A draft of the 2022 AQMP is available and currently undergoing public comment. <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan>

¹⁴ South Coast Air Quality Management District Current and Future Air Quality – Desert Nonattainment Areas (2012).

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

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

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **No Impact.** The Project site is located within the SSAB, within the greater SCAQMD, and is subject to the 2022 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (2022 AQMP) as well as the 2003 Coachella Valley PM State Implementation Plan (2003 CV PM10 SIP). The 2022 AQMP is a comprehensive plan establishing guidelines and strategies for reducing air pollutants in order to meet national air quality standards. As U.S. EPA designated “extreme” and “severe” nonattainment areas, the 2022 AQMP focuses on plans for the South Coast and Coachella Valley basins to attain the 2015 8-hour ozone standard of 70 parts per billion.¹⁵

The AQMP is based, in part, on the land use plans of the jurisdictions in the region. According to the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, the Project site is designated as Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MUN), which permits a mix of multi-family housing and commercial developments along major streets. While the Project proposes a density of 32 DU/AC, the designation permits housing density of up to 40 DU/AC. The proposed Project is thus compliant with the General Plan and corresponding land use assumptions underlying the 2022 AQMP.

The SCAQMD works with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), county transportation commissions, and local governments, and cooperates with all state and federal agencies. Through its adoption of the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS), SCAG complies with the metropolitan planning organization requirements under the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act. The Growth Management chapter in the RTP/SCS is used as a basis for the land use and transportation controls of the AQMP. The proposed Project will be implemented in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations in the AQMP because the Mixed-Use Neighborhood land use was accounted for in the SCAG analysis.

Therefore, while the Project will contribute impacts to air quality, as discussed in the subsequent sections, it will not conflict with the implementation of the applicable AQMP because its land uses were included in the development of the regional plans. No impact is anticipated.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** A project is considered to have significant impacts if there is a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. The SSAB is a non-attainment area for PM₁₀ and Ozone.

¹⁵ SCAQMD Draft 2022 AQMP.

The air quality emissions to be generated by the proposed Project were projected using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Versions 2020.4.0 (Appendix A). The proposed Project will release criteria air contaminants during its construction and operational phases, as shown in Table 2 and 3, respectively.

Construction Emissions: For analysis purposes, it is assumed that construction will occur over a 1-year period from 2023 to 2024. The construction period includes site preparation, grading, paving, building construction, and application of architectural coatings. It is also assumed, for analysis purposes, that paving and architectural coating will occur concurrently with building construction.

Emissions generated by construction activities will not exceed the SCAQMD thresholds for any criteria pollutants during construction, as shown in Table 2. The data shown in the table represents daily unmitigated emissions over the 1-year construction period, including summer and winter conditions, assuming standard dust control measures have been applied to the particulate matter emissions. Given that the SCAQMD’s thresholds for criteria pollutants will not be exceeded under unmitigated conditions, and standard best practices will be applied during construction, impacts will be less than significant.

Table 2						
Maximum Daily Construction-Related Emissions Summary (pounds per day)						
Construction Emissions¹	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Daily Maximum	37.0619	27.5653	51.7379	0.0618	10.2630	5.7515
SCAQMD Thresholds	550.0	100.0	75.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0						
¹ Average of winter and summer emissions. Standard dust control measures have been applied to the PM emissions.						

Operational Emissions: Operational emissions refer to the ongoing emissions over the life of a project. They include area source emissions, emissions from energy demand (electricity), and mobile source (vehicle) emissions.

The proposed Project will generate approximately 1,213 daily trips based on ITE Land Use Code Multifamily Housing (Low-Rise).¹⁶ During the Project’s operation at build out, as shown in Table 3, projected emissions will not exceed the SCAQMD thresholds of significance for any criteria pollutants. Impacts related to operational emissions are thus anticipated to be less than significant.

¹⁶ ITE Trip Generation 11th Edition.

Table 3						
Maximum Daily Operations-Related Emissions Summary						
(pounds per day)						
	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Operational Emissions¹	43.1340	6.2997	8.3463	0.0712	6.0359	1.8307
SCAQMD Thresholds	550.0	100.0	75.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0						
¹ Average of winter and summer emissions.						

Cumulative Contribution: Non-Attainment Criteria Pollutants : Given the dispersing nature of pollutant emissions and aggregate impacts from surrounding jurisdictions, cumulative air quality is evaluated on a regional scale. As previously discussed, the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is a nonattainment area for ozone and PM₁₀. Any development resulting in emissions of PM₁₀, ozone, or ozone precursors will contribute to some extent to the existing regional nonattainment designations.

While the SCAQMD does not currently provide thresholds of significance to assess the cumulative emissions of multiple projects, it is recommended that a project’s potential cumulative contributions be analyzed using the criteria for project-specific impacts. SCAQMD states that if an individual development generates less than significant construction or operational emissions, that it would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the region is a non-attainment area.

PM₁₀, CO, NO_x, and ROG emissions related to the proposed Project are projected to be well below the SCAQMD thresholds, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. As discussed above, standard best practices will be implemented in accordance with SCAQMD Rule 403.1. The Project will contribute to incremental emissions, but the impacts will not be cumulatively considerable on regional PM₁₀ or ozone levels.

Summary: As described above, both the construction and operation of the proposed Project will result in emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds. Neither construction nor operations will violate any air quality standards or make substantial contributions to an existing air quality violation. Overall, impacts will be less than significant and will not be cumulatively considerable in terms of non-attainment.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The nearest sensitive receptors to the proposed development are the residents of the single-family homes to the north and west of the Project site. SCAQMD’s Mass Rate Localized Significance Threshold (LST) Look-Up Table was used to determine if the proposed Project has the potential to generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts.

Based on the Project’s size and proximity to existing residential developments, the 5-acre site tables (largest site option in LST table) at a distance of 25 meters (nearest measurement option in LST table) were used for air quality analysis. Table 4 shows that on-site emissions concentrations for Project construction and operation will not exceed LST thresholds. Overall, the impacts will be less than significant.

Table 4				
Localized Significance Thresholds Emissions				
(pounds per day)				
	CO	NO_x	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Construction				
Maximum Emissions	37.0619	27.5653	10.2630	5.7515
LST Threshold	2,292	304	14	8
Exceed?	No	No	No	No
Operation¹				
Area	15.5182	1.6985	0.2058	0.2058
LST Thresholds	2,292.00	304.00	14.00	2.00
Exceed?	No	No	No	No
Emission Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0				
LST Threshold Source: LST Mass Rate Look-up Table, SCAQMD.				
1. Operational emissions that affect sensitive receptors are limited to on-site area emissions. Energy and mobile emissions occur off-site.				

Health Impacts: As shown in Tables 2 and 3, construction and operation of the proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. It is not scientifically possible with the technology available today to calculate the degree to which an individual’s health would be impacted by exposure to various levels of criteria pollutant emissions. There are several factors that make this prediction difficult:

- Differing medical histories mean that not all individuals would be affected equally. Some individuals may have medical pre-dispositions, and diet and exercise levels vary across a population.
- Due to the dispersing nature of pollutants, it is difficult to local and identify which individuals will be impacted, either directly or indirectly.
- There are currently no agreed upon methodologies or studies upon which to base assumptions, such as baseline health levels or emissions level-to-health risk ratios.

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

- d) Less Than Significant Impact.** Some land uses can be sources of odors that, while not necessarily physically harmful, may be unpleasant and distressing to the public. The SCAQMD identifies land uses such as agriculture, chemical plants, composting operations, dairies, fiberglass molding, landfills, refineries, rendering plants, rail yards, and wastewater treatment

plants, as more likely to generate odors.¹⁷ The Project proposes the development of residential land uses which may produce some odors from household activities, but are not likely to produce any objectionable odors long term. While some odors may be generated on-site during construction, their production will be short term and, even while ongoing, they are expected to disperse quickly with distance from the construction site. Overall, impacts from objectionable odors are expected to be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

¹⁷ SCAQMD Guidance Document, Chapter 2 Air Quality Issues Regarding Land Use, p.2-2.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓		
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?				✓
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓
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?				✓
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			✓	
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?			✓	

Sources: City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update; Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan; Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Environmental Setting

The Coachella Valley makes up the westernmost limits of the Sonoran Desert, a subdivision of the Colorado Desert. The Sonoran Desert contains a wide variety of biological resources that are endemic to the region. According to the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), vegetation communities in the City range from active desert dunes to urban environments.¹⁸

The Coachella Valley Multiple Species Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) is a comprehensive regional plan that balances growth in the Coachella Valley with the requirements of federal and State endangered species laws.

¹⁸ Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update (March 2019) – Page 4.4-1

The Project site is currently vacant. The land is primarily barren and disturbed, with sparse vegetation along the northern and western edges of the site. It is located within the CVMSHCP fee area but not within a CVMSHCP conservation area. The nearest conservation area is the East Indio Hills, located approximately 1.16 miles north/northeast of the northeastern corner of the Project site.

The City of Indio's General Plan (2040), the CVMSHCP, and a Biological Resources Assessment prepared for the Project by Wood Inc. (Appendix B), were referenced to analyze potential impacts to biological resources associated with the proposed development, and are discussed below.

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** During a Project-specific biological resources assessment, only three animal species were observed on-site; all of which were common species. No nesting birds or special status species were observed on-site.

Based on the literature and field survey, a list of 67 biological resources with the potential to occur on site was developed.¹⁹ None of the 31 sensitive plant species from this list are expected to occur on the Project site due to the site being the wrong habitat and elevation, or due to the lack of habitat available on site. Of the 34 sensitive wildlife species identified in the list, only five have potential to forage over the Project site or immediate area: golden eagle, prairie falcon, black swift, black-tailed gnatcatcher, and burrowing owl. The biological resources assessment notes that there is a low to very low chance of any of the five bird species foraging on or near the site, and no suitable habitat was identified for them to nest on or adjacent to the Project site. Of the 67 species with the potential to occur on the site, the burrowing owl is the only CVMSHCP covered species expected to occur on the site, and the potential remains very low due to lack of suitable habitat.

It can thus be concluded that no species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local/regional, state, or federal policies are expected to be impacted by the proposed development. In order to ensure compliance with the MBTA and the California Fish and Game Code, Project-related disturbance to the site during the nesting season for migratory or resident bird species must be avoided, otherwise a nesting bird survey must be prepared (BIO-1). While, as discussed, the likelihood of borrowing owl occurring on site is low, a preconstruction survey following CDFG (2012) guidelines must be conducted prior to any ground-disturbing activities (BIO-2). With implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts to sensitive species will be reduced to less than significant levels.

- b, c) **No Impact.** The Project site is mostly barren, disturbed ground. It does not contain any streams, riparian habitat, marshes, protected wetlands, vernal pools or sensitive natural communities protected by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). It does not contain any U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any United States Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Control Board, or CDFW jurisdictional waters. No Project-related impacts will occur.

¹⁹ Biological Resources Assessment & Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Compliance Report prepared by Wood Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc., for Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc., 30 August 2022.

- d) **No Impact.** The Project site is 5.7 acres located in an urban area and surrounded by roadways, residential and commercial development. Due to surrounding human activity for many decades, the site does not contain features that are suitable for a migratory wildlife corridor. The site provides no connectivity to any adjacent native habitat or conservation areas. No impact is anticipated.
- e, f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, nor will it conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans.

The Project is located within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP and is therefore subject to payment of the Development Mitigation Fee, which is intended to mitigate any Project-related impacts to covered species. This standard requirement will be imposed by the City prior to the issuance of building permits. The site is not within or directly adjacent to any CVMSHCP Conservation Areas, so no additional mitigation measures are required.

The Project will not conflict with any policies or ordinances that protect biological species or other habitat conservation or natural community conservation plans. Impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

- BIO-1** Either Project-based disturbance during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31) must be avoided or a nesting bird survey conducted by a qualified ornithologist or biologist immediately prior to on-site disturbances during the nesting season will be required. If the survey finds nesting birds, then no work will be permitted near the nest until the young have fledged. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) generally recommends avoidance buffers of about 500 feet for birds-of prey and species listed as threatened or endangered, and 100–300 feet for unlisted songbirds.²⁰
- BIO-2** A pre-construction survey following CDFG (2012) guidelines²¹ must be conducted. Unless avoidable, all burrowing owls must be relocated prior to any ground disturbing activities. If burrowing owls remain on the Project site, a Burrowing Owl Relocation and Management Plan must be prepared to outline how the owls will be relocated per CDFW guidelines. Any owls occurring on-site must be relocated prior to construction, vegetation removal, or grading activities. Relocation will, at a minimum, require prior approval from the CDFW.²²

²⁰ Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Inc., p.20.

²¹ California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). 2012. Staff report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. CDFG, Sacramento, CA.

²² Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Inc., p.21.

Monitoring:

BIO-A Prior to the issuance of any permit to allow ground disturbance on the site, the Project proponent shall provide the City with pre-construction surveys following CDFG (2012) guidelines for burrowing owl and nesting birds.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, project biologist, City Planning Department, City Engineer.

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

Sources: CRM TECH, Inc., Cultural Resources Report (September 2022); Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

Environmental Setting

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

The City of Indio is located in the Coachella Valley, which was once the traditional home of the Cahuilla Indians. The Cahuilla Indians were a Takic-speaking people consisting of hunters and gatherers who are 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. The Cahuilla had many villages throughout the Coachella Valley.

Numerous prehistoric sites exist in the City of Indio, including habitation sites, temporary camps, lithic and ceramic scatters, quarries, and trails. The areas of highest archaeological sensitivity are within the ancient Lake Cahuilla shoreline. However, there is the potential for archaeological resources to be encountered in any location in the City. These sites are most often identified on undeveloped properties or developed land subjected to minimal subsurface disturbance.

Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a historic resource as a resource that is: (1) listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register); (2) included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code); or (3) identified as significant in a historical resource survey (meeting the criteria in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code). Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register. The California Register automatically includes all properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and those formally determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

The City's history is linked to the development of the transcontinental railroad and the resulting growth of the local agricultural industry. Historic resources, including residential, institutional, commercial, recreational, and agricultural properties that reflect the local cultural heritage, also occur in Indio. These resources are managed through the City's Historic Resource List, established in 2008. The list currently includes 39 buildings eligible for historic designation as well as 19 properties requiring further evaluation.

According to the City of Indio's EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, the Project site is located in an area with moderate-high prehistoric/ethnohistoric cultural resources sensitivity. Historic structures could potentially occur anywhere in the city, however, there is a greater potential for these resources to occur in the older portion of the City, which is located south of the railroad.²³ The Project site is located north of the railroad, on a vacant site with no structures on it.

The following discussion of impacts is primarily based on the results of a Cultural Resources Report prepared by CRM TECH for the Project (Appendix C). The study included a historical/archaeological records search, historical background research, contact with relevant Native American Representative, and a field study.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Project area is situated on the former lakebed of Ancient Lake Cahuilla, suggesting that the site is less likely to contain significant prehistoric resources than areas along and above the former lakeshore. The majority of land surrounding the Project site has been surveyed for cultural resources in recent decades, but no significant archaeological resources have been found, indicating that the site has a relatively low prehistoric archaeological sensitivity.

Eastern Information Center (EIC) Records Search

The EIC records search found that a portion on the western end of the Project site was previously surveyed for cultural resources in 2006. No cultural resources were found during this previous survey.

The records search for a 1-mile radius around the subject property found nearly 60 previous studies covering approximately 70% of the land within the radius. These previous surveys recorded 18 historical/archaeological sites and 12 isolates (i.e., localities with fewer than three artifacts). Eight of the sites and nine of the isolates were identified as prehistoric, consisted mainly of ceramic and/or lithic artifacts. The other ten sites and three isolates were of historic origin, including buildings, linear infrastructure features, and scattered refuse. None of these prehistoric or historic resources were found in the immediate Project vicinity, and thus do not require further consideration in the analysis of Project-related impacts.

²³ Draft EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, Page 4.5-12.

Historical Record Search

Sources consulted during the historical record search indicate that the subject property has remained unsettled and undeveloped throughout the historic period, other than a period of agricultural use during the early or mid-20th century. Agricultural activity ended around the 1950s-1970s. While suburban residential development started in the Project-area in the post-World War II era, the Project site has not been occupied by any human-made features.

Native American Consultation

A search of the Sacred Lands File conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission for the Project identified no Native American cultural resources in the vicinity of the subject site. CRM TECH contacted the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians during the study. A representative of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla participated in the archaeological field survey, but the tribe did not provide any information on potential tribal cultural resources known to be in the Project vicinity. No response was received from the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians.

Field Survey

The field survey conducted by CRM TECH for the Project found an isolate of historic origin on the subject property. The isolate, consisting of two fragments of clear glass insular thought to date to the early 20th century, were recorded into the California Historical Resources Inventory. No other artifacts or features were found in association with the isolate. According to the California Office of Historic Preservation, the isolates found on the Project site do not qualify as archaeological sites due to the lack of contextual integrity and are also not considered “historical resources” per the CEQA definition.

Summary

The research methods employed by CRM TECH found no significant archaeological or historic resources on the Project site. It can thus be concluded that the proposed Project will not cause any substantial adverse changes to such resources. There is, however, a potential for buried cultural materials to be discovered during earth-moving operations associated with the Project, which would result in a significant impact. In order to assure that this does not occur, Mitigation Measure CUL-1, provided below, assures that all work within 50 feet of the discovery would be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the findings. With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to cultural resources would be reduced to less than significant levels. Please also see Section XVIII, Tribal Cultural Resources.

- c) **No Impact.** The historical/archaeological records search and Sacred Lands File search did not suggest any past use of the Project site as a cemetery or burial ground. The field survey conducted by CRM also did not indicate any evidence of human remains on the subject site. Should human remains be uncovered during Project-related earth-moving operations, California Health and Safety Code §7050.5 requires that all activity stop, that the coroner be notified and determine the nature of the remains, and whether Native American consultation will be required. The legal requirement ensures that the Project will have no impact to cemeteries or human remains.

Mitigation Measures:

CUL-1 Earth-moving activities including grading, grubbing, trenching, or excavations at the site shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and approved Tribal Monitor(s).

Should cultural materials be discovered, they shall be recorded and evaluated in the field. The monitors shall be prepared to recover artifacts quickly to avoid construction delays but must have the power to temporarily halt or divert construction equipment to allow for controlled archaeological recovery if a substantial cultural deposit is encountered. The Native American Monitor may request that destructive construction halt and the Monitor shall notify a Qualified Archaeologist (Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines) to investigate and, if necessary, prepare a mitigation plan for submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office. If artifacts are discovered, these shall be processed, catalogued, analyzed, and prepared for permanent curation in a repository with permanent retrievable storage that would allow for additional research in the future. Archaeological site records shall be prepared to document the cultural remains discovered during monitoring and submitted to the California Historical Resources Information System.

Monitoring:

CUL-A The archaeological and Tribal monitors shall provide the City with a report of findings within 30 days of completion of earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project archaeologist, Planning Department

VI. ENERGY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			✓	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			✓	

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; SoCalGas List of Cities and Communities Served; California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11; SoCalGas 2045 Sustainability Strategy; Imperial Irrigation District - Renewable Energy.

Environmental Setting

Nuclear energy, fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas) and renewable sources like wind, solar, geothermal and hydropower are various sources of energy. The electrical energy to the City is provided by Imperial Irrigation District (IID). The Project will connect to existing IID facilities. Natural gas to the City is provided by the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas).²⁴ The Project will connect to the existing 4” gas line under Avenue 44.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Energy resources will be used on a short-term basis during construction of the proposed Project, as well as on a long-term basis for its operation. Grading and construction involve the consumption of energy as a result of operating heavy equipment, manufacturing materials, and transporting workers and materials. The primary fuel consumed for construction will be petroleum and diesel. However, petroleum and diesel use during construction would be temporary and minimal and would not be wasteful or inefficient.

The operational energy demand primarily comes from building/site lighting, HVAC systems, and use of electricity and natural gas for household activities such as kitchens and swimming pools. As shown in Table 5, the project will consume a total of 783,911 kWh per year of electricity and 2.72266e+006 kBTU per year of natural gas.

Land Use	Electricity Use (kWh/yr)	Natural Gas Use (kBTU/yr)
Apartments Low Rise	750,591	2.72266e+006
Parking Lot	33,320	0
Total	783,911	2.72266e+006
Source: CalEEMod model, version 2020.4.0		

²⁴ SoCalGas, Company Profile, <https://www.socalgas.com/about-us/company-profile>, Accessed May 2021.

All Project units will be constructed in accordance with the Building Code, California Green Building Code²⁵, and Energy Code in effect at the time that development occurs, to ensure the most efficient construction/building technologies are used, which will benefit overall building operations, ensure energy efficiency and reduce wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy resources. These requirements of law assure that future buildings on the site will not waste energy.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** IID has established targets which meet or exceed the standards set by the California Renewable Portfolio Standard for the procurement of renewable energy sources including biomass, biowaste, geothermal, hydroelectric, solar, and wind.²⁶ By 2030, IID aims to source 50 percent of its retail electricity from renewable sources.

SoCalGas is also committed to transitioning to clean energy, including through the delivery of cleaner fuels such as renewable natural gas. SoCalGas aspires to achieve net zero GHG emissions in both operations and delivery of energy by 2045.²⁷

The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) promotes local generation of renewable energy. The policies and forecasts in the CAP are based in part on the growth forecasted in the City's General Plan. The Project proposes an affordable housing development at a density of 32 DU/AC, which is within the range of 20 to 40 DU/AC associated with the site's Mixed Use Neighborhood designation in the General Plan. By extension of its compliance with the General Plan, it can be assumed that the Project would not exceed the forecasts or directions for renewable energy and energy efficiency set forth in the CAP. The Project will also comply with the solar and zero net energy requirements in the most recent California Building Code, which will further ensure that it does not conflict with local or state energy efficiency goals.

Adherence to the applicable state standards enforced the California Building Code, as well as IID and SoCalGas, will ensure the development is consistent with current energy standards and conservation goals laid out in the City's Climate Action Plan. The Project will not interfere with any state or local plan that promotes renewable energy or energy efficiency, therefore impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

²⁵ California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11.

²⁶ Imperial Irrigation District Renewable Energy, <https://www.iid.com/energy/renewable-energy>, (retrieved 8/22/2022).

²⁷ SoCalGas Aspire 2045 – SoCalGas Sustainability Strategy, https://www.socalgas.com/sites/default/files/2022-02/SoCalGas_Sustainability_Strategy_final.pdf, (retrieved 8/22/2022).

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	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.				✓
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			✓	
iii) Seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction?				✓
iv) Landslides?				✓
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✓	
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?			✓	
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?				✓
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?				✓
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✓		

Sources: Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application; Indio Municipal Code 156.035 - Standards for Design and Improvement; Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Inc., Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared by KCE Matrix for Pacific West Communities, Inc.

Environmental Setting

Geology

The Coachella Valley is bounded by the Santa Rosa - San Jacinto Mountains to the southwest, the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the east and extends through the Imperial Valley into the Gulf of California on the south.

The City of Indio is located within the Salton Trough, within the site of ancient Lake Cahuilla. The Salton Trough is dominated by several northwest trending faults, most notably the San Andreas Fault system. The tectonics of the San Andreas, San Jacinto, and Elsinore fault systems are a primary influence on the geology and seismicity of the area. The San Andreas Fault is a continental transform fault that extends roughly 750 miles through California. It forms the tectonic boundary between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate, and its motion is right-lateral strike-slip (horizontal). The San Andreas Fault is the nearest fault to Indio.²⁸ The San Jacinto Fault zone is a component of the larger San Andreas transform system. Together, the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults are considered to be the most seismically active fault zones in Southern California.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, passed in 1972, established regulatory zones around active faults in California in order to mitigate surface rupture related hazards to built structures. According to the California Department of Conservation Regulatory Maps, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones lie adjacent and run through portions of the City of Indio.²⁹

The surface of the Salton Trough is composed of alluvial, lakebed, and aeolian deposits.³⁰ Portions of the Salton Trough are well below sea level (253 feet below mean sea level). Over the ages, between approximately 300 AD and 1600 AD, the Salton Trough has periodically been inundated by the Colorado River's water, forming ancient Lake Cahuilla. The floor of the Trough has been repeatedly flooded with other "fresh" water lakes since that time, the most recent and historically long lived being the current Salton Sea. The sole outlet for these waters is evaporation, leaving behind vast amounts of terrestrial sediment materials and evaporite minerals. The Salton Sea is located southeast of the Coachella Valley.

Soils

Episodic flooding of major regional drainages, including the Whitewater River, results in the deposition of sand and gravel on the valley floor. Strong sustained winds emanating from the San Gorgonio Pass cause wind erosion and transport and deposit dry, finely granulated, sandy soils on the central valley floor. Regional soils range from rocky outcrops within the mountains bordering the valley to coarse gravels of mountain canyons and recently laid fine- and medium-grained alluvial (stream deposited) and aeolian (wind deposited) sediments on the central valley floor.

²⁸ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p.4.6-5

²⁹ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p.3-4.

³⁰ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p.4.6-1

Several different soil types have been identified in the City of Indio area, including most predominantly Gilman fine sandy loam (0 to 2 percent slopes), Indio very fine sandy loam, and Myoma fine sand (0 to 5 percent slopes).³¹

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains of prehistoric animals and plants, created more than 12,000 years ago in the Pleistocene era. Fossils are usually buried resources, and often cannot be identified on the surface. A relatively thick sequence (20,000 feet) of sediment has been deposited in the Coachella Valley portion of the Salton Trough from the Miocene era to present times. These sediments are predominantly terrestrial in nature with some lacustrine (lake) and minor marine deposits. The major contributor of these sediments has been the Colorado River. The mountains surrounding the Coachella Valley are composed primarily of Precambrian metamorphic and Mesozoic "granitic" rock.

During the Holocene era, the Salton Trough contained Lake Cahuilla, a large, freshwater lake. Paleontological resources including shells, fish bones and teeth, and invertebrate fossils have been identified in Pliocene age alluvium.³² The majority of the City, including the location of the Project site, is in a high sensitivity area for paleontological resources, due to the presence of ancient Lake Cahuilla. The lakeshore and lakebed have yielded resources associated with the repeated stands of the ancient lake.

Discussion of Impacts

- a, i) No Impact.** The Project site is not located within or adjacent to any fault or included in any Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The nearest earthquake fault is the San Andreas Fault which is located approximately 0.85 miles northwest of the site.³³ This fault is capable of generating earthquakes of magnitude 7.2 on the Richter scale. Fault rupture is not expected on the Project site because it does not occur in a Fault Zone. No impact is anticipated.

- a, ii) Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project site is located in a seismically active region where earthquakes originating on local and regional faults can produce severe ground shaking. Buildings proposed for the site will be required to be constructed in accordance with the most recent edition of the California Building Code (CBC) and Indio Municipal Code Section 156.035 to provide collapse-resistant design.³⁴ According to the CBC, Site Class D may be used to estimate design seismic loading for the proposed structures. As a result of these standards, Project-related impacts associated with seismic ground shaking will be less than significant.

³¹ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p.4.6-3

³² City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p. 4.5-17.

³³ California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application, Accessed 08/15/2022.

³⁴ Indio Municipal Code 156.035 - Standards for Design and Improvement.

a, iii) Less Than Significant Impact. Three conditions contribute to the occurrence of liquefaction: Liquefaction-susceptible soils, groundwater within 50 feet or less below ground surface, and strong seismic shaking. Three soil types occur on the project site: Gilman fine sandy loam, wet, 0 to 2 percent slopes (GbA); Indio very fine sandy loam (Is); and Indio fine sandy loam (Ip).³⁵ According to the City of Indio General Plan EIR, the Project site is located in an area with a moderate liquefaction susceptibility.³⁶ However, based on samples from three wells in the vicinity of the Project, the depth of the groundwater in the area is more than 50 feet below the surface.³⁷ According to the City’s General Plan EIR, liquefaction in the City generally occurs in areas where groundwater is shallower than 30 feet. It is therefore anticipated that less than significant impacts will occur.

a, iv) No Impact. The Project site is located in a relatively flat area on the Coachella Valley floor. The nearest hillsides slope of the Indio Hills are approximately 1.5 miles north of the subject property. According to the County of Riverside Risk Assessment map, due to the minimal slopes in the area, the City of Indio does not face low, moderate, high, or existing landslide susceptibility. No impacts are expected to occur.

Less Than Significant Impact. Development of the Project site has the potential to result in the erosion of soils during site preparation, grading, and building construction. However, the applicant will be required to adhere to erosion control measures imposed by the City of Indio through grading and building permit regulations, including adherence to SCAQMD Rule 403.1, that requires a fugitive dust control plan. All grading activities would require grading permits from the Indio Public Works Department and would be required to comply with the standards imposed by the City to limit potential erosion impacts.

At buildout, there would be a low potential for soil erosion due to the predominantly level topography and the construction of buildings, impervious roads and stabilized landscaped areas. According to the Project-specific Drainage Report prepared by Atlas Civil Design, Best Management Practices, such as lining conveyance channels and regular repair of any erosion rills, will be implemented to ensure that the site design will not result in erosion on- or off-site. Impacts would be less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. Soils on the Project site consist primarily of Indio Fine Sandy Loam, Gilman Fine Sandy Loam, and Indio Very Fine Sandy Loam. These surface soils are not considered unstable soils or geologic units. Due to the depth of the groundwater in the Project vicinity, as well as the site’s distance from mountain slopes and foothills, there is not a high susceptibility to on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, less than significant impacts are expected.

³⁵ Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Inc., p.6.

³⁶ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, Figure 4-6.4

³⁷ Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared by KCE Matrix for Pacific West Communities, Inc.

- d) **No Impact.** As described in Section C, above, the Project site consists of fine sandy loam and fine sand, which have a low shrink-swell potential. Soils containing large amount of clay, which expands when water is absorbed and shrinks when dry, typically have a high susceptibility to expansion. The majority of soils in the City of Indio,³⁸ including the Project site, have a low shrink-swell potential, and thus no impacts are expected to occur.

- e) **No Impact.** The Project site is vacant and located in an area served by existing sewage infrastructure. The Project's wastewater demand would be accommodated by connections to existing wastewater infrastructure provided by the Valley Sanitation District (VSD). The Project will connect to the existing sewer main under Avenue 44 via an 8" PVC sewer pipe. As such, the Project would not require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to the ability of soils to support septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

- f) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** Like much of Indio, the Project site is located in an area with high paleontological potential.³⁹ According to historical background research conducted for the Project, the subject property has remained unsettled and undeveloped, except for agricultural use in the early or mid-20th century, but is within the boundary of ancient Lake Cahuilla, which has yielded fossilized snails and similar species. Paleontological or geologic resources in the Project site would likely have been disturbed during previous agricultural activity. However, given the potential sensitivity of the subject site, mitigation measures (GEO-1) should be implemented to prevent potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources.

Mitigation Measures:

GEO-1 All earth-moving operations within the project area reaching beyond a depth of three feet below the current ground surface must be monitored periodically for potential paleontological resources, with a full-time monitoring program implemented if potentially fossiliferous soils are encountered. The monitor should be prepared to quickly salvage fossils as they are unearthed to avoid construction delays and should collect samples of sediments that are likely to contain fossil remains of small vertebrates or invertebrates. However, the monitor must have the power to temporarily halt or divert grading equipment to allow for the removal of abundant or large specimens.

Monitoring:

GEO-A The paleontological monitor shall provide the City with a report of findings within 30 days of completion of earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project paleontologist, Planning Department

³⁸ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p. 4.6-4

³⁹ City of Indio EIR for the General Plan Update, Figure 4.5-3.

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

Sources: Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; City of Indio Climate Action Plan (2019).

Environmental Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) trap heat on the earth’s surface similarly to how greenhouses function to trap heat. GHGs are produced through natural processes as well as through human activity. The emissions of these gases related to human activity have increased since the industrial revolution, intensifying the greenhouse effect and, as a result, warming the earth’s climate. GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated compounds. Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) requires all cities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

The City of Indio’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) establishes a plan to meet the State emissions reduction targets for 2020 and 2030, as required by AB 32 and SB 32. According to the CAP, Indio’s 2010 communitywide emissions baseline is 607,946 metric tons of CO₂e (MTCO₂e), which is equivalent to 8 MTCO₂e per capita. In order to comply with SB 32, the City’s General Plan would need to achieve 5.9 MTCO₂e per capita by 2030. Accounting for reduction measures set forth in the CAP, future development consistent with the General Plan would result in communitywide emissions 387,122 MTCO₂e in 2030, which represents an emission level of 3.9 MTCO₂e per capita. Therefore, the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, and projects consistent with the General Plan Update, would achieve per capita thresholds for 2030 as established by SB 32.⁴⁰

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:

⁴⁰ City of Indio Climate Action Plan (2019).

- 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?

Discussion of Impacts

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

Construction: Construction activities will result in short-term GHG emissions associated with the operation of construction equipment, vehicle emissions from construction employee commutes, material hauling, and other ground disturbing activities. As shown in Table 6, the Project will generate 543.8136 metric tons of CO₂e during the 1-year construction period. There are currently no construction-related GHG emissions thresholds for projects of this nature. As such, construction-related GHG emissions were amortized over a 30-year period, added to annual operational emissions, and compared to applicable thresholds, in order to determine if construction emissions will result in a cumulatively considerable impact.

Operation: At buildout, five categories of emissions will contribute to operational GHG emissions either directly or indirectly: energy/electricity use, water use, solid waste disposal, mobile sources, and area emissions (pavement and architectural coating off-gassing). A summary of the projected construction and annual operational GHG emissions associated with the buildout of the proposed Project is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Projected GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons)	
Phase	CO₂e (MT/YR)
Construction	
2023	543.81
Construction Total	543.81
Operation	
Area	6.07
Energy	214.43
Mobile	948.59
Waste	41.64
Water	29.55

Table 6 Projected GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons)	
Phase	CO ₂ e (MT/YR)
Construction: 30-year amortized ¹	18.13
Total Operational	1,258.40
Project Per Capita	2.30
Climate Action Plan Per Capita Thresholds ²	3.9
Tier Compliance	Tier 2
1. Buildout construction GHG emissions were amortized over 30- years then added to buildout operational GHG emissions. $543.8136/30 = 18.1271$	
2. City of Indio CAP MTCO ₂ e Per Capita forecast for 2030	

As shown in the above table, the Project will generate lower per capita emissions than the per capita target for 2030 established in the City of Indio’s Climate Action Plan (CAP). Therefore, the Project complies with the SCAQMD Tier 2 threshold for compliance with a greenhouse gas reduction plan that is consistent with the goals of AB 32.

Buildout of the Project could result in an increased population of 547 residents, based on the proposed 180 units of multi-family housing and Indio average household size of 3.04 people.⁴¹ Based on total operational emissions of 1,258.40 metric tons of CO₂e per year at buildout, the Project could result in a per capita emissions rate of 2.30 MTCO₂e per person. The City’s CAP established CO₂e emissions forecasts of 6.5 MTCO₂e per capita in 2020 and 3.9 MTCO₂e per capita in 2030. These forecasts, based on a business-as-usual rate adjusted with local measures and development consistent with the General Plan, are compliant with the per capita thresholds as established by SB 32 and AB 32. The Project’s per capita emissions rate of 2.30 MTCO₂e is within the target established in the CAP, and is therefore compliant with the goals of AB 32 and SB 32.

In conclusion, based on its compliance with the SCAQMD Tier 2 thresholds, greenhouse gas emissions generated by the Project are expected to have a less than significant impact on the environment. Based on the Project’s consistency with the emissions targets set forth in the City’s CAP, it can also be concluded that the proposed development does not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouses gases. Impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁴¹ California Department of Finance Table E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2022.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓	
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?			✓	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✓
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?				✓
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?				✓
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				✓

Sources: City of Indio General Plan; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; California Department of Toxic Substances Control – EnviroStor; California State Water Resources Control Board – Geotracker.

Environmental Setting

Federal laws and regulations, such as the Environmental Protection Act of 1970, regulate the storage, use, generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, and investigate and mitigate the potential impacts of these materials on the environment and on human health. The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Branch provides additional oversight in Indio.

Historically, the City was one of the larger farming communities in the Coachella Valley. Today, agricultural areas are mostly adjacent to residential developments north of I-10 and at the southern border of the City limits (south of Avenue 50) with some smaller acreages of active farmland scattered in the center.⁴² Chemical overspray within areas of active agriculture adjacent to residential neighborhoods is a potential health hazard.

The former sites of land uses associated with hazardous materials are sometimes abandoned without proper cleanup, resulting in the contamination of soil and groundwater. These former hazardous material sites are referred to as “brownfields”. The City of Indio does not have many brownfield sites, but, as of the writing of the 2040 General Plan Update, does have one active cleanup, one recently completed cleanup, and two sites waiting for investigation.⁴³ There are no hazardous waste sites or sites with known contamination within a 0.5 miles radius of the Project site.⁴⁴ However, there is one leaking underground storage tank (LUST) cleanup site located less than 200 feet southeast of the Project, but the cleanup is complete.⁴⁵ The site is not designated as Locally Significant Farmland, and has not been used for agricultural purposes apart from a brief period around 1959, suggesting a low potential for soil contamination from prior use of herbicides, fertilizers and pesticides.

KCE Matrix, Inc. prepared a "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report" (ESA) for the site in June 2022 which is referenced herein. The methods and procedures used for the Phase I consisted of site visit, records review, interviews, and Vapor Encroachment Screen. Overall, it was found that the site does not have a significant or recent history of agricultural use, nor was evidence of migration of contamination from other sites observed through subsurface environmental site assessment activity.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project includes development of residential units which could involve use of limited quantities of chemicals such as cleaning and degreasing solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, pool chemicals, and similar materials. These chemicals will occur in limited quantities and will not require a hazardous material handling/storage permit. None of these chemicals will be used in sufficient quantities to pose a threat to humans or cause a foreseeable chemical release into the environment.

⁴² Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

⁴³ City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, 10-4.

⁴⁴ California Department of Toxic Substances Control – EnviroStor hazardous waste facilities and sites with known contamination map. Accessed 08/19/2022.

⁴⁵ California State Water Resources Control Board – Geotracker cleanup site map. Accessed 08/16/2022.

The Project construction phase would involve the use of heavy equipment, which uses small quantities of oil and fuels and other potential flammable substances. During construction, equipment would require refueling and potential minor maintenance on site that could lead to fuel and oil spills. The contractor will be subject to laws relating to the handling, storage and use of hazardous materials during construction, as per the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5.

The proposed Project would not result in a significant risk of explosion or accidental release of hazardous substances, because the cleaners and household chemicals used are not explosive and will not be stored in large quantities. The use and handling of hazardous materials during construction activities and long-term operation of the proposed Project would occur in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws including California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CalOSHA) and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) requirements. Impacts would be less than significant.

- c) **No Impact.** The nearest school to the proposed Project is Woodrow Wilson Middle School, located less than 0.5 miles west of the site, on the southwest side of the Interstate-10. The proposed Project will result in the development of residential units, which are not expected to emit any hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste to jeopardize schools. No impact is expected.
- d) **No Impact.** The Project site is currently vacant. There are no hazardous materials or waste sites located on or near the site, and the site is not included on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.⁴⁶ The proposed Project will not create a significant hazard to the public or environment. No impact is anticipated.
- e) **No Impact.** The Bermuda Dunes Airport (UDD) is located approximately 3.75 miles northwest of the subject property. The Project site is located well outside the airport planning boundary and operational and navigational hazard area. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working at the Project site. No impact is anticipated.
- f) **No Impact.** The proposed Project site is near Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway. The site will have direct access to Avenue 44, which is designated as a '4-Lane Boulevard with Median' according to the City's Mobility Element.⁴⁷ Golf Center Parkway is also designated as '4-Lane Boulevard with Median'.⁴⁸ The proposed Project will also have an emergency route connecting the development to Mojave Drive in the residential neighborhood to the north, and an emergency exit onto Avenue 44. Major roadways near the Project site would be used as regional emergency evacuation routes to and from the City. The Project access points will not alter the existing circulation pattern in the Project area or adversely impact evacuation plans.

⁴⁶ Nearest LUST Cleanup Site is more than 1000 feet away from the Project site according to the State Water resources Control Board GeoTracker, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>. Accessed 07/20/2022.

⁴⁷ City of Indio General Plan 2040, Figure 4-3.

⁴⁸ Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

The Fire and Police Departments will review the proposed parking and circulation plan for the Project to assure that driveways and roads are adequate for emergency vehicles. In addition, construction traffic management plans will be required to assure that the proposed Project will not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. No Project-related impact is expected.

- g) No Impact.** The Project site is located in an urban area and is not located in a wildland fire hazard zone and is not susceptible to wildfires. Therefore, the proposed Project will not expose people or structures to significant risks associated with wildfires. No Project related impact is expected.

Mitigation Measure: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Monitoring: None required. a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			✓	
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;			✓	
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;			✓	
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			✓	
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				✓
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			✓	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				✓

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; IWA 2015 Urban Water Management Plan – Final Report; Valley Sanitary District Website – Recycling Waste Water into Safe Water; WQMP for Indio Multifamily” (2022), prepared by Atlas Civil Design.

Environmental Setting

Domestic Water

The Project site is located within the Indio Water Authority (IWA) service area for domestic water. IWA's primary sources of water supply include groundwater produced by local potable water supply wells. Water supplies for the City of Indio are primarily from the lower aquifer in the Lower Whitewater River Subbasin. Because the Whitewater River Basin is an un-adjudicated basin, IWA does not hold specific water rights, but rather pumps supplies from the aquifer as needed to meet demands within its service area. IWA currently has 20 operational groundwater wells. Pumping capacities for these wells range from 1,200 gpm to 3,500 gpm, with a total pumping capacity of 74,600 AFY.⁴⁹ Its average demand is 17.4 million gallons per day or 19,490.5 AFY.

Water Quality

The proposed Project site is located in the Whitewater River watershed which drains into the Salton Sea and is part of the larger Colorado River Watershed.⁵⁰ All water providers in the watershed are required to comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board standards for the protection of water quality, including the preparation of site-specific Water Quality Management Plans for surface waters.

The City, including the Project site, is located within the Coachella Valley where the water quality is generally good to excellent.⁵¹ The extensive use of septic systems in Indio and elsewhere in the Coachella Valley historically has impacted water resources, but nitrate levels in Indio continue to meet or exceed current standards.⁵²

Wastewater Treatment Provider and City's Sewer System

The Project site is located in an area where sewer service is provided by the Valley Sanitary District (VSD). The Project will extend sewer lines from existing mains in Avenue 44, into and throughout the Project site.

VSD provides wastewater collection and treatment services for the City of Indio and the majority of IWA areas. The collection system for VSD consists of approximately 240 miles of sanitary sewer pipes and 4 pump stations.⁵³ Currently, VSD discharges treated wastewater to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and provides a small amount of treated wastewater for on-site irrigation and agricultural irrigation for local tribes. IWA is currently pursuing opportunities with VSD to provide recycled water to golf courses and parks from VSD's plant in the future. VSD currently treats approximately 6.5 million gallons per day through an activated sludge process, and has a capacity of 9.5 million gallons per day. An additional 0.5 million gallons per day is treated through oxidation ponds, which have a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day.

⁴⁹ IWA's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan – Final Report.

⁵⁰ Indio General Plan – Chapter 8 (Conservation Element, Page 8-9)

⁵¹ City of Indio General Plan Update EIR, p.3-7

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Valley Sanitary District Website – Recycling Waste Water into Safe Water.

Floodplain Management

In the City of Indio, local drainage facilities generally convey runoff from local streets and lots to the regional facilities. The local storm drain system consists of gutters, engineered storm drains, and channels. There are limited existing storm drainage facilities in the City.

Regional drainage is managed by the Coachella Valley Water District, which maintains the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, and the La Quinta Evacuation Channel.

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Atlas Civil Design prepared a Water Quality Management Plan for the proposed Project, as required by all water providers in the Whitewater River Watershed, in order to comply with Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board standards for the protection of water quality.

The proposed Project will generate demand for domestic water and wastewater. It will not violate IWA and CVWD water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. The proposed Project will also be required to comply with CVWD and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations to minimize the pollutant load associated with urban activities. The preparation and approval of a Project-specific WQMP, including Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address Pollutants of Concern, is required to comply with these regulations.

Compliance with the conditions of approval and adherence to local, state and federal requirements will assure that Project-related impacts associated with water quality standards will be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will require water for domestic use, landscape irrigation, and outdoor recreational use. The Project proposes 180 dwelling units over a gross building area of 169,592 square feet, landscaped area (including dog parks, tot lots, and private open space) of 101,871 square feet, and 797 square feet of outdoor recreation space (pool and spa). As shown in Table 7, buildout of the proposed Project has the potential to generate a demand of 40.51 acre-feet per year.

Table 7 Water Demand at Project Buildout				
Proposed Land Use	Max/Min Allowed	Water Consumption Factor	Water Demand (gpd)	Total Water Demand At buildout (AFY)
Multi-Family Residential	180 DU	167.2 (gdp/DU) ⁵⁴	30,096 gpd	33.71
Landscaping (Dog park, tot lot, private open space)	101,871 SQ FT	0.45 ETAF ⁵⁵	5,953.83 gpd	6.67
Outdoor Recreation (Pool/spa)	797 SQ FT	1.1 Plant Factor ⁵⁶	113.86 gpd	0.13
TOTAL				40.51

The Indio Water Authority (IWA) had an actual water demand of 18,208 AF in 2015 and projects 27,730 AF of water demand in 2025. The proposed Project will increase water demand by approximately 0.22% over the 2015 baseline demand or 0.15% over the projected demand for 2025. In developing projections for future water demand, the IWA based its analysis on, in part, the City’s General Plan. The proposed Project is consistent with the Mixed Use Neighborhood designation assigned to it in the General Plan, and its water demand would have been factored into IWA’s projections. Impacts associated with domestic water demand are therefore expected to be less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant.

Existing Drainage

The Project site is almost completely flat with no clearly identifiable drainage pattern. The nearest receiving water is the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. On-site soils are highly permeable sands, and therefore it is anticipated that most water will infiltrate the sands rather than running off-site.

Proposed Drainage System

In accordance with Section 55.26 of the City of Indio Code of Ordinances, the Project will retain runoff on-site. Per Section 55.25, the Project is required to store a 100-year 24-hour duration storm on site. Atlas Civil Design prepared a Drainage Report that analyzed Project buildout. Three infiltration basins and four infiltration trenches will be located on site to collect and store stormwater. The basins and trenches will be designed to store a 100-year 24-hour storm event. Stormwater runoff is thus not anticipated during most average rain events.

⁵⁴ Based on 3.04 persons per household (CA Department of Finance Table 2: E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 2022 for the City of Indio.) and 55 gdp per occupant (CVWD Indoor Water Use Performance Standard).

⁵⁵ Based on Evapotranspiration (ETo) for ETo Zone 4 from CVWD Landscape Ordinance 1302.5, Appendix C and ETO Adjustment Factor (ETAF) from CVWD Landscape Ordinance 1302.5, Appendix D.

⁵⁶ Based on Evapotranspiration (ETo) for ETo Zone 4 from CVWD Landscape Ordinance 1302.5, Appendix C and Plant Factor of 1.1 for a stationary body of water, from CVWD Landscape ordinance 1302.5

Erosion and On- or Off-site Siltation

Adherence to City requirements, including Best Management Practices (BMPs), will ensure the Project site design will not result in erosion or siltation on- or off-site. As stated in the WQMP, the Project will apply BMPs such as lining conveyance channels to reduce erosion and weekly landscape maintenance for purposes including the repair of any erosion rills.⁵⁷ The Project will be subject to the City's requirements, including BMPs for the control of silts and other contaminants in flood waters.

Summary

Prior to the issuance of grading permits, approval of the Project-specific hydrology study and Water Quality Management Plan will be required from the City. Approval of these plans and implementation of the BMPs discussed within the plans will ensure that the proposed Project will not create or contribute water which would exceed the capacity of existing stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial polluted runoff.

- d) **Less than Significant Impact.** No hazard from a dam failure, tsunami, or seiche is possible because the Project site is not located in proximity to a body of water. There is a low potential of flooding if the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, which is approximately 1,100 feet southwest of the site, were to breach during a substantial storm event. However, because the channel is design to accommodate a storm larger than a 100-year storm, the risk is very low. A less than significant impact is anticipated.

- e) **No Impact.** The Project is required to implement a WQMP approved by the City of Indio and the Regional Water Quality Control Board and will be required to comply with all applicable water quality standards during construction and long-term operation. As discussed above, the Project's expected water demand is less than 1% of the IWA's current and projected supplies, indicating that impacts to the Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update will be negligible. Adherence to all applicable standards ensures that there will be no impacts to relevant water quality control plans.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁵⁷ "WQMP for Indio Multifamily" (2022), prepared by Atlas Civil Design.

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

Sources: Sources: City of Indio General Plan (Final– September 2019); Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update. City of Indio Zoning Update Map, City of Indio General Plan 2040 Land Use Map; City of Indio 6th Cycle Housing Element (2021-2029).

Environmental Setting

The Project is situated in the City of Indio and is governed by the policies and land use designations in the City’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The Project site is designated as Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MUN) according to the 2040 General Plan Update Land Use and Zoning Update maps. The MUN land use designation “provides moderate-to higher-intensity neighborhood development that features a variety of multifamily housing choices and limited neighborhood-serving commercial uses in a walkable environment”.⁵⁸ It allows residential development of up to 40 DU/AC.

The area surrounding the Project site is comprised of vacant, residential, and commercial land uses, designated as Suburban Neighborhood and Mixed-Use Neighborhood.

The City of Indio participates in the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). As discussed in the Biological Resources section, the Project site is not located in a CVMSHCP conservation area.

a) No Impact. The Project site is currently vacant and located in an area that is predominantly developed with residential and commercial uses. Surrounding residential communities operate independently of the subject property and will not be physically divided by the proposed Project. No impact is anticipated.

No Impact. The subject site is designated as Mixed-Use Neighborhood in the City’s General Plan Update and Zoning Update. The designation allows for moderate to high intensity multifamily housing up to 40 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC). The Project proposes a

⁵⁸ City of Indio General Plan 2040, p.3-19

residential density of approximately 32 DU/AC and thus would comply with the City’s General Plan. The proposed development will also be subject to the City of Indio Municipal Code standards.

The Avenue 44 Apartments support the General Plan’s policies regarding the provision of a broad range of housing choices within a short distance of goods and services. The Project will also support the goals established in the City’s Housing Element. For example, as stated in Goal 2 in the Housing Element, the City of Indio aims to provide “an affordable housing supply that meets the needs of extremely low-, very low-, low- and moderate-income households”.⁵⁹ The Project will provide 100 percent affordable multi-housing units to lower income households, thus contributing to the City’s progress towards addressing the Statewide housing supply and affordability crisis.

As discussed in Section IV, Biological Resources, the Project site is within the boundaries of and subject to the provisions of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan but is not located within or adjacent to a CVMSHCP Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposed Project will not conflict with adopted plans and programs and therefore, no impacts are expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁵⁹ City of Indio 6th Cycle Housing Element (2021-2029), p. 4.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	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?				✓
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?				✓

Sources: City of Indio General Plan; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

Environmental Setting

Sand and gravel, known as aggregate, are some of Indio’s most important mineral resources. Asphalt, concrete, road base, stucco and plaster can be comprised of 80 percent to 100 percent aggregate. As a key component of these common construction materials, aggregate plays a vital role in the local economy.

Mining activity near Indio generally occurs north of the City, including eight active mines in its Sphere of Influence.⁶⁰ The majority of City lands, including the Project site, have been classified as Mineral Zone MRZ-1, indicating “areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources.”⁶¹

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) No Impact. The Project site is located in an urbanized area designated for mixed use development (MUN) according to the City’s General Plan Update. This zoning and land use designation does not permit mineral resource extraction. There are no permitted mining operations in the vicinity of the Project site, nor does this area of the City generally lend itself to mining activities, as indicated by the MRZ-1 classification. No impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁶⁰ City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, 4.11-3.

⁶¹ City of Indio General Plan 2040, Figure 8-2.

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

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Policy Document (2004); Golf Center Parkway Noise Impact Analysis, prepared by William Maddux / Urban Crossroads, Inc. (September 27, 2022); City of Indio Code of Ordinance, Chapter 95C Noise Control.

Environmental Setting

Noise can be defined as unwanted sound. Excessive noise levels can have negative impacts to physical and psychological well-being, property values, the natural environment, and overall quality of life. Sources of noise in Indio include mobile sources, such as the passage of vehicles, trains, and aircrafts, as well as stationary sources, such as air conditioners, and industrial, commercial and agricultural operations. Transportation related sources are the most dominance source of noise in Indio. The Project Site is located in proximity to major roads, namely Avenue 44, Golf Center Parkway, and the I-10.

The FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual defines vibration as the periodic oscillation of a medium or object. Ground-borne vibration may be generated by natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, or by human sources, such as heavy machinery, construction equipment, or traffic. Typically, ground-borne vibration from human activity diminishes rapidly with distance from the source.

Residences, schools, hospitals, and churches are typically more sensitive to noise than commercial or industrial developments. Similarly, people (particularly residents, the elderly, and the sick) are sensitive receptors to vibration.

Through its General Plan and Municipal Code, the City of Indio has established goals, policies, and programs to limit and reduce the effects of noise intrusion on sensitive land uses and to set acceptable noise levels for varying types of land uses. The Noise Element in the City’s General Plan includes policies protecting sensitive receptors from excessive noise, requirements for noise computability between new and existing developments, and considerations for airport land use planning. Temporary noise sources, including landscaping equipment, home stereo systems, and domestic animals, are governed by the City’s Municipal Code.⁶²

As part of the development of the Noise Element, noise level measurements were collected at various locations throughout the city to set standards for normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, and clearly unacceptable noise levels for different categories of land use. Per the City of Indio General Plan, noise levels of up to 65 dBA CNEL are “acceptable” and levels up to 75 dBA CNEL are “conditionally acceptable” for multi-family residential uses.⁶³ The City of Indio also has an interior noise level threshold of 45 dBA CNEL.

The City of Indio General Plan and Municipal Code do not identify operational noise level standards for stationary sources to assess the noise levels at sensitive receptors in the Project vicinity. Therefore, for analysis purposes, Urban Crossroads, Inc. used the exterior noise level limits set by the County of Riverside in County Code Section 9.52.040 General Sound Level Standards. The City of Indio General Plan and Municipal also do not establish maximum acceptable construction noise levels. Instead, Urban Crossroads used the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual for analysis.

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.** The proposed Project is located on a vacant site north of Avenue 44, east of I-10, and west of Golf Center Parkway. Residential uses to the northeast, west, and north of the Project site are the nearest sensitive receptors.

Impacts of the proposed Project on Surrounding Development

To assess the potential for long-term operational and short-term construction noise impacts, four sensitive receiver locations in the Project vicinity (shown in Appendix D, exhibit 8-4) were identified as representative locations for analysis. These locations included two immediately north of the Project, one immediately west, and one across Golf Center Parkway to the east, adjacent to a mobile home. The locations were selected to represent sensitive receptors in the Project area.

Operational Noise: The Project is not expected to generate operational noise beyond sources typically associated with residential land uses, such as people, parking lot activity, garage doors, air conditions, and trash collection. To estimate Project-related operational noise impacts, Urban Crossroads, Inc. collected reference noise level measurements from similar

⁶² City of Indio Code of Ordinance, Chapter 95C: Noise Control.

⁶³ City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, table 11-1.

activities – including air conditioning, trash enclosure activity, and parking lot movement – to represent the noise levels expected from the proposed Project. These operational noise levels were evaluated against exterior noise level thresholds based on the Riverside County exterior noise level standards at the four sensitive receiver locations.

Table 8						
Operational Noise Level Compliance						
Receiver Location ¹	Project Operational Noise Levels (dBA L _{eq})		Noise Level Standards (dBA L _{eq})		Noise Level Standards Exceeded?	
	Daytime	Nighttime	Daytime	Nighttime	Daytime	Nighttime
R1	40.0	36.4	55	45	No	No
R2	29.2	25.3	55	45	No	No
R3	46.9	42.0	55	45	No	No
R4	48.5	44.6	55	45	No	No

¹ See Appendix D, Exhibit 8-A for the receiver locations.

Table 8, above, shows that Project-related operational levels will satisfy the City of Indio 55 dBA L_{eq} daytime and 45 dBA L_{eq} nighttime exterior noise levels standards. Operational noise impacts associated with the Project are therefore considered less than significant.

Construction Noise: Noise generated by construction of the Project will be short-term in nature. Sources of construction noise will include a combination of trucks, power tools, concrete mixers, and portable generators, which can reach high noise levels when combined. The combination of equipment being used will vary across the site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating phases of Project construction.

Section 95C.08 of the City of Indio Municipal Code states that construction activity is permitted only during the following hours:

- Pacific Standard Time: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays; or
- Pacific Daylight Time: 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays; 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays; and
- Between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays and holidays all year.

Construction of the proposed Project will comply with the hours set by the City.

Table 9				
Typical Construction Noise Level Compliance				
Receiver Location	Construction Noise Levels (dBA L _{eq})			
	Highest Construction Noise Levels	Land Use	Threshold ¹	Threshold Exceeded?
R1	66.1	Residential	80	No
R2	55.6	Residential	80	No
R3	73.0	Residential	80	No
R4	73.1	Mobile Home	80	No

¹ Federal Transit Administration, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual.

For the purposes of analysis, Urban Crossroads, Inc. used reference construction noise level measurements from the Road Construction Noise Model (RCNM) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Table 9, above, shows the Project-related construction noise level at each sensitive receptor location using the highest reference noise level. Based on the FTA construction-related daytime noise level threshold of 80 dBA L_{max} , Project-related construction noise levels of 55.6 to 73.1 would satisfy the significance threshold.

Based on compliance with the permitted hours for construction activity, and noise levels below the threshold of 80 dBA Leq during permitted hours, construction-related noise impacts in the Project vicinity will be less than significant.

Impacts of Surrounding Noise on the Proposed Project

It is expected that the primarily source of noise impacts to the Project will be traffic noise from Avenue 44 and I-10. To assess the impacts of this traffic noise, noise levels at the building exterior and interior were measured for the residential buildings on the Project site which are adjacent to Avenue 44 and I-10.

Exterior Noise Levels: To estimate the exterior noise levels at the building facades of the proposed residential buildings, Urban Crossroads, Inc. used the FHWA traffic noise prediction model (Appendix D). The results of the model, summarized in Table 10, below, indicate the exterior noise levels will satisfy the City of Indio noise standards for multi-family residential land uses and exterior noise levels.

Table 10					
Exterior Noise Levels (CNEL)					
Lot	Roadway	Type	Noise Level 1st Floor (dBA CNEL)	Noise Level 2nd Floor (dBA CNEL)	Noise Level 3rd Floor (dBA CNEL)
Building 2	Avenue 44	Three-Story	69.1	69.4	69.0
Building 2	I-10	Three-Story	62.7	62.7	62.7
Building 4	Avenue 44	Three-Story	69.1	69.4	69.0
Building 4	I-10	Three-Story	61.5	61.5	61.5
Building 6	Avenue 44	Three-Story	69.1	69.4	69.0
Building 6	I-10	Three-Story	59.5	59.5	59.5
Building 8	Avenue 44	Three-Story	69.1	69.4	69.0

Source: Noise Study by Urban Crossroads, Inc.

According to the City of Indio Noise Element (Table 11-1), for multi-family residential land uses noise levels of up to 65 dBA CNEL are considered *acceptable*, and noise levels up to 75 dBA CNEL are considered *conditionally acceptable*. The Project’s exterior noise levels at the building façade for units adjacent to Avenue 44 and I-10 range from 59.5 to 69.1 dBA CNEL, and therefore impacts are considered less than significant.

Interior Noise Levels: The City of Indio has an interior noise level standard of 45 dBA CNEL. To ensure that the Project interior noise levels comply with this standard, Urban Crossroads, Inc. measured the interior noise levels on the first, second, and third floor of residential

buildings adjacent to Avenue 44 and I-10. With the implementation of standard noise reduction measures (N-1 to N-5), interior noise levels will range from 34.5 to 44.4 dBA CNEL, thus satisfying the City’s threshold of 45.0 dBA CNEL.

Summary

Noise levels produced by the operation of the Project will satisfy the City’s daytime and nighttime standards. Short-term noise produced by the construction of the Project will abide by the hours permitted by the City and will remain within the FTA’s construction noise level threshold. Impacts of noise sources on the Project will satisfy the City’s standard for exterior noise levels. With the application of standard noise reduction measures to the design of the residential buildings (N-1 to N-5), interior noise levels will be below the City’s standard. Overall, both impacts related to noise produced by the Project and impacts of noise to the Project will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The background vibration-velocity level in residential areas is typically 50 VdB. Ground-borne vibration is generally perceptible to people at approximately 65 VdB, and becomes more than barely perceptible at 75 Vdb. The City of Indio does not specify specific vibration level limits in its General Plan or Municipal Code, so Urban Crossroads, Inc. used the Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual as a basis for analysis.⁶⁴

Table 11								
Construction Equipment Vibration Levels								
Receiver Location	Distance to Construction Activity (ft)	Typical Construction Vibration Levels PPV (in/sec) ¹					Thresholds PPV (in/sec) ²	Thresholds Exceeded?
		Small bulldozer	Jack-hammer	Loaded Trucks	Large Bulldozer	Highest Vibration Level		
R1	21’	0.00	0.05	0.10	0.12	0.12	0.30	No
R2	19’	0.00	0.05	0.11	0.13	0.13	0.30	No
R3	50’	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.30	No
R4	444’	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	No

¹ Based on the Vibration Source Levels of Construction Equipment.
² Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual, April 2020, Table 19, p. 38
 PPV = Peak Particle Velocity

Table 11, above, shows the expected Project-related vibration levels at the nearest sensitive receiver locations, relative to the maximum acceptable continuous vibration threshold of 0.30 PPV (in/sec) for older residential buildings. Based on the Caltrans threshold, the Project will have less than significant construction vibration levels. Furthermore, the typical construction vibration levels are unlikely to be sustained at the levels shown in Table 11 through the entire construction period, but rather will occur only at times that the operation of heavy equipment will be required. Project-related construction vibration impacts will be less than significant.

⁶⁴ Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual, (18 p.38), Table 19.

- c) **No impact.** The Project site is located approximately 3.8 miles southeast of the Bermuda Dunes Airport. The airport's noise contours are localized and do not extend to the vicinity of the subject property.⁶⁵ Less than significant impacts will occur.

Mitigation Measures:

- N-1** Windows and Glass Doors: First, second, and third-story facades of buildings adjacent to Avenue 44 require windows and glass doors with well-fitted, well weather-stripped assemblies with minimum sound transmission class (STC) ratings of 27.
- N-2** Doors (Non-Glass): All exterior doors shall be well weather-stripped and have minimum STC ratings of 27. Well-sealed perimeter gaps around the doors are essential to achieve the optimal STC rating.
- N-3** Walls: At any penetrations of exterior walls by pipes, ducts, or conduits, the space between the wall and pipes, ducts, or conduits shall be caulked or filled with mortar to form an airtight seal.
- N-4** Roof: Roof sheathing of wood construction shall be per manufacturer's specification or caulked plywood of at least one-half inch thick. Ceiling shall be per manufacturer's specification or well-sealed gypsum board of at least one-half inch thick. Insulation with at least a rating of R-19 shall be used in the attic space.
- N-5** Ventilation: Arrangements for any habitable room shall be such that an exterior door or window can be kept closed when the room is in use and still receive circulated air. A forced air circulation system (e.g. air conditioning) or active ventilation system (e.g. fresh air supply) shall be provided which satisfies the requirements of the Uniform Building Code.

Monitoring:

- N-A** The project architect shall demonstrate to the City's Building Department that the requirements for construction meet the standards listed in Mitigation Measures N-1 through N-5, with the submittal of building permits.

Responsible Agencies: Project architect, City Building Department.

⁶⁵ Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Policy Document (2004) – Bermuda Dunes Airport, Map BD-3 – Noise Compatibility Contours.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			✓	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census of Population and Housing; 2020-2045 RTPSCS Demographics and Growth Forecast by Southern California Association of Governments; State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — January 1, 2021-2022.

Environmental Setting

The City of Indio has a current population of approximately 89,137 persons,⁶⁶ which is expected to grow to 123,300 by 2045.⁶⁷ Currently, the City is composed of a mix of single-family, multi-family, and mobile homes development, but the majority (71.9%) of housing units are single-family homes.⁶⁸

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Based on an average household size of 3.04,⁶⁹ implementation of the proposed Project (180 units) could result in an increased population of approximately 547 people. This represents 0.44% of the city’s anticipated 2045 population of 123,300, which would have a less than significant impact on the overall population of the area.

The site is currently vacant and undeveloped. The proposed Project occurs on the City’s existing street grid and will tie into existing utility systems. Since existing streets, utilities and public facilities are located adjacent to the Project site along Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway, the Project will not result in considerable construction or expansion of infrastructure. It will, however, require the addition of access points on Avenue 44 and Mojave Drive. Overall, less than significant impacts are anticipated.

⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census of Population and Housing.

⁶⁷ 2020-2045 RTPSCS Demographics and Growth Forecast by Southern California Association of Governments.

⁶⁸ Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

⁶⁹ 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.

- b) **No Impact.** The subject property is vacant, and the proposed Project would not displace any existing housing or require replacement housing elsewhere. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a) Fire protection?			✓	
b) Police protection?			✓	
c) Schools?			✓	
d) Parks?			✓	
e) Other public facilities?			✓	

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; School Impact/Developer Fees, Desert Sands Unified School District, effective May 2020.

Environmental Setting

Fire Protection

Fire protection and emergency medical services in the City of Indio are provided by the Indio Fire Department.⁷⁰ The nearest fire station is Fire Station #5, located at 42-900 Golf Center Parkway, less than 0.5 miles north of the subject site. The station is staffed by 7 firefighters, who operate one paramedic fire engine.

Police Protection

Police protection services are provided by the Indio Police Department. The Indio Police Station is located at 46-800 Jackson Street, approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the Project site. The police department has various crime programs including a Citizens Online Police reporting system, a police K-9 program, police dispatch, community outreach, and neighborhood watch programs. The department has a staff of approximately 80 employees and its response times are approximately 5 minutes within the 5-beat system.

Schools

Indio receives educational services from two K-12 school districts: Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD) and Coachella Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) and one community

⁷⁰ Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

college district. The proposed Project is located within the DSUSD boundaries.⁷¹ DSUSD consists of 19 elementary schools, 1 charter elementary school, 6 middle schools, 1 charter middle school, 4 comprehensive high schools, 2 continuation high schools, 1 alternative education school, preschool, and centralized administration.

Parks

The City has dedicated approximately 1,926 acres of land for open space/recreation/horse facilities. The nearest municipal park to the Project site is Cahuilla Park, located at 83787 Hopi Avenue, approximately 500 feet north of the Project site.

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The population increase of approximately 547 people resulting from the proposed Project will result in a slight increase in demand for fire services. Development of the proposed Project will require payment of the City's development impact fees, which are designed to share the costs of the added demand on services and facilities generate by new development.

In accordance with standard City practices, the Fire Department would review Project plans before permits are issued to ensure compliance with all applicable fire and building code standards and to ensure that adequate fire and life safety measures are incorporated into the Project in compliance with all applicable state and city fire safety regulations. Emergency access will be provided to the site via one standard access drive and two emergency access only drives onto Avenue 44, as well as an emergency route connecting to Mojave Drive.

Because the proposed Project would be required to comply with City standards and the proposed Project is not anticipated to generate substantial additional demand for fire protection services and would not result in the need for new or expanded facilities, the Project's potential impact on fire protection services would be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The ultimate development of the site will result in a marginal increase in demand for police services. Police personnel will be able to access the site using the entry points on Avenue 44 as well as the emergency access point on Mojave Drive. The Project will be required to comply with all Police Department regulations and procedures. No construction of new or expanded police services or facilities are required for the proposed Project. Impacts will be less than significant.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will result in the development of 180 multi-family residential units. Based on DSUSD student generation rates, shown below, the Project has the potential to generate approximately 63 kindergarten through twelfth grade students, as shown in Table 12.

⁷¹ Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

Table 12 Project Student Generation		
School Type	Generation Rate (per residential unit)	Project's Student Generation
Elementary School	0.1486	27
Middle School	0.0793	14
High School	0.1221	22
Total:		63
Source: Desert Sands Unified School District - Fee Justification Report For New Residential And Commercial/Industrial Development, Table VI Student Generation Rate, May 18, 2022.		

The proposed Project will be subject to the DSUSD developer fees in place at the time development occurs, which currently stand at \$4.08 per square foot of residential development.⁷² As a result of the developer fee, impacts to school resources are anticipated to be less than significant.

- d, e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project's increase in permanent population has the potential to increase the use of existing local or regional parks/other public facilities. The development proposes onsite recreational amenities and open spaces for the site, including a pool and spa, an off-leash dog park and a tot lot, that would help offset the impact to the city's existing park/other public facilities. In addition, the Project will be required to pay the development impact fee for parks imposed on all new development in the City.

Overall, Project build out is expected to have marginal impacts on local and regional public facilities. No additional public facilities will be required for the proposed Project, and increased in demand for the city's existing facilities will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁷² School Impact/Developer Fees, Desert Sands Unified School District, effective May 2020.

XVI. RECREATION				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			✓	
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?			✓	

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Desert Recreation District – About Us.

Environmental Setting

The City of Indio owns and maintains 107 acres of park space distributed across 16 parks, as well as community centers and a municipal golf course. The City is located in the Desert Recreation District (DRD), which is the largest park and recreation district in California,⁷³ covering over 1,800 square miles from Rancho Mirage east to the Salton Sea, and providing recreational services to more than 380,000 residents throughout the Coachella Valley. DRD is responsible for over 30 recreational facilities that include community and fitness centers, sports fields, swimming pools, a golf course and driving range, and various parks and open spaces.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) Less Than Significant Impact. At buildout, the proposed Project will result in an estimated additional population of 547 residents. This population growth is not so substantial that significant impacts to existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities would be anticipated.

As required in Section 156 of the City of Indio Zoning Ordinance for residential projects, the Avenue 44 Apartments will include on-site recreational amenities. Common on-site recreational facilities will include a pool and spa, an off-leash dog park, and a tot lot. Residents can be expected to utilize on-site recreational amenities as well as local and regional recreational facilities. Project-related impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁷³ Desert Recreation District – About Us, <https://www.myrecreationdistrict.com/about-us>

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

Sources: City of Indio General Plan; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; County of Riverside, 2020, Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service, Vehicle Miles Traveled; California Public Resources Code Section 21099(b)(1) (2021).

Environmental Setting

In the City of Indio, the circulation system consists of roadways, freeways, bus lines, sidewalks, and bike lanes. The different modes of transportation include vehicular travel, public transit, walking, bicycling, and golf carts. All roadways in the City are classified into various roadway types based on number of lanes and other facilities, including bicycle lanes, sidewalks and parkways. The City’s acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for both roadway segments and intersection operations is LOS D or better. All area roadways and intersections currently operate at LOS D or better.⁷⁴

Major roadways in the vicinity of the Project site include Avenue 44, Golf Center Parkway, and Interstate-10. Local streets adjacent to the Project include Aztec Street and Mojave Drive.

According to the planned bicycle network in the City’s 2040 General Plan Update, Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway are both assigned as Class 2 Bike Lanes in the vicinity of the Project site. SunLine Transit Routes 80 and 81 are planned to serve the Project, running on Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway. Currently, no bus routes run in the immediate vicinity of the Project site.

⁷⁴ Final EIR for the City of Indio General Plan update 2040, Mobility Element Technical Report, Table 3-2

The proposed Project is consistent with the City’s 2040 General Plan Update, published within three years of this Initial Study. With the approval of the City’s Traffic Engineer, as explained in Appendix E, Terra Nova prepared an evaluation of traffic impacts.⁷⁵

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed Project is consistent with the Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN) land use designations assigned in the 2040 General Plan Update (GPU), as well as with the corresponding policies established in the Mobility element of the GPU. The MUN designation permits residential densities of up to 40 dwelling unit per acre (DU/AC). The Project proposes the development of 180 units on approximately 6 acres, or a density of 32 DU/AC. As described in Appendix E, it can be expected that the Project will result in a 21% to 43% reduction in trip generation when compared to that analyzed in the General Plan EIR, and resulting impacts to level of service (LOS) will be less than significant.

There are currently no dedicated bike lanes on Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway is currently marked as a shared road. According to the GPU, both roads are future Class 2 Bike Lanes in the vicinity of the Project site,⁷⁶ which provides a delineated lane for one-way bike travel. The Project will be required to build its half-section of Avenue 44 to ultimate right-of-way, including the Class II bike lane.

As discussed above, while the Project is currently not served by any bus routes, the GPU proposes routes running on Avenue 44 and Golf Center Parkway. The proposed Project will not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities. No impact is anticipated.

- b) **No Impact.** Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) of the CEQA Guidelines puts forward guidelines for implementing Senate Bill 743, requiring the provisions of an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts. Alternate measurements of transportation impacts may include “vehicle miles traveled, vehicle miles traveled per capita, automobile trip generation rates, or automobile trips generated.”⁷⁷ Currently, the city of Indio has not adopted regulations or thresholds pertaining to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the reduction of GHG emissions, but uses guidelines from the County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service, Vehicles Miles Traveled. These guidelines are based on the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts on CEQA.⁷⁸

The Riverside County guidelines establish guidelines which, if met, a Project is not required to submit detailed VMT analysis. These criteria include the following:⁷⁹

⁷⁶ City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, figure 4-1.

⁷⁷ California Public Resources Code Section 21099(b)(1) (2021).

⁷⁸ County of Riverside, 2020, Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service, Vehicle Miles Traveled.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Figure 3.

- Small Projects (194 multi-family dwelling units);
- Projects near high quality transit;
- Affordable housing;
- Residential and office Projects in an area under VMT thresholds as shown on screening maps (Low VMT Area).

The Project proposes the development of affordable housing, and thus is presumed to have a less than significant impact relating to VMT analysis. As discussed above, the proposed Project is consistent with the General Plan, and is thus anticipated to have no impacts on the traffic flows and LOS already accounted for. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Project will not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

- c, d) No Impact.** Access points to the proposed Project will be provided from Avenue 44. Regional access to the site will be provided via Golf Center Parkway, Interstate-10, Highway 111, and Jackson Street. Emergency vehicles will have an additional access to the site via Mojave Drive, as well as additional emergency entrance/exits on Avenue 44.

Prior to construction, the Indio Fire Department and Police Department will review the Project site plan to ensure safety measures are address, including emergency access and geometric design. The proposed Project will therefore not result in increased hazards to due geometric design features or inadequate emergency access.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

<p>XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES</p> <p>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:</p>	<p>Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>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</p>		<p>✓</p>		
<p>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.</p>		<p>✓</p>		

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Cultural Resources Report prepared by CRM TECH (September 2022).

Environmental Setting

Cahuilla Indians are known to have lived in the Coachella Valley for thousands of years. They were Takic-speaking people who lived in various groups in the area. Anthropologists generally divide the Cahuilla into three groups according to their geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the San Gorgonio Pass-Palm Springs area, the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and the Cahuilla Valley, and the Desert Cahuilla of the eastern Coachella Valley.

Population data prior to European contact is nearly impossible to obtain, but estimates range from 3,600 to 10,000 people over a territory of 2,400 square miles. The Cahuilla population was decimated in the 19th century as a result of diseases spread by European contact.

Today, Native Americans of Pass or Desert Cahuilla heritage are mostly affiliated with one or more of the Indian reservations in and near the Coachella Valley, including the Cabazon, Augustine, Torres Martinez, Twenty-nine Palms, Agua Caliente, and Morongo.

Discussion of Impacts

a, i, ii) Less than Significant with Mitigation. As discussed in Section V, cultural resources, the Cultural Resource Report prepared by CRM TECH did not find any significant archaeological or historical resources on the Project site. CRM TECH contacted representatives of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. No response was received from the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. A representative of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla participated in the field survey, but the tribe did not provide any information about potential tribal cultural resources in the Project vicinity. The Sacred Lands File search conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission at the request of CRM TECH did not identify any Native American cultural resources in the Project vicinity.

The City is conducting Tribal consultation, as required by AB 52. The results of consultation will be included either as mitigation prior to the adoption of the Initial Study, or as conditions of approval. However, the mitigation measure included in Section V, Cultural Resources, requires the presence of a Tribal monitor during earth moving activities, to assure that impacts are reduced to less than significant levels.

As described in Section V, archaeological and Tribal monitoring will be required for the Project for all earth moving activities. This assures that no buried Tribal resources will be impacted by the Project, although no surficial resources have been identified. This mitigation measure serves to reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measures: See Section V (Cultural Resources).

Monitoring: See Section V (Cultural Resources).

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✓	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			✓	
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?			✓	
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?			✓	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			✓	

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Solid Waste Generation Rates by CalRecycle; Preliminary Drainage Study prepared by Atlas Civil Design (August 2022); Valley Sanitary District, Treatment Operations; 2020 Regional Urban Water Management Plan.

Environmental Setting

Domestic Water

The Project site is located within the Indio Water Authority (IWA) service area for domestic water. The City of Indio's largest water supply source is groundwater from the Indio Subbasin (Whitewater River), one of four subbasins of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basins. Because the Whitewater River Basin is an un-adjudicated basin, IWA does not hold specific water rights, but rather pumps

supplies from the aquifer as needed to meet demands within its service area. IWA currently has 20 operational groundwater wells. IWA's total current urban water demand was 19,880 AFY in 2020.⁸⁰

Wastewater Treatment Provider and City's Sewer System

Sewer service for the Project site is provided by the Valley Sanitary District (VSD). The Project will extend on-site sewer lines from the site to an existing sewer main under Avenue 44.

VSD provides wastewater collection and treatment services for 98% of the City's population. The collection system for VSD consists of approximately 246 miles of sanitary sewer pipes and 5 active pump stations, eight siphons, and a wastewater treatment plant.⁸¹ VSD is partnering with the City and IWA to complement a recycled water program. VSD currently treats approximately 6.5 million gallons per day through an activated sludge process and has a capacity of 9.5 million gallons per day. An additional 0.5 million gallons per day is treated through oxidation ponds, which have a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day.⁸²

Floodplain Management

In the City of Indio, local drainage facilities generally convey runoff from local streets and lots to the regional facilities. Regional drainage is managed by the Coachella Valley Water District, which maintains the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, and the La Quinta Evacuation Channel. The local storm drain system consists of gutters, storm drains, and channels. There are a limited amount of storm drainage facilities in Downtown Indio.⁸³

Solid Waste Management

Solid waste services in the City of Indio are provided by Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services. Burrtec collects residential garbage and recyclables on a weekly basis. Trash is taken to the Indio/Coachella Valley Waste Transfer Station in Coachella, which has a permitted maximum tonnage of 1,100 tons per day (tpd) of solid waste and a maximum capacity of 12,685 cubic yards per day.⁸⁴ The facility can receive agricultural, construction and demolition, green material, industrial, inert, metal, mixed municipal, and tire wastes. Once waste enters the Indio/Coachella Valley Waste Transfer Station, it enters the Riverside County waste stream, is sorted, and sent to one of the Riverside County landfills (Badlands, Blythe, Desert Center, El Sobrante, Lamb Canyon, Mecca Landfill II, and Oasis), which have a remaining combined capacity of 181,783,284 cubic yards.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ 2020 Regional Urban Water Management Plan.

⁸¹ City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update, 9-6.

⁸² Valley Sanitary District, Treatment Operations <https://www.valley-sanitary.org/treatment-operations> (Accessed 08/20/2022).

⁸³ City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, 4.9-2.

⁸⁴ City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, 4.16-9.

⁸⁵ City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, 4.16-10.

Discussion of Impacts

a-c) Less Than Significant Impact.

Domestic Water

The proposed Project will be connected to the existing water main under the Avenue 44 right of way, and thus will not require the relocation of facilities. As discussed in Table 7 in the Hydrology and Water Quality section, above, the total water demand for the proposed Project is 40.51 acre-feet per year. This water demand would represent a 0.22% increase over the IWA's 2015 baseline demand or a 0.15% increase over the projected demand for 2025. In developing projections for future water demand, the IWA based its analysis in part on the City of Indio's General Plan. The Project is consistent with the Mixed-Use Neighborhood designation in the General Plan, and thus can be expected to contribute less than significant impacts to IWA's water supply. Furthermore, the Project will be required to implement all water conservation measures imposed by the IWA under both normal and drought conditions. Impacts associated with domestic water demand are expected to be less than significant.

Wastewater Treatment

The Project site is served by VSD for wastewater collection and treatment services and will connect to the existing sewer main under the Avenue 44 right of way. The proposed Project will require construction of on-site sewer infrastructure to connect to the existing sewer main.

Wastewater discharges from the Project will be typical of residential uses and would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the VSD or Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Drainage System

According to the Preliminary Drainage Report prepared for the Project by Atlas Civil Design, the Project has been designed to retain stormwater from a 100 year, 24 hour, storm event on site. On-site facilities will include three infiltration basins and four infiltration trenches to collect and store stormwater. Stormwater will be piped to the basins via a bubbler system. Stormwater runoff is not anticipated during most average rain events.⁸⁶ As development occurs, additional hydrological analysis may be required to demonstrate that the Project meets the City's standards. Compliance with the standard requirements will ensure that Project-related impacts associated with stormwater retention and drainage will be less than significant.

Electricity

The Project will connect to existing IID infrastructure and will not require the addition or expansion of facilities.

Natural Gas

The Project will connect to the existing SoCalGas infrastructure under the Avenue 44 right of way. It will not require the addition or expansion of natural gas facilities.

⁸⁶ Preliminary Drainage Study prepared by Atlas Civil Design, 8.25.2022.

Telecommunications

The Project will connect to existing Frontier Communications infrastructure and will not require the addition or expansion of telecommunications facilities.

Summary

The proposed Project is in an urban area with existing water, sewage, electric, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. It will not require the relocation or construction of new facilities. The IWA has sufficient water supplies to serve the Project during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

- d, e) **Less than Significant Impact.** Based on its location in the City of Indio, the proposed Project will receive solid waste services from Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services (Burrtec). Solid waste generated in Indio is either recycled, reused, transformed at a waste-to-energy facilities, or disposed at a county landfill. The Riverside County landfills have a combined maximum permitted capacity of 266,159,998 cubic yards and a remaining capacity of 181,783,284 cubic yards.⁸⁷

Table 13				
Estimated Solid Waste Disposal at Project Buildout				
Land Use	CIWMB Disposal Rates	Proposed	Solid Waste Disposal (pounds per day)	Solid Waste Disposal (tons per year)
Multi-Family Residential	5.31 pounds/dwelling unit/day	180 DU	955.8	174.43
TOTAL				174.43
TOTAL (with 50% diversion)				87.22
*Estimated Solid Waste Generation Rates by CalRecycle, https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates , Accessed August 2022.				

As shown in Table 13, above, the Project is estimated to generate 87.22 tons of solid waste per year, which is less than 0.00005% of the County’s remaining capacity. Burrtec is responsible for maintaining standards that ensure that all waste is handled in a manner that meets local, state, and federal standards. Project-related impacts associated with solid waste disposal will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁸⁷ City of Indio EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, Table 4.16-5.

XX. WILDFIRE If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓
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?				✓
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?				✓
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				✓

Sources: City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update; California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services – My Hazards; FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer.

Environmental Setting

Large areas of California are at risk of fires due to the weather, topography, and native vegetation. It continues to experience longer wildfire seasons as a result of climate change.

Wildfires occur in undeveloped areas and can spread to urban areas where the landscape and structures are not designed and maintained to be ignition resistant. A wildland-urban interface is an area where urban development is located in proximity to open space or “wildland” areas. The potential for wildland fires represents a hazard where development is adjacent to open space or within proximity to wildland fuels or designated fire severity zones.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) has mapped areas of significant fire hazards in the state through its Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP). The City of Indio is not identified as an area of significant hazard according to FRAP.⁸⁸ The City of Indio is not affected by wildfires and risk is generally considered “moderate” throughout the City, according to the Riverside County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.⁸⁹

Discussion of Impacts

- a) **No Impact.** The City of Indio does not have established emergency evacuation routes, however potential routes may include Interstate 10, State Route 86, Highway 111, Jefferson Street, Monroe Street, and Jackson Street. While the Project site is located in proximity to Interstate 10, it will not have direct access. The Project is located along Avenue 44, approximately a 1-mile drive from Jackson Street, which also provides access in an emergency.

The Project is not proposing any amendments to existing evacuation routes or response plans. The proposed development will be reviewed and approved by the City of Indio Fire Department before building permits will be issued in order to ensure that the Project will not interfere with emergency access or fire department standards.⁹⁰ No impact is anticipated.

- b) **No Impact.** The Project area is not located within a wildfire hazard severity zone nor a wildland-urban interface (WUI). The Project site is in an urban area, surrounded by residential and commercial developments, and is miles from an area of wildland fire potential. No impact is anticipated because of the Project site’s distance from any state responsibility lands or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones.
- c) **No Impact.** Urban roadways exist surrounding the Project. No new infrastructure will be required that could increase the fire risk. No impact is anticipated.
- d) **No Impact.** The Project site is located on the relatively flat floor of the Coachella Valley where there is no potential for landslides, or post-fire slope instability. The Project site is in an area with a minimal flood hazard,⁹¹ and is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands with a very high fire hazard severity. Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks such as downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impact is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring: None required.

⁸⁸ California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services – My Hazards.

⁸⁹ Final EIR for the City of Indio 2040 General Plan Update.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<p>NOTE: If there are significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated and no feasible project alternatives are available, then complete the mandatory findings of significance and attach to this initial study as an appendix. This is the first step for starting the environmental impact report (EIR) process.</p> <p>Does the project:</p>	<p>Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>a) Does the project have the potential to 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, 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?</p>		<p>✓</p>		
<p>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)?</p>			<p>✓</p>	
<p>c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>		<p>✓</p>		

a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

Biological Resources: The Project site is not located in a CVMSHCP conservation area and does not contain any wildlife corridors or biological linkage areas.

However, the site may provide habitat for burrowing owl and nesting birds protected by the MBTA. A pre-construction survey will be required to avoid impacts to these protected species. Additionally, the Project will be required to pay the Development Mitigation Fee to mitigate potential impacts to species covered under the CVMSHCP.

The proposed Project will not significantly reduce fish or wildlife habitat or otherwise adversely impact a fish or wildlife species. The construction of the Project has the potential to impact nesting birds and burrowing owl, but the mitigation measures included in Section IV of this document will reduce those impacts to less than significant levels.

Cultural Resources: No historical or archaeological resources of significance are known to exist within or adjacent to the Project site. Since construction of the Project will require earth-moving activity, there is potential for unknown resources to be discovered. The mitigation measures provided in Section V of this document will ensure that impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources will be less than significant in the unlikely event that resources are uncovered.

Overall, there will be no significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated. Project-related impacts, including cumulative impacts, will be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Significant cumulative impacts could occur if the Project, in conjunction with related projects, would result in impacts that would be less than significant when viewed separately, but would be significant when viewed together. In this case, the Project's impacts are individually limited and not cumulatively considerable. The proposed Project is consistent with the development envisioned for the area in the City of Indio's General Plan. All environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the Project would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures included in this document, and when viewed in conjunction with other closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects, would not be significant.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** The proposed Project will not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, with the exception of noise impacts, either directly or indirectly, with the implementation of the City's Municipal Code, other standard requirements and requirements of law. Noise impacts to residents of the Project would be lowered to less than significant levels with the implementation of the mitigation measures provided in Section XIII.

Appendix A
Air Quality and GHG Modeling
(Available for review on city website)

Appendix B
Biological Resources Assessment
(Available for review on city website)

Appendix C
Cultural Resources Study
(Available for review on city website)

Appendix D
Noise Impact Analysis
(Available for review on city website)

Appendix E
Transportation Letter
(Available for review on city website)