

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) provides a general overview of the existing environmental setting of the Project Site as well as an overview of related projects that are considered as part of the future conditions in evaluating potential cumulative environmental impacts. The City of Rancho Mirage (City), acting as Lead Agency for the proposed Section 31 Specific Plan Project ("Specific Plan Project" or "Project"), is preparing this Draft EIR in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the environmental impact analysis of a proposed project to include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of a proposed project at the time the Notice of Preparation of an EIR is published. Section 15125 further states that this environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions used to determine if an impact is significant. The purpose of describing and defining the environmental setting is to define the baseline physical conditions to determine the significance of the environmental impacts resulting from the Project.

A. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1. Regional Location

The Project Site is located in the central part of the Coachella Valley, a low valley sandwiched between the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the west. The valley is part of the Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province, an area that includes both sides of the lower Colorado River and the Coachella and Imperial Valleys of California. The Project Site consists of land located entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage. As shown in **Figure 3.0-1: Regional Location Map**, the City is bounded by the communities of Thousand Palms to the north, Palm Desert to the east, Indian Wells to the southeast, and Palm Springs and Cathedral City to the west.

2. Regional Planning Considerations

Air Quality Management Plan

The Project Site is located within the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB), which spans the Coachella Valley portion of the County of Riverside and the entire County of Imperial. Air quality management of the Riverside County portion of the SSAB is overseen by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The Riverside County portion of the SSAB is bound by the San Jacinto Mountains to the west and spans eastward up to the Palo Verde Valley.

SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are responsible for formulating and implementing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the SSAB. The AQMP is a

plan that includes control strategies for stationary and area sources, as well as for on-road and off-road mobile sources. The Project would comply with SCAQMD authority and air quality regulations.

Coachella Valley PM10 State Implementation Plan

The SSAB is designated as a serious nonattainment area for particulate matter (PM) 10. The attainment date for serious nonattainment areas to achieve the PM10 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) was 2001. After years of demonstrating attainment of the PM10 standards prior to 1999, PM10 levels during the next three years (1999-2001) did not demonstrate attainment of the annual average PM10 NAAQS. Under the federal Clean Air Act, an area can request an extension of up to five years to attain the PM10 NAAQS if certain requirements are met, including creation of a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that demonstrates expeditious attainment of the standards. Thus, SCAQMD established additional strategies for the control of PM10 in the Coachella Valley PM10 State Implementation Plan (CVSIP), which was most recently updated in 2003. The 2003 CVSIP updates the emission inventories, emission budgets, and attainment modeling for the SSAB.

2016 Air Quality Management Plan

The most recent adopted comprehensive plan is the 2016 AQMP, adopted in March 2017, which incorporates substantial new scientific data primarily in the form of updated emissions inventories, ambient measurements, new meteorological episodes, and new air quality modeling tools. Additionally, the AQMP provides local guidance for the SIP, which provides the framework for air quality basins to achieve attainment of the State and federal ambient air quality standards. Areas that meet ambient air quality standards are classified as attainment areas, while areas that do not meet these standards are classified as nonattainment areas.

The 2016 AQMP proposes attainment of the federal 24-hour particulate matter (PM) 2.5 standard by 2019 in the South Coast Air Basin through adoption of all feasible measures. The annual PM2.5 standard, however, cannot be met by 2021 by implementing all feasible measures due to prolonged drought conditions. Accordingly, as a “serious” nonattainment area, four more years are provided to attain the annual PM2.5 standard by 2025. The 2016 AQMP proposes attainment of the federal 2008 8-hour ozone standard by 2031; additionally, due to overlaps in emissions and control strategies, the 2016 AQMP includes revisions to the attainment demonstrations for the federal 1997 8-hour and 1979 1-hour ozone standards, which have proposed attainment years of 2023 and 2022, respectively.

The AQMP also includes an update on the current air quality status of the SSAB. The Coachella Valley Planning Area, the desert portion of Riverside County in the SSAB, is designated as a nonattainment area for the federal 2008 and 1997 8-hour ozone standards as well as the federal 2006 24-hour PM10 standard.

The 2016 AQMP does not include new modeling efforts for PM₁₀; since the mid-1990s, peak 24-hour average PM₁₀ concentrations have not exceeded the current federal standard (150 µg/m³) other than on days with windblown dust from natural events, which can be excluded upon USEPA concurrence. Regardless, the USEPA has requested additional ambient monitoring prior to consideration of re-designation. With further implementation of cleaner technologies, the 2016 AQMP anticipates the Coachella Valley Planning area to be in attainment of the federal 1997 8-hour ozone standard by the end of 2018 and the 2008 8-hour ozone standard by 2023, as well as progress towards attainment of the 2015 8-hour ozone standard to be evaluated in a later AQMP.

Southern California Association of Governments

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a council of governments representing Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. SCAG is the federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for this region, which encompasses over 38,000 square miles. SCAG is a regional planning agency and a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. SCAG is also the regional clearinghouse for projects requiring environmental documentation under federal and State law. In this role, SCAG reviews proposed development and infrastructure projects to analyze their impacts on regional planning programs. As the southern California region's MPO, SCAG cooperates with SCAQMD, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and other agencies in preparing regional planning documents. SCAG has developed regional plans to achieve specific regional objectives.

Regional Transportation Plan

SCAG is the authorized regional agency for intergovernmental review of programs proposed for federal financial assistance and direct development activities. SCAG consists of local governments from Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties. SCAG is also responsible for the designated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) including its Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 375. The Sustainable Communities Strategy has been formulated to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles by 8 percent per capita by 2020 and by 13 percent per capita by 2035 compared to 2005 targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

The 2016–2040 RTP/SCS links the goal of sustaining mobility with the goals of fostering economic development, enhancing the environment, reducing energy consumption, promoting transportation-friendly development patterns, and encouraging fair and equitable access to residents affected by socioeconomic, geographic, and commercial limitations. The Project's consistency with the applicable RTP/SCS policies is analyzed further in **Section 5.10: Land Use and Planning** of this Draft EIR.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments

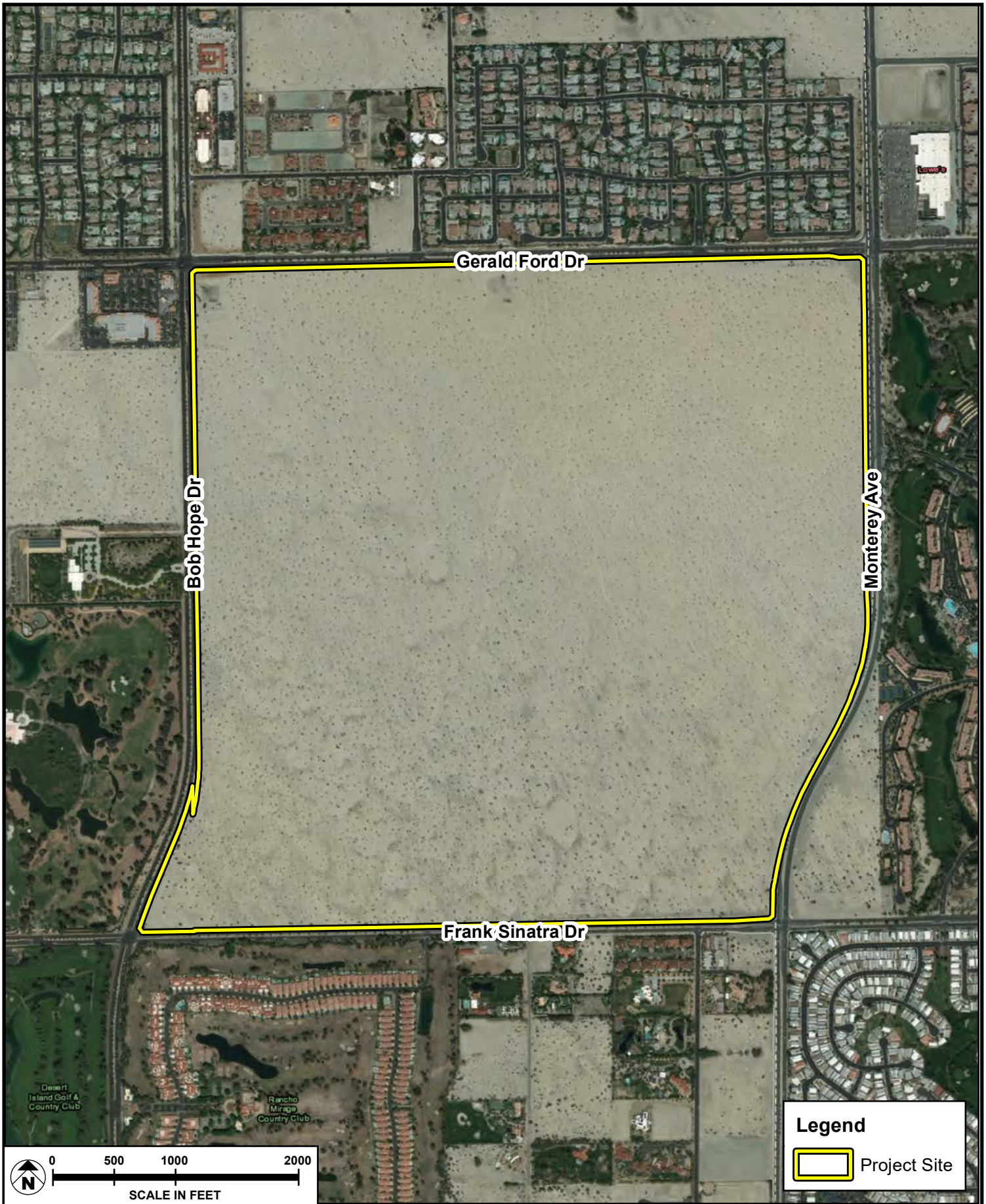
The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is a sub-regional organization within SCAG. CVAG operates as the lead agency and as part of larger jurisdictional or regional teams within the Coachella Valley, made up of ten cities, Riverside County, and two Native American Indian tribes. CVAG represents member local governments and agencies throughout the Coachella Valley seeking cooperative sub-regional and regional planning, coordination and technical assistance on issues of mutual concern. CVAG comprises several departments, including an Energy and Environmental Resources Department that monitors and implements both regional and local plans related to energy and air quality issues, waste management, water quality, habitat conservation planning, and trails issues.

B. LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1. Location and Land Use

The Project consists of the application of the Section 31 Specific Plan for the approximately 618-acre Project Site. The Project Site is located entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage, as shown in **Figure 3.0-2: Local Vicinity Map**. The Project Site is surrounded by properties within the City of Rancho Mirage to its north, south, southeast, and west, and by properties within the adjacent City of Palm Desert to its east. The Project Site is bound by Gerald Ford Drive on the north, Monterey Avenue on the east, Frank Sinatra Drive on the south, and Bob Hope Drive on the west. The current status of the Project Site and surrounding properties is shown in **Figure 4.0-1: Existing Land Status**. The existing characteristics of the Project Site from the four major surrounding intersections (Monterey Avenue and Gerald Ford Drive, Monterey Avenue and Frank Sinatra Drive, Frank Sinatra Drive and Bob Hope Drive, and Bob Hope Drive and Gerald Ford Drive) are illustrated in **Figure 4.0-2a: Project Site Photographs** and **Figure 4.0-2b: Project Site Photographs**.

The Project Site is undeveloped and consists of approximately 618 acres of relatively undisturbed desert lands within the Coachella Valley, located in the broader Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province of California. This province consists of numerous north-south trending mountain ranges, such as the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the west.



SOURCE: USA Topographic Maps; ELMT Consulting Inc. - 2018

FIGURE 4.0-1



Existing Land Status



Monterey Avenue and Gerald Ford Drive intersection looking southwest across Project Site



Monterey Avenue and Frank Sinatra Drive intersection looking northwest across Project Site

SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-2a



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Project Site Photographs



Bob Hope Drive and Frank Sinatra Drive intersection looking northeast across Project Site



Bob Hope Drive and Gerald Ford Drive intersection looking southeast across Project Site

SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-2b



Project Site Photographs

C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Aesthetics

The Project Site is located in a portion of the Coachella Valley that is visually defined by the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the west. The Project Site is primarily surrounded by existing residential and resort uses and golf courses, with minor areas of commercial and office uses at the northwest and southeast corners. Additionally, the Sunnylands Center and Gardens (Sunnylands) is located to the west across Bob Hope Drive. Vacant, undeveloped parcels are interspersed with development to the north, southeast, and south, with a larger undeveloped area located to the west, in between Sunnylands and the commercial shopping center to the north.

Views along and through the Project Site are predominantly defined by the natural and visual resources of the aforementioned mountain ranges. Views of these ranges to the north, south, and west of the Coachella Valley can be seen by viewers along all four roadways surrounding the Project Site. **Figure 4.0-3a: Public Viewpoints in Vicinity of Project Site** shows the existing public viewpoints from the rights-of-way surrounding the Project Site of the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north from Bob Hope Drive at Sunnylands and Frank Sinatra Drive at Kavenish Drive. **Figure 4.0-3b** shows existing public viewpoints of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and west from Monterey Avenue looking south (approximately 0.5 miles north of Frank Sinatra Drive) and looking southwest from Shadow Ridge Road. **Figure 4.0-3c** shows existing viewpoints of these mountains ranges from Gerald For Drive looking west (approximately 0.2 miles east of Bob Hope Drive) and looking southwest from Oasis Way. Further public views of the mountain ranges to the south and west and provided in **Figure 4.0-3d** from Bob Hope Drive looking south at Sunnylands and from Frank Sinatra Drive looking west (approximately 0.2 miles west of Monterey Avenue). The topography of the Project Site, as shown in **Figure 4.0-4: Existing Topography**, and the surrounding area is generally flat with on-site elevations ranging from approximately 254 and 319 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Please refer to **Section 5.1: Aesthetics** of this Draft EIR for further discussion on the Project's impacts to the visual resources in the area.



Bob Hope Drive at Sunnylands looking north



Frank Sinatra Drive at Kavenish Drive looking north

SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-3a



Public Viewpoints in Vicinity of Project Site



Monterey Avenue looking south



Monterey Avenue at Shadow Ridge Road looking southwest

SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-3b



Public Viewpoints in Vicinity of Project Site



Gerald Ford Drive looking west



Gerald Ford Drive at Oasis Way looking southwest

SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-3c



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Public Viewpoints in Vicinity of Project Site



Bob Hope Drive at Sunnylands looking south



Frank Sinatra Drive looking west

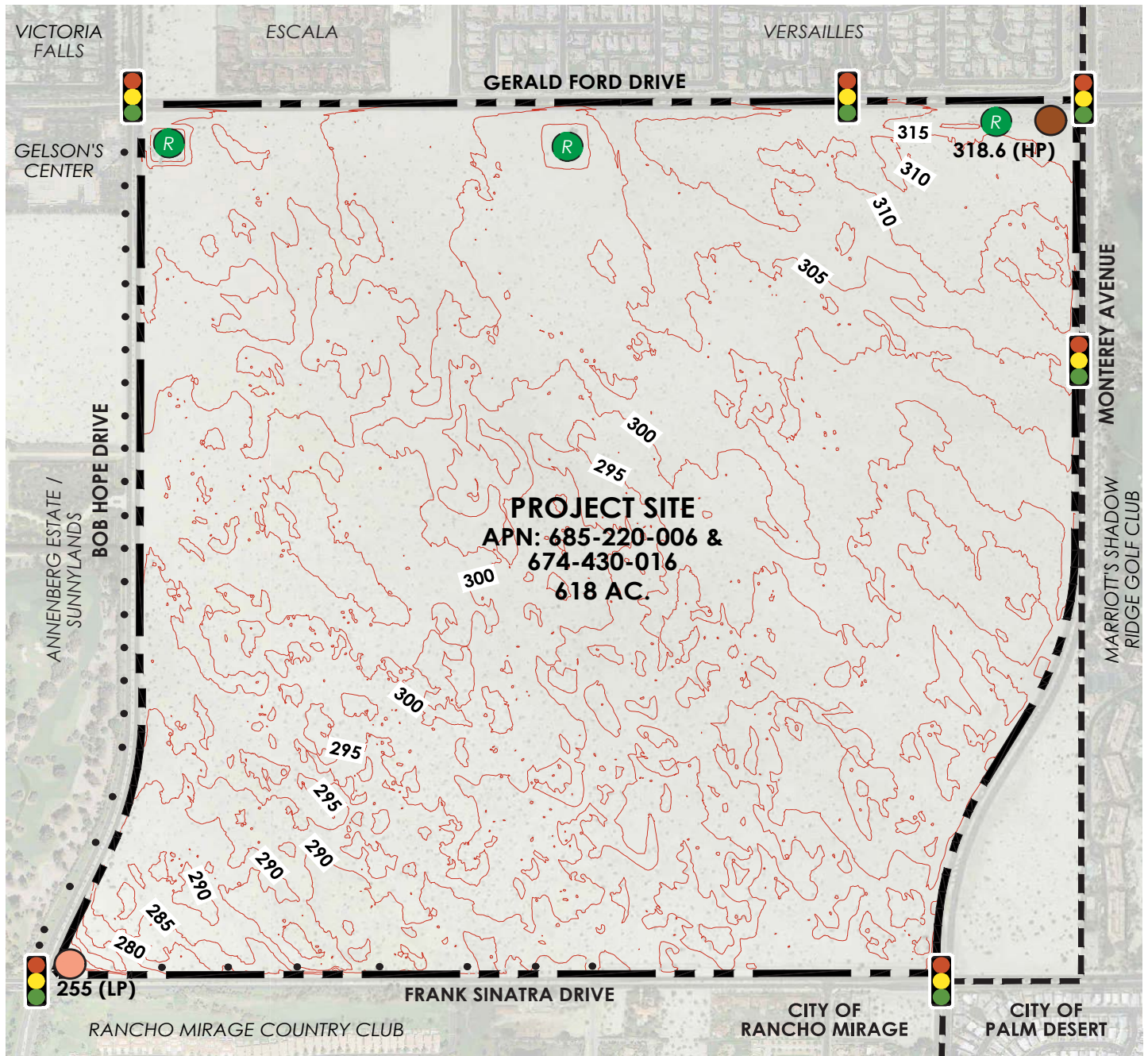
SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-3d



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Public Viewpoints in Vicinity of Project Site



Legend:

- Project Boundary
- City Limits
- R Existing Retention Area
- Existing Project High Point
- Existing Project Low Point
- Existing Power Pole
- Existing Traffic Signal



NOT TO SCALE

Exhibit Date: January 31, 2019

SOURCE: MSA Consulting Inc. - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-4



Existing Topography

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Project Site lies within the SSAB, which spans the Coachella Valley portion of the County of Riverside and the entire County of Imperial. Air quality management of the Riverside County portion of the SSAB is overseen by the SCAQMD. The Riverside County portion of the SSAB is bound by the San Jacinto Mountains to the west and spans eastward up to the Palo Verde Valley. The SSAB and the adjacent Mojave Desert Air Basin were previously included in a single large air basin known as the Southeast Desert Air Basin. However, the CARB has subdivided this larger basin into the two separate air basins that are in place today.

The SSAB is classified as having a desert climate characterized by low precipitation, hot summers, mild winters, low humidity, and strong temperature inversions. The annual average temperature varies little throughout the SSAB, ranging from the low 40s to the high 100s, measured in degrees Fahrenheit (°F).

The Western Regional Climate Center (WRCC) maintains historical climate information for the western U.S., including the City of Palm Springs. The closest meteorological monitoring station to the Project Site is in the City of Palm Springs and is monitored by WRCC Station ID No. 046635. According to this Station, the average maximum temperature in the local vicinity is 108.2°F in July. The average minimum temperature is reported at 42.3°F in December and January.

In relation to other areas of southern California, the City of Rancho Mirage has good air quality. In the past few decades, however, noticeable deterioration of air quality has occurred due to transport of pollutants from coastal air basins to the west, primarily ozone, and locally generated PM10 as a result of increased development and population growth, traffic, construction activity, and various site disturbances. The Project's potential air quality and greenhouse gas impacts are discussed in **Section 5.2: Air Quality** and **Section 5.7: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**, respectively, of this Draft EIR.

Biological Resources

The Project Site is historically undeveloped vacant land that consists of partially stabilized shielded sand fields, with the dominating vegetation being that of the Sonoran creosote bush scrub community. There are three small stormwater retention basins existing within the Project Site along Gerald Ford Drive. These basins currently retain off-site street flows and will be functionally replaced by the proposed drainage system. There are no potential jurisdictional waters or wetland areas that are present on the Project Site.

The Project Site is located within the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) Area. The CVMSHCP was prepared for the entire Coachella Valley and surrounding mountains to address current and potential future State and federal Endangered Species Act issues therein. The biological field surveys performed for the Project identified one CVMSHCP-covered plant species on site,

the Coachella Valley milk-vetch. In addition, it was determined that the Project Site has a moderate potential to support eight sensitive plant species that are not covered under the CVMSHCP, including Borrego milk-vetch, ribbed cryptantha, winged cryptantha, pointed dodder, Abram's spurge, Arizona spurge, flat-seeded spurge, and slender cottenheads. All other special-status plant species covered and non-covered are presumed absent.

Based on habitat requirements for specific species and the availability and quality of habitats needed by each sensitive wildlife species, it was determined that the Project Site has a moderate or higher potential to support five CVMSHCP-covered wildlife species, including Coachella giant sand treader cricket, Palm Springs pocket mouse, flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, and Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel. In addition, the Project Site has a moderate or higher potential to support three special-status wildlife species that are not covered under the CVMSHCP, including loggerhead shrike, Costa's hummingbird, and black-tailed gnatcatcher. Costa's hummingbird and black-tailed gnatcatcher were the only special-status wildlife species observed within the Project Site.

There are no specific wildlife corridors that were identified within or adjacent to the Project Site. The Project's potential impacts to biological resources are further discussed in **Section 5.3: Biological Resources** of this Draft EIR.

Cultural Resources

The Project Site is located in a portion of the Coachella Valley identified as having low to moderate prehistoric/ethnohistoric cultural resource sensitivity. The Coachella Valley consists of alternating lacustrine and fluvial sediments, termed the Lake Cahuilla beds, which have previously yielded fossil remains representing diverse freshwater diatoms, land plants, sponges, ostracods, mollusks, fish, and small terrestrial vertebrates. The Project Site consists of property that historically has been undeveloped with minimal human activity and does not contain any historical resources of significance. The Project's impacts on cultural resources are analyzed in **Section 5.4: Cultural Resources** of this Draft EIR.

A number of California Native American tribes have been historically associated with the broader Coachella Valley and Project area, as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. The Project Site has never been developed and currently consists of relatively undisturbed desert lands. There are no known historical resources within the Project Site, nor did the cultural resources survey conducted for the Project Site identify any historical resources. Pursuant to Government Code (GC) Section 65352.3 (Senate Bill [SB] 18) and PRC Section 21080.3.1 (Assembly Bill [AB] 52), the City has actively engaged with tribes historically associated with the Project area. Comments were received from the five following tribes: the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (SMBMI), the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI), the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians (ABCI), the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians (TNPBMI), and

the Pala Band of Mission Indians (PBMI). While none of these tribes identified specific tribal cultural resources (TCRs) that may be affected by the Project, ACBCI requested formal consultation under SB 18 and AB 52 and requested a copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the information center, a cultural resources inventory of the Project area be performed by a qualified archaeologist prior to any development activities, and a copy of any cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection to the Project. ABCI recommended notification of other tribes historically associated with the area, contracting a monitor qualified in Native American cultural resources to be present on-site during pre-construction and construction activities, and immediate notification of ABCI should any cultural resources be discovered during implementation of the Project. The City intends to actively coordinate with California Native American tribes that have requested consultation as the Project progresses. For further information related to TCRs, please refer to **Section 8.1: Effects Not Found Significant** of this Draft EIR.

Energy

Energy in the State of California (State) is regulated by Title 24, Part 6, of California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings. The Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings were established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. New standards went into effect in October 2005.

Energy sources are made available by private entities and public agencies in the City of Rancho Mirage. Major energy providers for electricity and natural gas in Coachella Valley include Southern California Edison (SCE) and the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), respectively. The Rancho Mirage Energy Authority (RMEA), a locally run power program commissioned by the Rancho Mirage City Council, conveys power to City consumers via SCE infrastructure.

Geology and Soils

The Project Site is located within the Coachella Valley in the northern part of the Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province with elevations ranging from approximately 254 to 319 feet amsl, generally sloping from the northeast to the southwest. The Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province consists of numerous north-south trending mountain ranges, such as the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the west. Additionally, this Province is bound on the east by the Colorado River, on the south by the Baja California border, on the north by the Transverse Ranges Province, on the northeast by the Mojave Desert Province, and on the west by the Peninsular Ranges Province.

The Coachella Valley is heavily prone to wind-blown sand erosion hazards as a result of the fierce winds that funnel through the steep mountain ranges. Areas at the base of the mountains are more sheltered from these hazards since the winds are not as strong. The regional tectonic subsidence along the Coachella Valley floor along with the uplift of adjacent mountains is responsible for the rapid deposition of poorly consolidated soils susceptible to consolidation and/or collapse.

The Project Site is located in a moderately active seismic region, with the San Andreas Fault Zone being the major structural feature for the region. Ground shaking due to earthquakes should be anticipated during the life of the proposed improvements at the Project Site. The US Geological Survey (USGS) and California Geology Survey (CGS) have identified 28 active, or potentially active, faults located within approximately 60 miles of the Project Site. Each of these faults is believed to be capable of producing sizeable earthquake events with significant ground motions that would be experienced at the Project Site. Lastly, the Project Site contains recent alluvium soils which have a low potential to contain significant paleontological resources. On-site geologic features such as sand and soil types are not unique to the Project Site, instead being common in the area and extensive in the Coachella Valley. Potential impacts to geology and soils as a result of the Project are further discussed in **Section 5.6: Geology and Soils** of this Draft EIR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As an extension of the State Emergency Plan, the City of Rancho Mirage maintains a Multi-Hazard Functional Plan (MHFP) that addresses the planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural or human caused disasters, technological incidents, and nuclear defense operations. Additionally, the City of Rancho Mirage falls under the Riverside County Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HWMP), which serves to provide a framework for the management of the County's hazardous substances.

The Project Site is not identified to be on a list of hazardous materials sites as defined in Government Code Section 65962.5. The Project Site has historically been undeveloped and vacant with little evidence of any human disturbance. According to the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and Phase I ESA Update that were prepared, the Project Site does not use or store any hazardous materials, nor does it exhibit the presence or likely presence of hazardous substances or petroleum products or an existing, past, or material threat of a release thereof. The Project's potential impacts to hazards and hazardous materials are discussed in **Section 5.8: Hazards and Hazardous Materials** of this Draft EIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Project Site is within the boundaries of the Coachella Valley planning area of the Colorado River Basin (Region 7), which is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB). Region 7 covers approximately 13,000,000 acres (20,000 square miles) in the southeastern portion of California, and includes all of Imperial County and portions of San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego Counties. The Coachella Valley planning area consists of the Whitewater River Watershed and East Salton Sea Watershed, with the Project Site being within the Whitewater River Watershed. The Whitewater River passes approximately three miles southwest of the Project Site.

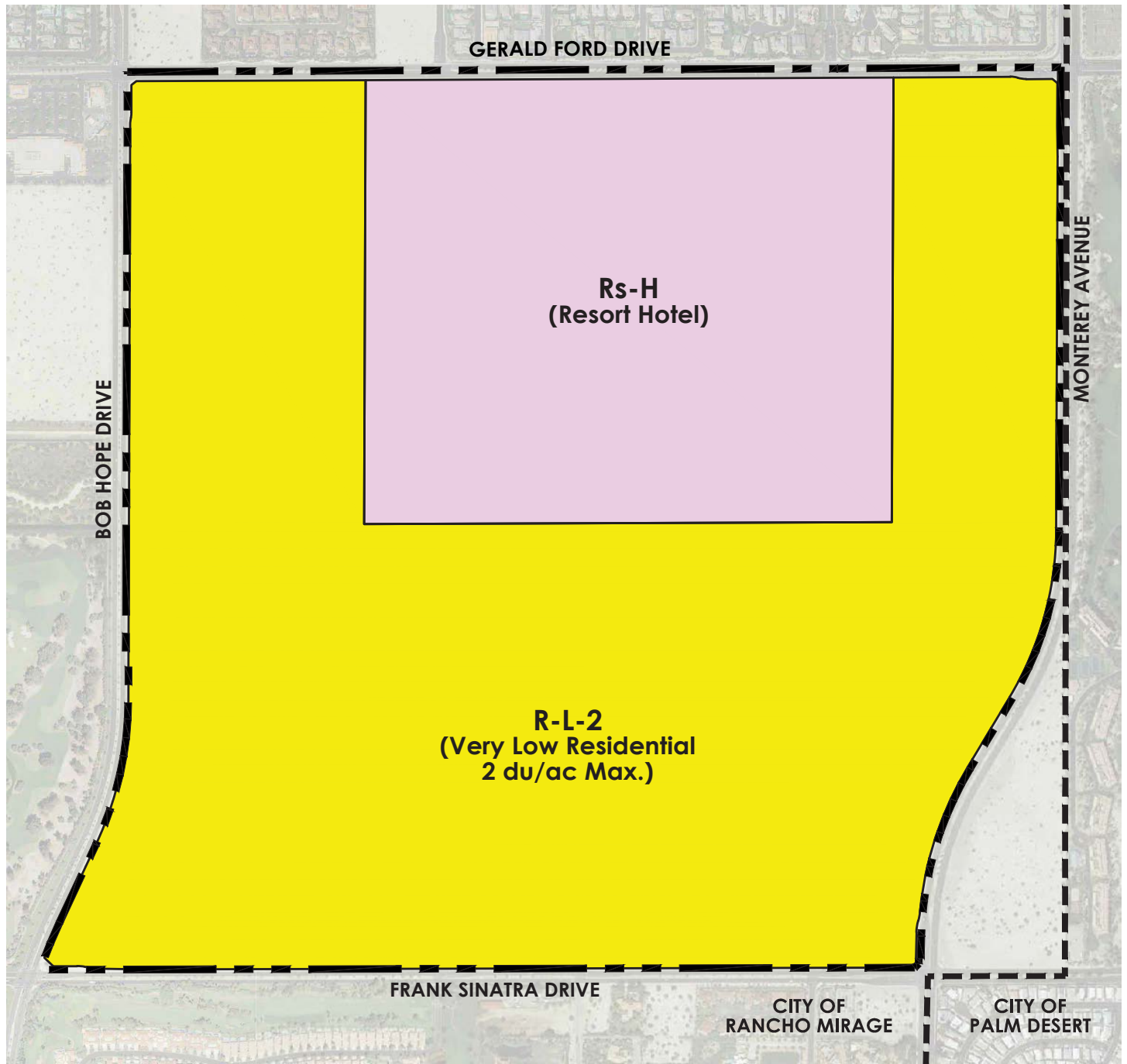
Based on surface topography, drainage across the Project Site is generally from the northeast to the southwest towards the Frank Sinatra Drive and Bob Hope Drive intersection via sheet flow following natural drainage courses. There are two small retention basins existing within the Project Site along Gerald Ford Drive, as well as four stormwater inlets along Monterey Avenue, that currently retain off-site street flows. However, these basins will be functionally replaced by the proposed drainage system. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Map Number 06065C1595G, effective August 28, 2008, the Project Site is not located within a designated 100-year flood hazard area. The Project's potential impacts on hydrology and water quality are analyzed in **Section 5.9: Hydrology and Water Quality** of this Draft EIR.

Land Use and Planning

As mentioned previously, the Project Site is located entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage. The City of Rancho Mirage uses a single-map system of its land uses. This means that the City's General Plan land use designations are the same as its zoning designations. Also, the density and intensity standards expressed in the General Plan are the same as those expressed in the Zoning Ordinance. As shown in **Figure 4.0-5: City of Rancho Mirage Land Use and Zoning Map**, the City's General Plan designates the eastern, southern, and western portions of the Project Site generally containing the proposed residential portions of the Project (Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3) as Very Low Density Residential (R-L-2), consisting of approximately 443 acres of the Project Site. The northern central portion of the Project Site, generally in the vicinity of the proposed Town Center Planning Area and lagoon, is designated as Resort Hotel Commercial (Rs-H) and consists of approximately 175 acres. The City's General Plan calls for the preparation of specific plans for major areas within City boundaries, including the Project Site. A full discussion of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan and regional planning documents such as SCAG's 2016–2040 RTP/SCS is located in **Section 5.10: Land Use and Planning**.

Noise

Noise in an urban setting is primarily generated by vehicular traffic, but can also be generated by stationary sources of noise, such as mechanical equipment. Temperature, wind speed and direction, ground surfaces, vegetation, walls, and buildings affect noise transmission and perceived noise levels. Noise levels are measured in terms of the A-weighted decibel (dBA). A-weighting is a frequency correction that correlates overall sound pressure levels to the frequency response of the human ear, with the normal range of human hearing extending from approximately 0 dBA to 140 dBA. The noise rating scale used in California for land use compatibility assessment is the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). The CNEL scale represents a time-weighted, 24-hour average noise level based on the A-weighted decibel. Noise levels in the Project Site are influenced primarily by vehicular traffic on surrounding roadways, including Gerald Ford Drive, Monterey Avenue, Frank Sinatra Drive, and Bob Hope Drive. As shown in **Figure 4.0-6: Noise Monitoring Locations**, there were eight sites set up within proximity to the Project Site to measure existing CNEL noise levels with noise levels ranging from a low of 69.1 dBA to a high of 73.8 dBA at approximately 75 feet from the roadway centerline. Existing noise sensitive land uses located near the Project Site include single-family residential uses to the north along Gerald Ford Drive and to the south along Frank Sinatra Drive, the Marriott Shadow Ridge Resort and Villages to the east along Monterey Avenue, and the Sunnylands estate and visitor center to the west along Bob Hope Drive. Refer to **Section 5.11: Noise** of this Draft EIR, for further information concerning existing noise conditions in the Project Site and an analysis of this Project's impacts on the local noise environment.



Legend:

-  Project Boundary
-  City Limits
-  R-L-2
Very Low Density Residential
-  Rs-H
Resort Hotel



NOT TO SCALE

Exhibit Date: January 23, 2019

SOURCE: MSA Consulting Inc. – 2019, City of Rancho Mirage – 2019

FIGURE 4.0-5



City of Rancho Mirage Land Use and Zoning Map



SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 4.0-6



Noise Monitoring Locations

Population and Housing

According to the California Department of Finance (DOF), as of January 1, 2018, the City of Rancho Mirage had a population of 18,738 with 14,492 housing units and an average household size of 2.025 persons. The Project's impacts on population and housing are discussed in **Section 5.12: Population and Housing** of this Draft EIR.

Public Services

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

The Riverside County Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the City of Rancho Mirage. The Riverside County Fire Department is administered under contract by Cal Fire, and participates in a Regional Integrated and Cooperative Fire Protection System. This system provides local jurisdictions and surrounding areas with additional regional resources to respond to fire service calls when required. Fire protection services include response to vegetation and structure fires, hazmat, and public assists. There are currently two fire stations within the City of Rancho Mirage, Station 69 located at 71-751 Gerald Ford Drive (approximately 0.3 miles west of the Project Site), and Station 50 located at 70-801 Highway 111 (approximately 3.0 miles southwest of the Project Site). Additionally, RCFD stations in the adjacent communities of Thousand Palms and Palm Desert are proximate to the Project Site. Please refer to **Section 5.13.1: Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services**, for further discussion on the Project's potential impacts to fire and emergency medical services.

Law Enforcement

The Project Site is currently located in an area that served by local law enforcement that enforces local, State, and federal laws pertaining to public safety, traffic, and public order. The City of Rancho Mirage contracts with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for police protection services.

Since the City of Rancho Mirage does not currently have any public police stations within the City boundaries, the closest station to the Project Site is located at 73-705 Gerald Ford Drive in Palm Desert (approximately 0.51 miles east of Project Site). Please refer to **Section 5.13.2: Law Enforcement**, of this Draft EIR for further discussion of the Project's potential impacts to police protection services.

Schools

The City of Rancho Mirage is served by two public school districts: the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) and the Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD). The majority of the City falls within the boundaries of the PSUSD, with the southeastern portion of the City within the boundaries of the DSUSD. The Project Site is a part of the PSUSD attendance boundaries. The schools that would serve the Project

Site are Rancho Mirage Elementary, Nellie N. Coffman Middle School, and Rancho Mirage High School. Please refer to **Section 5.13.3: School Services**, of this Draft EIR for further discussion on the Project's potential impacts to the local schools.

Libraries

The City of Rancho Mirage is served by the Rancho Mirage Public Library and Observatory, located at 71-100 Highway 111 (approximately 3.6 miles south of the Project Site). The Rancho Mirage Public Library operates independently from the Riverside County Library System (RCLS) but serves the City and broader Coachella Valley. Please refer to **Section 5.13.4: Library Services**, of this Draft EIR for further discussion on the Project's potential impacts to the City's library services.

Recreation

The City of Rancho Mirage provides a vast amount of recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors, including golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, and hiking trails. The City adopted their Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan to define and establish goals, policies, and programs toward preserving and effectively managing the valuable natural resources in the City. Previously, the City prepared its Parks Master Plan to assess the community's local park needs to ensure sufficient recreational opportunities are available for its residents. The Parks Master Plan also identifies the cross-utilization of recreational facilities between the Cove Communities (Palm Desert, Indian Wells, and Rancho Mirage). Please refer to **Section 5.14: Recreation** of this Draft EIR, for further discussion on the Project's potential impacts to parks and recreational facilities.

Traffic and Transportation

Regional facilities include Interstate 10, located approximately 1.25 miles north of the Project Site. Highway 111, located to the south of the Project Site, is a major arterial roadway linking Rancho Mirage with other cities throughout the Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley. Additionally, the UPRR located to the north of the Project Site accommodates two mainline tracks used for commercial and passenger rail traffic.

Access to the Project Site is provided in all directions with the existing local roadway network including Gerald Ford Drive, Monterey Avenue, Frank Sinatra Drive, and Bob Hope Drive. Existing AM and PM peak period traffic volume counts were counted for 30 intersections in the broader vicinity of the Project Site. All but three existing study intersections currently operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS) during peak hours. Further, both roadway segments analyzed (between Dinah Shore Drive and Gerald Ford Drive and between Gerald Ford Drive and Frank Sinatra Drive) operate at an acceptable LOS

Alternative modes of transportation also exist within proximity to the Project Site. The SunLine Transit Agency provides bus line services to several communities and cities within the Coachella Valley. Line 32 directly serves the Project Site, with a stop at the corner of Gerald Ford Drive and Bob Hope Drive. Additionally, the Coachella Valley has a subscription-based transit service is available to residents with disabilities who need regular repetitive stops. Furthermore, the City of Rancho Mirage currently maintains a variety of golf cart/electric vehicle (EV), bicycle, and pedestrian paths which are accessible to the public. A full discussion of the Project's existing traffic conditions and potential impacts is presented in **Section 5.15: Traffic and Transportation** of this Draft EIR.

Utilities and Service Systems

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) provides water and wastewater services for the City of Rancho Mirage. Domestic, landscape irrigation, and fire protection water supply would also be provided by the CVWD in combination with the Mission Hills Pressure Zone and at least one private well to supply water to the Grand Oasis Crystal Lagoon. The Project would tie into an existing 18-inch water main which runs along Gerald Ford Drive and forms the northern boundary of the Project Site. The Project would connect into the existing 24-inch sewer main beneath Country Club Drive and served by water reclamation plant (WRP) 10, located in the city of Palm Desert. The Project Site would contain vegetative retention areas for storm water on site in addition to existing catch basins and drainage inlets on surrounding roadways. Storm water would generally be conveyed by topography to the southeastern and southwestern corners of the Project Site. Existing stormwater drainage facilities within the City of Rancho Mirage are maintained by the Public Works Department, and a future reclaimed water line is proposed along Frank Sinatra Drive. Burrtec Waste and Recycling currently provides solid waste collection services. Solid waste is first taken to the Edom Hills transfer station in Cathedral City then sent to one to Burrtec's regional landfills within Riverside County. Southern California Edison (SCE) is the purveyor of electricity for the area, with existing transmission lines along the southern boundary of the Project Site on Frank Sinatra Drive and a variety of other existing electrical facilities in the surrounding roadway system. As mentioned previously, RMEA conveys power to City consumers via SCE infrastructure. Natural gas is provided by the Southern California Gas Company with high pressure distribution lines located north, east, and south of the Project Site on Gerald Ford Drive, Monterey Avenue, and Frank Sinatra Drive, respectively. Lastly, Frontier Communications currently provides telephone service and Spectrum provides cable television services. Please refer to **Section 5.16: Utilities and Service Systems** of this Draft EIR for further discussion on the Project's potential impacts to existing infrastructure.

D. RELATED PROJECTS

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that cumulative impacts are to be discussed where they are considered significant. It further states that the discussion of cumulative impacts reflects the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but that it does not need to be in as great level of detail as provided for the Project alone. Cumulative impacts are defined by Section 15355 to be “...two or more individual effects which, when considered together are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Cumulative impacts represent the change caused by the incremental impact of a project when added to other proposed or committed projects in the vicinity.

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15130 (b)(1)) further state that the information utilized in an analysis of cumulative impacts should come from one of two sources, either:

- (A) A list of past, present and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- (B) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

The cumulative impact analyses contained in the various topical sections of **Section 5.0: Environmental Impact Analysis**, considers related projects in the City of Rancho Mirage based on the City of Rancho Mirage “Development Activity Summary,” dated May 13, 2019. In addition, the projections in the City’s General Plan are used in the assessment of potential cumulative impacts, where appropriate, as well as related projects in proximate jurisdictions such as the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation, City of Palm Desert, and Riverside County.

The analysis of traffic impacts in the study area was conducted using the Rancho Mirage General Plan Transportation Analysis Model (RMGPM), a derivative the Riverside County Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM) with additional detail added to the roadway network and socioeconomic land use data consistent with Rancho Mirage General Plan assumptions. For use in the Traffic Study included as **Appendix I.1** of this Draft EIR, the RMGPM was updated to be consistent with the 2016–2040 SCAG RTP/SCS growth projections with updated 2012 base year and 2040 future year land use assumptions. The base year roadway network was also updated to include improvements built between 2008 and 2012, and the future year roadway network was updated to assume funding of all 2016–2040 SCAG RTP/SCS projects.

The following pending and approved development projects in the vicinity of the Project Site are not included in City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Model assumptions and were added to the future year socioeconomic dataset for future forecasting:

- Section 24 Specific Plan – The approved specific plan allows development of up to 3,138,600 square feet of commercial, retail, office, restaurant, hotel and entertainment uses, and up to 2,406 residential units. Land uses for Section 24 are specified in the Section 24 Specific Plan;
- The zoning on a 40-acre parcel of land just south of the Rancho Mirage High School is being changed from High Density Residential (nine maximum dwelling units per acre) to Mixed Use. The M-U zone allows residential densities up to 6.5 dwelling units per acre and will also introduce a commercial component to the property;
- Rancho Mirage Country Club – This is an existing project that proposes a land use change for the development of a hotel and associated residential units. The zone change affects approximately 25 of the 40 acres in this existing country club development;
- City-initiated General Plan Zoning Map Amendment (GPZMA) on two 5-acre parcels at the southwest corner of Monterey and 35th/Dick Kelly Drive. The current GPZMA of the 10-acres is RM (Medium Density Residential) and the proposed change is to Community Commercial; and
- Agua Caliente Resort and Casino Expansion – The Agua Caliente Casino Resort & Spa Expansion project is a proposal to expand the current casino resort and spa, including additional hotel rooms and gaming area in the casino in Phase 1 and future retail commercial uses in Phase 2. Specifically, Phase 1 involves the addition of 310 hotel rooms, 58,000 square feet of gaming space, 41,000 square feet of meeting space, 12,320 square feet of retail space, 12,700 square feet of restaurant space, and 5,200 square feet of health/fitness club space. Phase 2 involves the addition of 120,000 square feet of retail space.

Additionally, the City of Palm Desert is located immediately east of the Project Site across Monterey Avenue and contains a number of ongoing and foreseeable projects. **Table 4.0-1: Related Projects in the City of Palm Desert**, lists related projects in the adjacent City of Palm Desert. This list is based on consultation with City of Palm Desert staff.

**Table 4.0-1
Related Projects in the City of Palm Desert**

No.	Project	Address	Description
1	Ponderosa Homes	Dinah Shore Drive and Dick Kelly Drive	111 single-family and 114 multifamily residential units
2	Millennium	Portola Road and Gerald Ford Drive	116 single-family and 550 multifamily residential units, 551,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, and 250 hotel rooms
3	Villa Portofino	Portola Road and Country Club Drive	161 Skilled nursing, 150 assisted living, 288 villas, 182 casitas
4	Dolce	Gerald Ford Drive and Gateway Drive	159 single-family residential units
5	Spanish Walk Apartments	Gerald Ford near Frank Sinatra Drive	150 multifamily residential units
6	Falling Waters	Gateway Drive and Dick Kelly Drive	159 single-family residential units
7	University Park	Portola Road and Gerald Ford Drive	773 single-family and 336 multifamily residential units
8	Monterey Specific Plan	Monterey Avenue and Dick Kelly Drive	384 multifamily residential units and 120,000 sq. ft. commercial
9	Landmark Specific Plan	Miriam Way and Dinah Shore Drive	1,339 multifamily residential units, 20,000 sq. ft. commercial space, and 250,000 sq. ft. storage facility
10	Wolff Cottages	Country Club Drive and Portola Road	167 independent living units
11	128-Acres	Rembrandt Parkway and Frank Sinatra Drive	400 single-family and 200 multifamily residential units
12	Monterey Crossings	Monterey Avenue and Dinah Shore Drive	120,000 sq. ft. commercial space
13	DSRT Surf	Desert Willow Drive and Country Club Drive	6-acre surf lagoon, 350 hotel rooms, 12,500 sq. ft. spa, and 88 villa units

Source: Eric Ceja, Principal Planner, City of Palm Desert, email correspondence, May 20, 2019.