

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) addresses the potential impacts of the proposed Section 31 Specific Plan Project (“Section 31 Specific Plan” or “Project”) to the capacity of local landfills and transfer stations. This section also discusses the active landfills, transfer stations, and diversion and recycling programs that currently serve regional solid waste disposal service needs. Please see **Section 9.0** for terms, definitions, and acronyms used in this Draft EIR.

A. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1. Existing Conditions

Solid Waste Services

The Riverside County Waste Management Department (RCWMD) is responsible for the efficient and effective landfill disposal of non-hazardous county waste. To accomplish this, the RCWMD operates six active landfills and administers a contract agreement for waste disposal at the private El Sobrante Landfill. RCWMD also oversees several transfer station leases, as well as a number of recycling and other special waste diversion programs.

All of the active landfills currently located in Riverside County are rated as Class III landfills according to Title 27 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). Such landfills only accept nonhazardous, municipal solid wastes. Franchise solid waste collection companies are granted permits to collect commercial and residential waste throughout unincorporated Riverside County under Riverside County’s general operating authority. In addition, County landfills accept wastes collected in incorporated cities. Within these cities, solid waste is either collected by the city as a municipal service or collected by private firms pursuant to a franchise agreement with the city. As part of its long-range planning and management activities, the RCWMD also ensures that Riverside County has a minimum of 15 years of capacity, at any time, for future landfill disposal.

Solid waste not dumped directly in a landfill is deposited temporarily in several transfer stations throughout Riverside County. The region’s transfer stations play a vital role in accommodating throughput to landfills, serving as collection and separation points for solid waste and recyclables. Transfer stations also help reduce traffic congestion and provide flexibility for hauling waste to distant landfills or processing plants outside the region when appropriate. Solid waste services are provided by to the project by Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services (Burrtec). Solid waste is transported to one of three landfills and/or the Edom Hills Transfer Station in unincorporated Riverside County. The Edom Hills facility is closed for receiving solid waste but utilized for transferring and processing of materials. These facilities are further described as follows:

- **El Sobrante:** The local service areas for the El Sobrante Landfill typically include cities/communities within southwestern Riverside County, as well as multiple jurisdictions within the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and San Diego. According to Waste Management, Inc., the landfill's operator, it processes approximately 43% of Riverside County's annual waste. It is located near the center of the highly populated western third of Riverside County. This landfill is open 311 days out of the year, has a permitted capacity of 5,000 tons per day, a current design capacity of 53.2 million tons, and an average intake of 2,201 tons per day. This landfill has an estimated closure date of 2051.
- **Lamb Canyon:** This landfill receives waste from the entire Coachella Valley through the Edom Hill and Coachella Valley Transfer Stations. Lamb Canyon is open 311 days per year, has a permitted daily capacity of 5,000 tons per day, a current design capacity of 15.6 million tons, an average intake of 1,703 tons per day, with an estimated landfill closure date of 2029.
- **Badlands:** As a regional disposal facility, the landfill is also permitted to receive waste from the cities and unincorporated communities of the Coachella Valley in the eastern portion of Riverside County. This landfill is open 310 days per year, has a permitted daily capacity of 4,000 tons per day, currently design capacity is approximately 17.6 million tons, has an average intake of 1,667 tons per day, with an estimated landfill closure date of 2022.
- **Edom Hill Transfer Station:** This transfer station processes a maximum permitted capacity of 3,500 tons per day.

The Project Site is currently vacant and undeveloped and does not generate solid waste. The City of Rancho Mirage generated approximately 22,815 tons in 2017. Much of this waste was transported to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill.

2. Regulatory Setting

Federal

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

This law was enacted in 1976 and is the principal federal law in the United States governing the disposal of solid waste and hazardous waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) oversees waste management regulation pursuant to Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Under RCRA, however, states are authorized to carry out many of the functions of the federal law through their own hazardous waste programs and laws, if they are at least as stringent (or more so) than the federal regulations. Thus, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) manages the State of California's solid waste and hazardous materials programs pursuant to US EPA approval.

State

CalRecycle

This state agency performs a variety of regulatory functions pursuant to CCR Title 27 and other rules. Among other things, CalRecycle sets minimum standards for the handling and disposal of solid waste designed to protect public health and safety, as well as the environment. It is also the lead agency for implementing the State of California municipal solid waste program deemed adequate by the US EPA for compliance with RCRA.

Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939)

The Integrated Waste Management Act (IWMA), introduced as Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939), was passed by the State Legislature in 1989 to reduce dependence on landfills for the disposal of solid waste and to ensure an effective and coordinated system for the safe management of all solid waste generated within California. With its passage, solid waste management practices were redefined to require California State's cities and counties to divert disposal of solid waste by 50% by the year 2000. It also required local governments to prepare and implement plans to improve waste resource management by integrating management principles that place importance on first reducing solid waste through source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting before disposal at environmentally safe landfills or via transformation (e.g., regulated incineration of solid waste materials). These plans must also be updated every five years.

California's 75 Percent Recycling Initiative (AB 341)

Approved in 2011, AB 341 amended the California Public Resources Code (Section 42649 *et seq.*) to address solid waste diversion (i.e., recycling) targets to decrease the amount of wastes going to landfills and thus extend their usable lives. AB 341 requires cities and counties to include source reduction, recycling and composting in their integrated waste management plans (IWMP). In addition, under AB 341 cities are required to "divert 50% of all solid waste from landfill disposal or transformation [e.g., incineration] by January 1, 2000, through source reduction, recycling and composting activities." By 2020, the target rises to "not less than 75% of solid waste."

Regional and Local

Riverside County Integrated Waste Management Plan

The RCWMD manages and oversees compliance with a variety of permits necessary for the operation of their active landfills in Riverside County. The Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP) outlines and codifies the goals, policies and programs the County of Riverside and its cities are implementing to create an integrated and cost-effective waste management system that complies with the provisions of AB 939 and its diversion mandates. The CIWMP is composed of the Riverside Countywide

Summary Plan and the Riverside Countywide Siting Element, a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), a Nondisposal Facility Element (NDFE), and a Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE) for the County and cities within the County. Each component provides information regarding solid waste and hazardous waste disposal and recycling.

City of Rancho Mirage Municipal Code

Construction within the City of Rancho Mirage is subject to Title 7, Chapter 7 “Natural Resources and Environmental Protection” of the Rancho Mirage Municipal Code (RMMC) which outlines the City’s requirements related to solid waste practices. These policies include measures requiring project applicants to develop a Project Construction and Demolition Debris Plan and mandating materials reuse and waste diversion best efforts, among other policies.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Thresholds of Significance

To assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the following CEQA Guidelines thresholds related to solid waste:

Threshold 5.16.4-1: Would the project 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?

Threshold 5.16.4-2: Would the project comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statues and regulations related to solid waste?

2. Methodology

Information regarding the current intake capacity of each facility was gathered to determine if the existing transfer stations and landfills in Riverside County could accommodate solid waste generated by the Project. Solid waste generation rates from the Riverside County Draft Environmental Impact Report¹ were used to determine the generation of solid waste by the Project.

3. Project Design Features

The Project does not include any features specifically related to solid waste beyond the required recycling and diversion measures provided in the Rancho Mirage Municipal Code.

1 Riverside County Planning Department, Draft Environmental Impact Report No. 521 (March 2014), accessed May 2019, <https://planning.rctlma.org/Zoning-Information/General-Plan/General-Plan-Amendment-No-960-EIRNo-521-CAP-March-2014/Draft-Environmental-Impact-Report-No-521>.

4. Project Impacts

Threshold 5.16.4-1: Would the project 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?

Solid waste disposal and recycling services for the City is provide by Burrtec. Solid waste and recycling from the Project would be hauled to the Edom Hill Transfer Station. Waste from the transfer station is then sent to the permitted landfill or recycling facility. Prior to development or the issuance of building permits, the Project would be required to develop and submit a Construction and Demolition Debris Plan in accordance with the City’s Construction and Demolition Debris Recycling Ordinance 918, Section 2.

Residential Development

The residential portion of the Project is expected to generate 828.1 tons of solid waste per year, as identified in **Table 5.16.4-1: Project Solid Waste Generation**.

**Table 5.16.4-1
Project Solid Waste Generation**

Building Type	Units	Rate	Solid Waste (tons/year)
Residential Community			
Residential	1,932 du	0.41 tons per du	792.1
Beach Club	15,000 sq. ft.	2.4 tons per 1,000 sq. ft.	36.0
<i>Subtotal</i>			828.1
Mixed Use Core / Town Center			
Commercial	350,000 sq. ft.	2.4 tons per 1,000 sq.ft.	840.0
<i>Subtotal</i>			840.0
Total			1,668.1

Source: County of Riverside Environmental Impact Report No. 521, Public Review Draft, March 2014, Table 4.17-N. Abbreviations: du = dwelling units; sq. ft. = square feet

Note: The solid waste generation rates do not take into account required solid waste reductions.

Note: Commercial sq.ft. includes 400 hotel room keys

Waste generated by future development on the Project Site would be diverted to either the Edom Hill Transfer Station or the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill. The permitted daily maximum capacity of Edom Hill Transfer Station is 3,500 tons per day and the permitted capacity of the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill is 5,000 tons per day. The residential portion of the Project would generate an average of approximately 2.27 tons of solid waste per day, which is less than one percent of the daily capacity of the Edom Hill Transfer Station, which averages 1,500 tons per day of solid waste. The 2.27 tons of solid waste would then be

transferred to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill which has a daily permitted capacity of 5,000 tons and an estimated closure date of 2029. At the close of this facility, solid waste would then transfer to the El Sobrante Landfill, which has a permitted daily capacity of 5,000 tons with an average intake of 2,201 tons per day and an estimated closure date of 2051. The Project would contribute approximately less than one percent of the remaining daily intake permitted at El Sobrante Landfill. Accordingly, the Project would be served by a landfill with sufficient capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste needs and would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Town Center

The Town Center's commercial retail and resort hotel land uses are expected to generate 840 tons of solid waste per year, as identified in **Table 5.16.4-1**. This waste would be diverted to either the Edom Hill Transfer Station or the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill. The permitted daily maximum capacity of Edom Hill Transfer Station is 3,500 tons per day and the permitted capacity of the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill is 5,000 tons per day. The Town Center's commercial retail and resort hotel land uses are estimated to generate approximately 2.30 tons of solid waste per day, which is less than one percent of the daily capacity of the Edom Hill Transfer Station, which averages 1,500 tons per day of solid waste. The 2.30 tons of solid waste would then be transferred to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill which has a daily permitted capacity of 5,000 tons and an estimated closure date of 2029. At the close of this facility, solid waste would then transfer to the El Sobrante Landfill, which has a permitted daily capacity of 5,000 tons with an average intake of 2,201 tons per day and an estimated closure date of 2051. The Project would contribute approximately less than one percent of the remaining daily intake permitted at El Sobrante Landfill.

Accordingly, the Project would be served by a landfill with sufficient capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste needs and would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Combined Project

The Project is expected to generate approximately 1,668.1 tons of solid waste per year, as identified in **Table 5.16.4-1**. This waste would be diverted to either the Edom Hills Transfer Station or would directly be delivered to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill. The Project would contribute an average of approximately 4.5 tons of solid waste per day, or 0.3 percent of remaining daily capacity, to the Edom Hills Transfer Station, which averages 1,500 tons per day of solid waste. The 4.5 tons of solid waste would then be transferred to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill which has a daily permitted capacity of 5,000 tons and an estimated closure date of 2029. At the close of this facility, solid waste would then transfer to the El Sobrante Landfill, which has a permitted daily capacity of 5,000 tons with an average intake of

2,201 tons per day and an estimated closure date of 2051. The Project would contribute approximately less than one percent of the remaining daily intake permitted at El Sobrante Landfill.

Although adequate capacity exists for the near term, the Project would generate solid waste that would require disposal, thus decreasing the capacity of existing permitted landfills. However, there is adequate capacity and expansion potential within the regional landfill system to accommodate the solid waste expected to be generated by the Project. Closure dates of landfills for the existing landfills are estimates and subject to change depending on the actual tonnage that is received prior to their estimated closing date. Expansion potential exists at other nearby landfills in Riverside County. Therefore, while the Project would increase demand for waste disposal services, incorporation of mitigation would reduce impacts related to solid waste. Mitigation Measures **MM 5.16.4-1** and **5.16.4-2** would ensure that each individual development proponent implement a waste diversion program to reduce solid waste impacts on existing landfill capacities and that construction and demolition materials be recycled or reused to the maximum extent feasible. **MM 5.16.4-3** through **MM 5.16.4-6** would provide for the delivery of waste to the proper location, measures for green waste recycling diversion, adequate space for collecting and loading recyclable materials prior to issuance of building permits, and incorporation of low maintenance, drought tolerant vegetation as reviewed and approved by the appropriate Planning Department. With the incorporation of mitigation and compliance with State and local solid waste regulations, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold 5.16.4-2: Would the project comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statues and regulations related to solid waste?

Mitigation Measures **MM 5.16.4-1** through **5.16.4-6** would require that each individual development proponent implement a waste diversion program in effort to reduce solid waste impacts on existing landfill capacities. The Project would be required to comply with the State's waste diversion goal of 75 percent. With the incorporation of mitigation and compliance with State and local solid waste regulations, the Project would not interfere with regulations related to solid waste or generate waste in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure. Impacts would be less than significant.

5. Cumulative Impacts

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) anticipates that Riverside County buildout would continue to occur through the year 2035. All currently active landfills have estimated closure dates that predate the buildout year of 2035 with the exception of El Sobrante Landfill.

The Project and related projects would contribute to the cumulative amount of solid waste that is disposed of within the Riverside County landfill system. However, as discussed above, the Project in conjunction

with other projects within the area would generate a total amount of waste that could be accommodated by existing landfills and would not contribute to cumulatively significant impacts to landfill capacity such that all landfills exceed their capacity. However, related projects are also required to comply with State and local diversion and recycling regulations. Related projects within nearby jurisdictions, including the City of Palm Desert and Riverside County, would be required to adhere to recycling and waste diversion initiatives and programs in place within those jurisdictions.

Therefore, due to available capacity and adherence to regulatory requirements to reduce solid waste generation by 75 percent by 2020, impacts would be less than significant. Cumulative impacts to the existing landfills resulting from waste generated by related projects are considered less than significant.

C. MITIGATION MEASURES

The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to reduce the Project's solid waste impacts:

MM 5.16.4-1: Prior to implementing individual Project approval, a Waste Recycling Plan (WRP) shall be submitted and approved by the City of Rancho Mirage Planning Division and provided to the City's Building and Safety Division prior to the issuance of building permits. At a minimum the WRP shall identify the materials (e.g., concrete, asphalt, wood, etc.) that would be generated by construction and development, the project amounts, measures/methods that would be implemented to recycle, reuse, and/or reduce the amount of materials, the facilities and haulers that would be utilized, and the targeted recycling or reduction rates to be achieved, consistent with the Rancho Mirage Municipal Code and all other applicable legal requirements.

MM 5.16.4-2: Each individual project proponent shall recycle, reuse, and/or reduce, to the maximum extent feasible, the amount of construction and demolition materials (i.e., concrete, asphalt, wood, etc.) generated by development of the Project that would otherwise be taken to a landfill. This diversion of waste must exceed a 50 percent reduction by weight. The Project shall complete a Construction and Demolition Waste form as evidence to ensure compliance. The reporting form must be approved by the City's Planning Division and submitted to the City's Building and Safety Division prior to the issuance of certificate of occupancy/final inspection.

MM 5.16.4-3: All commercial and residential refuse generated from the Project shall be delivered to regional transfer stations throughout the life of the Project; any

residual waste that these transfer stations could not accept shall be disposed of at the Lamb Canyon Landfill or El Sobrante Landfill or other locations as determined by the Riverside County Waste Management Department.

MM 5.16.4-4: The Homeowners Association(s) and Commercial Management Service Provider(s) associated with the proposed development shall implement green waste recycling through their yard maintenance or waste hauling contracts throughout the life of the Project. Green waste recycling includes such things as grass recycling (where lawn clippings from a mulching-type mower are left on the lawn) and on- or off-site composting. This measure shall be implemented to reduce green waste going to landfills. If such services are not available through the yard maintenance or waste haulers in the area, the organizations shall provide individual homeowners and commercial businesses with information about ways to recycle green waste individually and collectively. Homeowners shall be notified of such in the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs).

MM 5.16.4-5: Prior to issuance of building permits for any multi-unit residential or commercial facility, individual Project proponents shall obtain clearance from the applicable Waste Management Department to verify compliance with local jurisdiction requirements, including providing adequate areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials.

MM 5.16.4-6: Prior to future Project approvals, individual Project proponents shall submit for review and approval, to the City's Planning Division, landscape plans that implement the use of xeriscape landscaping and the use of drought tolerant low maintenance vegetation in all landscaped areas of the Project.

D. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Project-level and cumulative impacts associated with solid waste would be less than significant following adherence to regulatory requirements and implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM 5.16.4-1** through **MM 5.16.4-6**.