

## 5.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

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This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) evaluates the potential land use impacts of the proposed Section 31 Specific Plan Project (“Specific Plan Project” or “Project”) and the Project’s consistency with the City of Rancho Mirage General Plan. Land use impacts can be either direct or indirect. Direct impacts result in land use incompatibilities or the division of neighborhoods or communities. Indirect impacts are secondary effects resulting from conflicts with implementation of land use policies, such as an increase in demand for public utilities or services, or increased traffic on roadways. Indirect impacts are addressed in other topical sections of this Draft EIR. Please see **Section 9.0** for a glossary of terms, definitions, and acronyms used in this Draft EIR.

### A. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project Site consists of approximately 618 acres of undeveloped land comprising the majority of Section 31, Township 4 South, Range 6 East, and a portion of the southeast quarter of Section 36, Township 4 South, Range 5 East, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian (SBBM). The Project Site is located entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage (City) on its eastern boundary with the City of Palm Desert, as shown in **Figure 5.10-1: Existing Land Status**.

#### 1. Existing Conditions

##### *Existing On-Site Land Uses*

The Project Site consists of relatively undisturbed desert lands, consisting of low-lying sand dunes and sand fields.

While the interior of the site is relatively undisturbed, some areas around the edges of the Project Site are disturbed. These areas contain disturbances consistent with the installation of utility lines along the eastern and western edges of the Project Site and two small stormwater detention basins located on the northern side of the Project Site, with isolated areas of grading and moderately- and lightly-used two-track roads also present throughout the Project Site. Native vegetation has been impacted in these areas of disturbance.

Much of the Project Site contains the non-native and invasive Sahara mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*). The establishment of this non-native, ephemeral species has likely contributed to the partial stabilization of sand hummocks on the Project Site. The existing residential and commercial development to the west shields the site from prevailing westerly winds emanating from the San Gorgonio Pass. This has had the effect of reducing wind-carried sand, which also contributes to the partial stabilization of sand deposits across some of the Project Site.

### ***Existing Surrounding Land Uses***

The Project Site is bordered by Gerald Ford Drive to the north, Monterey Avenue to the east, Frank Sinatra Drive to the south, and Bob Hope Drive to the west. North of Gerald Ford Drive, single-family residential neighborhoods are the predominant land use, with several vacant, undeveloped properties interspersed with the neighborhood at the corners of Gerald Ford Drive and Bob Hope Drive and Gerald Ford Drive and Oasis Way, with single-family development in between. East of the Project Site across Monterey Avenue in the adjacent City of Palm Desert is the Marriott Shadow Ridge Resort, which includes a golf course and multifamily resort housing. In addition, immediately east of the Project Site at its southeastern corner lies a vacant, undeveloped parcel. South of Frank Sinatra Drive are primarily single-family residential neighborhoods, with minor areas of office development to the east near Monterey Avenue. Additionally, the Rancho Mirage Country Club borders Frank Sinatra Drive to the south near Bob Hope Drive, and Desert Island lies to the southwest. Several vacant, undeveloped properties are interspersed with residential neighborhoods to the south. To the west of the Project Site across Bob Hope Drive is the Annenberg Estate, which includes a golf course and the Sunnylands Center and Gardens (Sunnylands), as well as vacant lands and a commercial shopping center.

### ***Existing Land Use Plans, Policies and Regulations***

Local and regional laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines that address the Project Site and the surrounding area are described below.

#### **City of Rancho Mirage**

The Project Site is located within the boundaries of the City of Rancho Mirage. 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, as shown in **Figure 5.10-2: City of Rancho Mirage Land Use and Zoning Map**. 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.<sup>1</sup> The Very Low Density Residential designation provides for single-family residential development typically on individual lots of about 0.03 to 0.5 acres. Planned residential developments are also an appropriate form under this designation. Lands with this designation may serve to buffer more dense residential development from estate residential uses.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, Chapter 2: Land Use (2017), 9.

**Figure 5.10-1 Existing Land Status**

The Resort Hotel Commercial designation allows for the development of hotels and destination resorts with limited, ancillary commercial uses, such as spas, recreational facilities, restaurants, lounges, and small retail shops that directly support the primary use. Based on the maximum permitted residential density of 2 dwelling units/acre in the R-L-2 zone, the City's current General Plan zoning designations for the Project Site could accommodate up to 886 dwelling units within the R-L-2 zone. Additionally, the existing Rs-H zoning/land use designation can accommodate resorts, hotel rooms, ancillary commercial uses (restaurants, shops, dry cleaners, etc.), condominium hotel units, and condominiums under certain conditions.

According to the Rancho Mirage Municipal Code, areas designated as a Specific Plan Overlay Zoning District require the preparation of a specific plan. The Rancho Mirage General Plan identifies Section 31 as an area targeted by the City for the preparation of a specific plan.<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned previously, the Project Site is bordered by Monterey Avenue to the east, Frank Sinatra Drive to the south, Bob Hope Drive to the west, and Gerald Ford Drive to the north. Monterey Avenue and Bob Hope Drive are classified as Major Arterial routes;<sup>3</sup> these roadways are generally intended to carry high traffic volumes and are main thoroughfares through the City. Frank Sinatra Drive and Gerald Ford Drive are classified as Minor Arterial routes;<sup>4</sup> these arterials typically carry traffic along the perimeters of major developments but are also used as through streets.

### **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 more than 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.

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2 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, Chapter 2: Land Use (2017), *Exhibit 3 Specific Plan Areas in Rancho Mirage*, 12.

3 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Circulation Element" (2017), *Exhibit 8 Circulation Roadway Plan*, 26.

4 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Circulation Element" (2017), *Exhibit 8 Circulation Roadway Plan*, 26.

SCAG is also responsible for the designated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) including its Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) component pursuant to SB 375. The SCS has been formulated to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles by 8 percent per capita by 2020, by 18 percent per capita by 2035, and by 21 percent per capita by 2040, 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.

### **Coachella Valley Association of Governments**

The CVAG is a sub-regional organization within SCAG. CVAG is 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 is made up of 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.

### **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission**

The Project Site is located within the jurisdiction of a habitat conservation plan prepared in the Coachella Valley– the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC), a joint powers authority of elected representatives, oversees and manages the CVMSHCP. The CVCC has no regulatory powers and no land use authority. Its primary purpose is to buy land from willing sellers in the conservation areas and to manage that land.<sup>5</sup> The CVMSHCP addresses approximately 1.2 million acres encompassing the Coachella Valley and the surrounding mountains up to the ridgeline. The CVMSHCP aims to conserve over 240,000 acres of open space and protect 27 plant and animal species in the Coachella Valley and the surrounding mountains while creating a robust system open space parks, trails, and reserves.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, “Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Fact Sheet,” accessed April 2019, <http://www.cvmshcp.org/doc/Fact%20Sheet%20CVMSHCP.pdf>.

6 Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, “Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Fact Sheet,” accessed April 2019, <http://www.cvmshcp.org/doc/Fact%20Sheet%20CVMSHCP.pdf>.

**Figure 5.10-2 City of Rancho Mirage Land Use and Zoning Map**

The CVMSHCP, which became effective in October of 2008, is a regional conservation plan that identifies and coordinates the permanent protection of habitats, biological linkages and corridors, and ecological processes for the benefit of plants and wildlife. CVMSHCP participants include Riverside County, the cities of Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage, as well as the Coachella Valley Water District and Imperial Irrigation District. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments serves as the lead agency for plan review and consideration with the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission overseeing the plan implementation. The plan enables the participating public agencies (permittees) to comply with both the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts and other regulations promulgated to protect listed plants and wildlife.

## **B. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **1. Thresholds of Significance**

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City finds a project may be deemed to have a significant impact related to land use if it would:

**Threshold 5.10-1: Physically divide an established community.**

**Threshold 5.10-2: 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.**

### **2. Methodology**

The determination of the Project's consistency with applicable land use plans and policies is based upon a review of the previously identified planning documents that regulate land use or guide land use decisions at and around the Project Site. The Project is considered to be consistent with the provisions of the identified regional and local plans if it meets the general intent of the plans and would not preclude the attainment of the primary intent of the land use plan or policy.

### **3. Project Design Features**

Upon approval and adoption of the Section 31 Specific Plan by the City, the Specific Plan would serve as the zoning for the Project Site. The Specific Plan establishes the necessary plans, development standards, regulations, infrastructure requirements, design guidelines, and implementation programs on which subsequent project-related development activities would be founded. It is intended that local public works projects, design review plans, detailed site plans, grading and building permits, or any other action requiring ministerial or discretionary approval applicable to the Project Site would be consistent with the Specific Plan.

The Section 31 Specific Plan would allow the development of a mixed-use community including residential, mixed use core, and lagoon land uses, as shown in **Figure 3.0-3: Land Use Plan** in **Section 3.0: Project Description** of this Draft EIR. The proposed master-planned community includes resort hotels, a mixed-use town center, residential neighborhoods, a private street system, and recreational open space amenities including a 34-acre Grand Oasis Crystal Lagoon (Grand Oasis lagoon), an integrated system of pedestrian, bicycle, and golf cart trail linkages, neighborhood parks, water features, a community beach club, and complementary features.

The Project would enable the development of up to 175,000 square feet of combined office, restaurant, and neighborhood commercial uses, a combined total of 1,932 residential units and hotel-branded residential units, and up to 400 hotel keys. The Project Site would be developed across four planning areas (Town Center and residential Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3).

A summary of the expanded land uses proposed by the Project are presented in **Table 3.0-1: Project Summary** in **Section 3.0: Project Description** of this Draft EIR. The Specific Plan goes into more detail regarding the development standards for each pertaining land use, and would orient the proposed 1,932 dwelling units such that buildings with lower densities are located near the exterior boundaries of the Project Site, increasing gradually in density toward the Grand Oasis lagoon and the Town Center Planning Area (Town Center). Within the residential portions of PAs 1, 2, and 3, maximum buildings heights for detached developments would be one story and 20 feet for Estate residences; two stories and 35 feet for Conventional residences; and three stories and 40 feet for Cluster residences. For attached, Cluster residences, building height caps would range from two stories and 35 feet, to four stories and 50 feet, depending on the residential product. Within the Town Center in the northeastern portion of the site, the Project would allow for heights of up to five stories and 65 feet for buildings associated with Mixed-Use and Resort Hotel uses; heights of four stories and 50 feet for Multifamily buildings; and heights of two stories and 29 feet for Commercial buildings.

The Covenant between the Annenberg Foundation Trust and the owner of the Section 31 property (EC Rancho Mirage Holdings Limited Partnership [ECRMH]) includes additional height restrictions designed to minimize visual and other impacts from the Project on the Annenberg Properties, located west of the Project Site. These restrictions, which are subject to change, include the following:

- Property west of a line that is 1,500 feet east of the Section 31 property line on the east side of Bob Hope Drive (the “Height Limit Line”) shall be used solely for single-family residential uses, with 20-foot building height limits; and



- The approximately 500-foot wide strip along the western boundary of Section 31 extending from Frank Sinatra Drive north to Gerald Ford Drive would be restricted to no more than one dwelling unit per acre with a maximum height of 20 feet and one story.

Primary vehicular access to the interior private street system would be provided at eight locations from the surrounding public Major and Minor Arterials, which are fully constructed with curb and gutter to City standards. The Project provides for two signalized entries and two right-in right-out entries providing public access to the Town Center retail, resort and public beach areas from Monterey Avenue and Gerald Ford Drive. Signalized, gated entries on Gerald Ford Drive, Bob Hope Drive, Frank Sinatra Drive, and Monterey Avenue would allow private access to residential neighborhoods by residents and their guests. Gated control points between the residential and Town Center areas would allow residents direct access to entertainment and services.

As shown in **Figure 3.0-5: Pedestrian and Alternative Vehicular Circulation Plan**, community pedestrian and multi-modal circulation would be accommodated on a multi-use path along the public roadways on the perimeter of the Project Site that link to the regional multi-modal system of meandering sidewalks and designated bike lanes along the City’s arterial street network. Pedestrian circulation inside the community would be provided along the internal Pedestrian and Multi-use Paseos, the Grand Oasis lagoon promenade, the Landscaped Edge Multi-Use Path, the Lagoon Multi-Use Corridor, the Grand Oasis Promenade, the Residential Multi-Use Path, and optional curb-adjacent sidewalks.

#### 4. Project Impacts

**Threshold 5.10-1: *Would the project physically divide an established community?***

The Project Site consists of an island of vacant, undeveloped land within the eastern portion of the City of Rancho Mirage. The Project Site is primarily surrounded by urban development with some vacant, undeveloped land interspersed. To the north of the Project Site are single-family residential neighborhoods with some vacant land interspersed to the northwest; to the east are country club resort uses with one vacant area to the immediate southeast; to the south are single-family residential, country club, and office uses with some vacant parcels interspersed near the southeast; and to the west are the Annenberg Estate, Sunnylands, vacant land, and a commercial shopping center. These uses are consistent with land use designations outlined in the City’s General Plan for lands north of the Project Site as Office, Low Density residential, and Very Low Density, to the east as General Commercial (and Resort & Entertainment within the adjacent portion of the City of Palm Desert), to the south as Office, Low Density

residential, Residential Estate, and Private Open Space, and to the west as Private Open Space, Public/Quasi-Public, Very Low Density residential, and Neighborhood Commercial.<sup>7</sup>

The Project would include development of a mixed-use, master-planned community across four planning areas (Town Center and PAs 1, 2, and 3). Land use categories would include Lagoon (LAG), Mixed Use Core (M-U CORE), and Residential. The Lagoon land use designates a 34-acre, multi-use Grand Oasis Crystal Lagoon (Grand Oasis lagoon), located near the center of the Project Site, as the defining feature of the site. The Mixed-Use Core land use category is the most intense and compact component of the Specific Plan and applies to approximately 80 acres located in the northeastern portion of the Project Site. It contains two components, Resort Hotels and Town Center, that enable a range of resort hotel, restaurant, beachfront recreation uses, and residential uses, including up to 731 multifamily and resort-branded units. The Residential land use category outside the Lagoon and Mixed-Use Core land use areas accommodates residential neighborhoods across PAs 1, 2, and 3, for a total of approximately 1,201 units on approximately 504 acres of land including parks and open space.

Four-lane thoroughfares border the Project Site to the north, south and, with a six-lane thoroughfare to the east. As described previously, the Project Site is surrounded by single-family residential neighborhoods to the north, with several vacant, undeveloped properties interspersed near Bob Hope Drive and Oasis Way. East of the Project Site across Monterey Avenue in the adjacent City of Palm Desert is the Marriott Shadow Ridge Resort, which includes a golf course and multifamily resort housing. In addition, immediately east of the Project Site at its southeastern corner lies a vacant, undeveloped parcel. South of Frank Sinatra Drive are primarily single-family residential neighborhoods, with minor areas of office development to the east near Monterey Avenue. Additionally, the Rancho Mirage Country Club borders Frank Sinatra Drive to the southwest near Bob Hope Drive. A portion of the Rancho Mirage Country Club golf course has been approved for redevelopment with a boutique hotel and resort condominiums. Several vacant, undeveloped properties are interspersed with residential neighborhoods to the south. To the west of the Project Site across Bob Hope Drive is the Annenberg Estate, which includes a golf course and Sunnylands, as well as vacant lands and a commercial shopping center.

The existing residential communities to the north and south, as well as country clubs and golf courses to the east, south, and southwest, are enclosed by walls. These barriers are intended to shield interior residents from roadway noise and provide a sense of security and privacy. Similarly, on-site walls enabled by the Project would offer future residents of the Project Site noise insulation and a sense of security and privacy typical of surrounding residential developments. Further, the Section 31 Specific Plan would

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7 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Chapter 2: Land Use," *Exhibit 1 Land Use Map*, (November 2017).

enable development of mixed-use, commercial, resort, and residential uses at the northeastern portion of the Project Site within the Town Center, and moderately higher density residential development at the southeastern portion within PA 3 (Cluster Residential and Conventional Residential). The Town Center would consist of similar resort uses and building heights to current multistory resort development across Monterey Avenue, as would the moderately higher residential buildings. Lower density, residential development would border the majority of the Project Site, including to the northwest, west, and south, consistent with existing uses adjacent to the Project Site in these areas. Development of the proposed uses would not result in a conflict with, or divide, any established community. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant.

***Threshold 5.10-2: Would the project 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?***

Since the Project Site is entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage and therefore subject to the City's land use regulations, the consistency of the Project with the City's land use plans and policies applicable to the area and to topics of environmental concern is discussed below. Additionally, because the City participates in regional planning efforts coordinated by SCAG and CVCC, consistency with regional planning policies and efforts related to topics of environmental concern are also evaluated.

**City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Analysis**

The City of Rancho Mirage employs a single-map system of 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. The City's current General Plan designates approximately 175 acres of the Project Site as Resort Hotel (Rs-H) and approximately 443 acres as Very Low Density Residential (R-L-2).

The City's General Plan describes the Very Low-Density Residential land use as single-family residential and Planned Residential Developments (PRD) typically on individual lots of about 0.5-acre. The intent of this designation is to encourage development of a wide variety of dwelling unit types in a planned environment. Lands with this designation may serve to buffer more dense residential development from estate residential uses. Intended densities range from 0–2 dwelling units per acre. The Resort Hotel land use is described as hotels and destination resorts with limited, ancillary commercial uses, such as spas, recreational facilities, restaurants, lounges, and small retail shops that directly support the primary use. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for Resort Hotel areas is 0.25. Based on the maximum permitted

residential density of 2 dwelling units/acre in the R-L-2 zone, the existing zoning/land use designation for the Project Site could accommodate up to 886 dwelling units.

As outlined in **Section 3.0: Project Description** of this Draft EIR, a requested approval item associated with the Project involves a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change for the Project Site from Very Low Density Residential (R-L-2) and Resort Hotel (Rs-H) to Specific Plan with a Mixed Use (M-U) underlay. The Section 31 Specific Plan would be approved and adopted by the City as the zoning for the Project Site. The Section 31 Specific Plan would develop up to 1,932 residential units. While this represents an increase of 1,066 units beyond what is permitted under the current land use designations, as mentioned previously, the existing Rs-H zoning/land use designation could accommodate a range of resort and resort-serving uses, including condominium hotel units and condominiums under certain conditions. Accordingly, it can be reasonably inferred that the Rs-H portion of the Project Site would result in some form of permanent residents upon development under existing conditions. Additionally, this residential growth has been accounted for in the City's General Plan and regional growth forecasts, described in further detail in **Section 5.12: Population and Housing** of this Draft EIR. The Section 31 Specific Plan integrates a variety of residential and non-residential uses similar to those which are currently permitted and includes infrastructure master plans to support the intensity of uses proposed and master-planned community design standards and features. As such, the intensity and uses enabled by the Project are consistent with the spirit and intent of current General Plan land use/zoning designations for the Project Site.

The City's General Plan describes the purpose of specific plans to generate development through flexible planning and design, as well as to provide an opportunity to focus regulations and standards in a specific geographic area.<sup>8</sup> The City's General Plan states that specific plans are intended for larger, more complex projects that integrate a variety of residential and non-residential land uses and that specific plans can also permit uses, development standards, and density/intensity levels beyond those allowed in the City's Zoning Code. In return, specific plans should demonstrate exceptional design quality and amenities, as well as the phased cost-effective extension of infrastructure. The General Plan identifies areas in the City targeted for specific plans, including the Project Site.<sup>9</sup> As proposed, the Section 31 Specific Plan is consistent with the policies in the City's General Plan related to the intent and use of specific plans.

A detailed analysis of the Project's consistency with the policies of the various elements of the City's General plan related to topics of environmental concern is provided in **Table 5.10-1: City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Analysis**. The analysis contained in **Table 5.10-1** concludes that the Project would

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8 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Chapter 2: Land Use," (November 2017).

9 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Chapter 2: Land Use," *Exhibit 3 Specific Plan Areas in Rancho Mirage* (November 2017).

be consistent with the City's General Plan. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in significant land use impacts due to inconsistency with the City's General Plan. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant.

### **SCAG RTP/SCS Analysis**

As previously noted, the 2016 SCAG RTP/SCS is an advisory document to local agencies in the southern California region for their information and voluntary use while preparing local plans and handling local issues of regional significance. **Table 5.10-2: SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS Analysis**, provides an assessment of the Project's relationship to regional goals pertaining to issues of environmental concern contained in various chapters of the RTP/SCS. The analysis contained in **Table 5.10-2** concludes that the Project would be consistent with the RTP/SCS goals. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in significant land use impacts due to inconsistency with the RTP/SCS goals. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission Analysis**

The City is a participant and permittee in the CVMSHCP and has recognized the value of biological resources for their contribution to residents' quality of life and provision of other benefits.<sup>10</sup> The CVCC, which oversees and manages the CVMSHCP, has adopted a development impact fee structure which helps fund and implement conservation efforts of the CVMSHCP, which has been codified in Section 3.29.147 of the City's Municipal Code. As discussed in **Section 5.3: Biological Resources** of this Draft EIR, payment of the CVMSHCP Conservation Fee, as required by Mitigation Measure **MM 5.3-1**, by the Project proponent prior to issuance of a grading permit would mitigate the potential impact of the Project on sensitive plant and wildlife species addressed by the CVMSHCP, which are identified as present or likely to be present within the Project Site. These species include Coachella Valley milk-vetch, 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. The Project would not conflict with the CVMSHCP and impacts would be less than significant.

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10 City of Rancho Mirage, *General Plan*, "Chapter 5: Conservation and Open Space," 59, (adopted November 2017).

**Table 5.10-1  
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Analysis**

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Land Use Element</b>	
<b>Goal Land Use (LU) 1:</b> A resort residential community of desirable neighborhoods, a variety of community facilities, and high-quality development.	
<b>Goal LU 2:</b> A balanced mix of functionally integrated land uses, meeting the general social and economic needs of the community through simplified, compatible, and consistent land use and zoning designations.	
<b>Policy LU 2.2:</b> Specific plans shall be utilized, where appropriate, to ensure the phased, logical and cost-effective extension of infrastructure and buildout of new development.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes grading, drainage, sewer, water, circulation, and phasing plans to guide infrastructure extensions and build-out of the Project.
<b>Policy LU 2.5:</b> The City shall ensure adequate visibility and accessibility for commercial development while preserving the scenic view sheds from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way.	The Section 31 Specific Plan proposes a commercial Town Center located on the northeastern quadrant of the Project Site and accessible from Monterey Avenue and Gerald Ford Drive, major transportation corridors. The site design would preserve and enhance scenic views through the proposed grading plan, by adding appropriately placed landscaping, and other high-quality design elements.
<b>Policy LU 2.6:</b> The City shall ensure privacy and safety for residential neighborhoods by providing adequate buffering and screening, particularly where neighborhoods adjoin or are integrated with commercial developments.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Wall Plan to establish walls and landscape setbacks around the Planning Areas as appropriate. Walls would serve as a noise and security barrier around residential areas to promote neighborhood privacy and security proximate to roadways, resort uses, and mixed-use development.
<b>Policy LU 2.8:</b> The City shall maintain a cooperative planning process with appropriate jurisdictions, including the County of Riverside and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, assuring an effective advisory role regarding any and all development and land use planning issues proposed in or near Rancho Mirage and the SOI.	The Section 31 Specific Plan Area is located entirely within the City of Rancho Mirage and borders Palm Desert to the east. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15082(a), the City has conducted outreach and notification efforts with relevant parties and stakeholders. Further, pursuant to the requirements of Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.3.1 (Assembly Bill [AB] 52) and Government Code (GC) Section 65352.3 (Senate Bill [SB] 18), the City has worked to ensure tribal consultation procedures are followed to solicit input from surrounding jurisdictions, including the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. The City will actively engage with any interested jurisdiction or tribal entity to ensure all considerations are addressed.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<p><b>Policy LU 3:</b> The preservation and enhancement of the predominantly low-density, high-quality residential character of Rancho Mirage.</p>	
<p><b>Policy LU 3.1:</b> Areas of existing residential development and surrounding vacant lands shall be planned in a manner that preserves neighborhood character and assures a consistent and compatible residential land use pattern.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan aims to preserve neighborhood character and surrounding land use patterns. In keeping with the predominantly residential nature of Rancho Mirage, a majority of the Project Site is planned for single-family residential development.</p> <p>The Project is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood character by regulating residential densities around the perimeter of the Project Site. The edge zones on the north, south, and west would limit densities and building heights for consistency with surrounding residential communities and Sunnylands.</p> <p>Non-residential uses are located primarily in the eastern portion of the Project Site. Residential densities are greater toward the center of the Project Site and around the Grand Oasis lagoon, where development would not disrupt the existing land use pattern surrounding the site.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU 3.2:</b> Density transfers (the transfer of allowable dwelling units from one area of land to another) may occur in planned residential developments in conjunction with the provision of common area amenities and open space. Golf courses, greenbelts, pool areas, and other open space uses incorporated into these developments shall be designated as Open Space areas to ensure their preservation as such.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan outlines a process for limited residential density transfers that allows for evaluation of Project impacts while preserving flexibility for future development. While the number of residential units on the Project Site may not exceed 1,932 units, the distribution of units inside the site may be adjusted to facilitate creative site-specific development proposals, while maintaining consistency with the density of residential development in the surrounding communities.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU 3.3:</b> The City shall consider the issues of slope disturbance, development area and lot coverage, view preservation, revegetation, compatibility, public safety, and access when assessing potential residential developments.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Grading Plan that addresses land recontouring and view preservation. Development regulations address lot size and coverage requirements for assorted residential product types. The Project would conform with all engineering and building codes to ensure public safety is maintained and provides for appropriate vehicular and pedestrian circulation.</p>
<p><b>Open Spaces Land Uses, Goal LU 6:</b> The conservation of open space areas that protect environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide recreational opportunities, and enhance the aesthetic character of Rancho Mirage.</p>	
<p><b>Open Spaces Land Uses, Goal 7:</b> A land use pattern that preserves Rancho Mirage’s resort residential atmosphere, including scenic resources such as hillside and mountain vistas, waterways, and native desert communities.</p>	

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<p><b>Policy LU 7.1:</b> The City shall maintain a Development Code that encourages the provision and preservation of open space areas through flexible development standards</p>	<p>The Project’s proposes uses are oriented around substantial open space features in the form of a swimmable lagoon and linear paseos along with formal and informal parks, trails, and bike paths. The Project defines development standards to create and preserve these unique open space features.</p>
<p><b>Circulation Element</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal Circulation (CIR) 1:</b> A safe, efficient, attractive, and economical circulation network meeting current and future demands in a manner consistent with the resort residential character of the community.</p>	
<p><b>Policy CIR 1.1:</b> Rancho Mirage’s street system shall be designed and constructed to maximize mobility, minimize congestion, and assure that all intersections and street segments operate at LOS “D” or better during the peak hours.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes Vehicular and Multi-Modal Circulation Plans to guide the development of a convenient and efficient circulation system. These plans encourage multimodal mobility both internal and external to the Project Site to promote the Circulation Element Goals of the City.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR 1.2:</b> A detailed traffic analysis shall be required for development proposals or other activities that might potentially require roadway improvements above and beyond those evaluated in the Circulation Element and General Plan EIR and EIR Addendum.</p>	<p>A detailed traffic analysis for the Project, included as <b>Appendix I.1</b>, was prepared to determine the need for traffic improvements to serve the Project. Findings for the traffic study are found in <b>Section 5.15: Traffic and Transportation</b> of this Draft EIR. All surrounding Arterial Roads are existing at their ultimate General Plan lane configuration including pavement, curb and gutter, other than Bob Hope Drive, which is currently constructed to Minor Arterial standards and classified as a Major Arterial, and would be reclassified as a Minor Arterial via the General Plan Amendment outlined in <b>Section 3.0: Project Description</b> of this Draft EIR.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR 1.3:</b> The City shall require improvements at critical intersections beyond those needed to meet standard levels-of-service at the discretion of the City Engineer.</p>	<p>The Circulation Plan of the Section 31 Specific Plan is subject to the review of the City Engineer. The Traffic Study and Circulation standards work together to ensure that critical intersections meet or exceed levels-of-service standards.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR 1.4:</b> The number of access points and intersections along arterials shall be limited in order to preserve midblock and intersection capacities and to maintain public safety.</p>	<p>The number of access points to the Project Site from perimeter arterial roads have been located to preserve midblock and intersection capacities and maintain public safety. All major entries align with existing intersections and have existing traffic signals or would be signalized by the Project as warranted. Right-in, right-out driveways are proposed at limited locations in the Town Center. All are subject to City review and approval as part of the entitlement process.</p>



Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Policy CIR 1.5:</b> Access points shall be coordinated between future development in Section 31 and any future development of the properties on the west side of Bob Hope Drive.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes only one entry on Bob Hope Drive. This is aligned with the existing driveway to the Sunnylands Center and Gardens as stipulated in this policy.
<b>Policy CIR 1.7:</b> The City shall develop a system of continuous and convenient bicycle routes and multiuse trails to places of employment, shopping centers, schools, and other high activity areas.	The Section 31 Multi-Modal Circulation Plan envisions a system of continuous and convenient internal multi-modal pathways that interconnect the residential communities with the Grand Oasis lagoon and with commercial and resort hotel uses in the Town Center. These also link with landscaped multi-modal trails along the perimeter arterials.
<b>Policy CIR 1.8:</b> The local street system in developing neighborhoods shall be established through a cooperative public/private planning process.	The Section 31 Specific Plan is a master-planned project and the local street network would be established through the City’s public review processes.
<b>Policy CIR 1.9:</b> Circulation and access for undeveloped parcels shall be coordinated with surrounding properties.	As shown on the Section 31 Circulation Plan, the six primary Project entries are aligned with those of surrounding or proposed developments. These include Shadow Ridge Road, Versailles Drive, Oasis Way (aka Michael Dante Way), North Kavenish Drive (or Vista Del Sol), the Sunnylands driveway and a future driveway on vacant commercial land to the east.
<b>Policy CIR 1.10:</b> Streets in private planned residential areas shall be installed and maintained as private streets, and shall be developed in accordance with development standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable standards and guidelines.	The Section 31 Specific Plan designates all internal streets as private streets; they would be owned and maintained as such. The Circulation Plan includes customized street sections and design standards that would be approved as part of the Specific Plan.
<b>Policy CIR 11:</b> City streets should not be converted to private streets when it would diminish circulation alternatives.	The Section 31 Specific Plan does not involve the conversion of any City streets to private streets.
<b>Policy CIR 13:</b> Public streets shall be designed in accordance with complete streets concepts.	The Section 31 Specific Plan designates all perimeter public arterial streets in accordance with the City’s General Plan Circulation Element. These incorporate complete street concepts such as landscaped parkways, multi-modal pathways, painted bike lanes, median islands, and accessible pedestrian signals.
<b>Housing Element</b>	
<b>Goal Housing (H) 1:</b> A variety of housing types that meet the needs of residents in the city.	
<b>Goal H 2:</b> Housing to meet the needs of the city’s lower income households.	
<b>Policy H 1:</b> The General Plan shall provide for a mixture of residential densities dispersed throughout the city.	The Section 31 Specific Plan provides for a mixture of housing densities and products, the intensity of which increases towards the center of the Project Site.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<p><b>Policy H 2:</b> The City’s residential development standards shall allow for a diversity of housing types while adhering to the General Plan’s community design policies.</p>	<p>The residential development standards in the Section 31 Specific Plan accommodate a diversity in housing types within the Project Site. Implementation of the Project makes all implementing residential development projects subject to pre-review by the Master Developer for consistency with the Specific Plan design guidelines before submittal to the City for formal approval.</p>
<p><b>Conservation and Open Space Element</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal Conservation and Open Space (COS) 1:</b> A balanced system of parks, trails, and recreation facilities that meets active and passive recreation needs of all residents and visitors.</p>	
<p><b>Policy COS 2.1:</b> The City’s park system shall consist of mini-parks, local parks, and community parks.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan would provide a comprehensive Open Space system that includes active and passive recreation areas for the private use of residents, as well as a publicly-accessible trail around the Grand Oasis lagoon. Controlled public access would also be allowed to the Town Center beachfront. These recreational facilities would increase the number of recreational park facilities available in the City.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 2.2:</b> To the extent feasible, the City shall provide at least three acres of local and community parkland per 1,000 in population, including park facilities for all age segments of the population.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a recreational lagoon of approximately 34 acres as well as a publicly-accessible trail around the Grand Oasis lagoon, providing recreational amenities for the City’s existing residents as well as residents and visitors of the Project Site. The Project also provides internal recreational amenities for residents that would reduce impacts on the City’s park system.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 2.3:</b> To the extent feasible, the design of city parks and trails shall accommodate the special needs of the disabled and senior population in Rancho Mirage.</p>	<p>No City parks are proposed as part of the Project; however, the recreational trail around the Grand Oasis lagoon would be open to the public and designed to accommodate special needs residents.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 2.5:</b> Class III bikeways shall only be permitted in Rancho Mirage where Class I or II bikeways are not feasible and where an essential regional bicycle route connection is missing.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Multi-Modal Circulation Plan, which directs the development of Class I bikeways. See the Circulation Plan, Multi-Modal Circulation Plan, and street sections included in <b>Appendix B: Section 31 Specific Plan</b>.</p>

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Policy COS 2.8:</b> Trails shall not encroach upon bighorn sheep lambing areas and shall be designed to minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources.	The Project Site is not located in a mountainous region near any bighorn sheep lambing areas nor would it have any significant and unavoidable impact on sensitive biological resources, as concluded in <b>Section 5.3: Biological Resources</b> of this Draft EIR.
<b>Policy COS 2.9:</b> Through coordination with the local utilities, service providers, and the CVWD, the City shall maximize the use of flood control and utility easement areas for inclusion in a multi-use trail system providing alternative transportation links to parks and open space areas.	The Project Site does not contain any existing regional flood control facilities. Existing utility easements are confined to the outer edges of the Project Site; the Project includes the provision of a Landscaped Edge Multi-Use Path which would include landscaping and accommodate a multimodal pathway integrating the Project Site with surrounding pedestrian and bicycle networks.
<b>Biological Resources, Goal COS 3:</b> The protection and preservation of biological resources in Rancho Mirage, especially sensitive and special status wildlife species and their natural habitats.	
<b>Policy COS 3.1:</b> The City shall support and participate in local and regional efforts to evaluate and protect natural habitats, including suitable habitats for rare and endangered species occurring in Rancho Mirage and vicinity.	Rancho Mirage is a participating agency in the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The Project Site is not located in a Conservation Area and would be required to pay the City's CVMSHCP Conservation Fee to assist in providing revenue for the conservation of lands necessary to implement the CVMSHCP.
<b>Policy COS 3.3:</b> The City shall encourage the use of naturally occurring desert plant materials in landscaping for development projects, to the greatest extent possible, and discourage the use of non-native plant materials that are harmful to native plant and animal species.	The Landscape Plan included in the Section 31 Specific Plan draws from the natural desert context of Rancho Mirage using desert and low-water-use plant materials. The Landscape Plan is designed to maximize water efficiency while maintaining an aesthetically pleasing environment for residents and visitors. In addition, the Project Site is characterized as an infill location in an urban context so there are no adjoining natural desert areas containing native plant or animal species.
<b>Energy and Mineral Resources, Goal COS 4:</b> The conservation, efficient use, and thoughtful management of energy sources and mineral deposits.	
<b>Energy and Mineral Resources, Goal COS 5:</b> The long-term viability of limited and non-renewable resources.	
<b>Policy COS 5.1:</b> The City shall promote energy efficiency and conservation in all areas of community development, including transportation, development planning, and public and private sector construction and operation, as well as in the full range of residential and non-residential projects.	Sustainability is a key element of the Section 31 Specific Plan and the Project includes a number of sustainability-related considerations. The Land Use Plan promotes energy efficiency by providing convenient routes for non-motorized travel and providing a full range of services within the Project Site which would serve reduce reliance on automobiles. Chapter 3: Sustainability of the Section 31 Specific Plan outlines approaches to energy efficiency and conservation integrated within the Project.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<p><b>Policy COS 5.2:</b> The General Plan and other community plans shall ensure an efficient circulation system and land use pattern in Rancho Mirage.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Land Use Plan that would promote efficient circulation within the future master-planned community. The Project would implement the spirit and intent of the Resort-Hotel and Residential land use designations identified in the City's General Plan.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 5.3:</b> Major developments that provide significant employment centers shall be required to provide convenient and safe access to the public transit system.</p>	<p>The Town Center is located adjacent to Gerald Ford Drive and Monterey Avenue, major arterial roadways. This location is conducive to convenient and safe public bus service from the SunLine Transit Agency as their operations and routes may allow.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 5.4:</b> The City shall proactively support the affordable and reliable production and delivery of electrical power to the community.</p>	<p>The Project includes prominent sustainability features such as alternative transportation options, less energy-intensive lighting systems, and an energy grid designed to minimize peak loads and provide efficient energy storage. Furthermore, in compliance with the California Energy Code, all residences would be built with solar panels.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 5.5:</b> The City shall support public and private efforts to develop and operate alternative systems of solar and electrical production that take advantage of local renewable resources.</p>	<p>The Project includes prominent sustainability features such as alternative transportation options, less energy-intensive lighting systems, and an energy grid designed to minimize peak loads and provide efficient energy storage.</p>
<p><b>Policy COS 5.6:</b> The City shall encourage the reduction and recycling of household and business waste.</p>	<p>Recycling services would be provided to the Project Site by the City's waste provider.</p>
<p><b>Water Quality, Goal COS 6:</b> A dependable, long-term supply of clean and healthful domestic water to meet the needs of all segments of the community.</p>	
<p><b>Water Quality, Goal COS 7:</b> An informed public that respects Rancho Mirage's finite water resource and maximizes protection and conservation efforts for the benefit of the entire community.</p>	
<p><b>Policy COS 7.1:</b> The City shall encourage the use of drought tolerant landscaping as a means of reducing water demand.</p>	<p>The Landscape Plan included in the Section 31 Specific Plan draws from the natural desert context of Rancho Mirage using desert and low-water-use plant materials. The Landscape Plan is designed to maximize water efficiency while maintaining a pleasing environment for residents of and visitors to the community.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) would evaluate the Landscape Plan against their Landscape and Irrigation System Design Criteria, which were established in response to severe and continued drought conditions. No water meter would be issued to the Project until the CVWD reviewed and approved the Landscape Plan. According to these criteria, the</p>

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
	plants selected must not exceed the Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) established by the CVWD. The CVWD review and approval of the Landscape plan would ensure that the Project helps reach the City's water quality goals.
<b>Policy COS 7.2:</b> Evaluate all proposed land use and development plans for their potential to create groundwater contamination hazards from point and non-point sources and confer with other appropriate agencies to assure adequate review.	The Section 31 Specific Plan proposes only residential, resort, and mixed-use development, none of which pose a high point source risk of groundwater contamination. The Grand Oasis lagoon also contains no appreciable contaminants as it is suitable for human contact. All development within the Project Site must comply with a required Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent contamination of surface and groundwater.
<b>Policy COS 7.4:</b> Require the use of alternative water supplies, such as recycled or canal water, for urban irrigation, where available.	While recycled water is not yet available to the site, CVWD is planning to extend a reclaimed water line within Frank Sinatra Drive in the near future. Once reclaimed water is available to the Project Site, future development enabled by the Project would use it for common area irrigation, and the Specific Plan is designed to accommodate that future use.
<b>Policy COS 7.5:</b> Require new developments to establish and confirm the ability to meet current and future water resource demands.	A Water Supply Assessment (WSA) has been prepared for the Section 31 Specific Plan to demonstrate that water supplies are adequate to serve the Project. The final WSA would be approved by CVWD, the agency responsible for providing oversight of local water resources.
<b>Archaeological and Historic Resources – Goal COS 8:</b> The preservation, maintenance, continuity, and enhancement of cultural heritage and resources in Rancho Mirage, including historic and prehistoric sites, objects, landscapes, and structures.	
<b>Policy COS 8.1:</b> The City shall exercise its responsibility to preserve archaeological, historical, and cultural sites.	A Cultural Resources study was conducted for the Project Site and is included in this Draft EIR (see <b>Appendix E</b> ). It concluded that no known archaeological, historical, or cultural sites are present on the Project Site. See <b>Section 5.4: Cultural Resources</b> of this Draft EIR for more information.
<b>Policy COS 8.2:</b> Development or land use proposals that have the potential to disturb or destroy sensitive cultural resources shall be evaluated by a qualified professional and appropriate mitigation measures shall be incorporated into project approvals, if necessary.	A Cultural Resources study was conducted for the Project Site and is included in this Draft EIR (see <b>Appendix E</b> ). It concluded that no known archaeological, historical, or cultural sites are present on the Project Site. See <b>Section 5.4: Cultural Resources</b> of this Draft EIR for more information.
<b>Policy COS 8.3:</b> The City shall ensure the protection of sensitive archaeological and historic resources from vandalism and illegal collection.	A Cultural Resources study was conducted for the Project Site and is included in this Draft EIR (see <b>Appendix E</b> ). It concluded that no known archaeological, historical, or cultural sites are present on the Project Site. See <b>Section 5.4: Cultural Resources</b> of this Draft EIR for more information.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Air Quality Element</b>	
<b>Goal Air Quality (AQ) 1:</b> Preservation and enhancement of regional air quality for the protection of the health and welfare of the community as a whole.	
<b>Policy AQ 1.1:</b> The City shall coordinate and cooperate with CVAG and SCAQMD in the ongoing monitoring and management of major pollutants affecting Rancho Mirage and the region, with particular focus on PM10.	Prior to construction, the Project would be required to prepare a Fugitive Dust (PM10) Control Plan that defines methods to control windblown dust during construction as per the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Rule 403 and 403.1.
<b>Policy AQ 1.2:</b> The City shall promote the development of pedestrian-oriented retail centers, as well as community wide multi use trails and bike paths, dedicated bike lanes, and other desirable alternatives to motor vehicle traffic.	The Section 31 Specific Plan is designed to encourage non-vehicular transportation by creating walkable residential neighborhoods and a mixed-use Town Center. The Town Center would be appropriately sized and designed to encourage pedestrian travel. The series of multi-use paseos would provide alternative access to the Town Center from the residential areas. The Multi-Modal Specific Plan illustrates the trails and paseos that run around and throughout the Project Site.
<b>Policy AQ 1.4:</b> The City shall encourage the use of clean alternative energy sources for transportation, heating, and cooling whenever practical.	The Section 31 Sustainability Plan and Sustainability Design Guidelines describe the approach to providing clean alternative energy sources whenever practical in support of this policy.
<b>Policy AQ 1.5:</b> The City shall review all development proposals for potential adverse effects on air quality and require mitigation of any significant impacts	See <b>Section 5.2: Air Quality</b> of this Draft EIR for an evaluation of the Project's impacts related to air quality. Air Quality impacts from buildout of the Project would be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.
<b>Policy AQ 1.6:</b> The City shall strive towards achieving a level-of-service C (see Circulation Element) on all roadways to improve traffic flow, minimize idling time, and reduce air emissions.	A traffic report has been prepared for the Project that evaluates vehicular traffic generated by the Project and impacts on the City's public street system (see <b>Appendix I.1</b> ). All potentially significant traffic impacts would be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.
<b>Noise Element</b>	
<b>Goal Noise (N) 1:</b> A noise environment providing peace and quiet that complements and is consistent with Rancho Mirage's resort residential character.	
<b>Policy N 1.1:</b> Land use patterns, associated traffic and its distribution, and individual developments shall be assessed for their potential to generate adverse and incompatible noise impacts. Noise exceeding normally acceptable levels shall be appropriately mitigated.	The Section 31 Specific Plan proposes no land uses that would generate unusually high noise levels with adverse or incompatible noise impacts on surrounding uses or that are inconsistent with the City's Noise ordinance.
<b>Policy N 1.2:</b> Noise sensitive land uses, including residences, resorts, community open space, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, and	The Section 31 Specific Plan proposes no land uses that would generate unusually high noise levels with adverse or incompatible noise impacts on surrounding uses or that are inconsistent with the City's Noise ordinance.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
convalescent homes, shall be protected from high noise levels emitted by both existing and future noise sources.	
<b>Policy N 1.3:</b> Project designs shall be required to include measures that assure that interior noise levels for residential development do not exceed 45 dBA CNEL.	The Section 31 Specific Plan incorporates the use of community walls for noise attenuation from adjacent streets. In addition, residences would be designed such that an interior noise level of 45 dBA is not exceeded.
<b>Policy N 1.4:</b> Land uses allowed adjacent to Rancho Mirage’s major arterial roads and highways, or the Southern Pacific Railroad/I-10 corridor, should generally be limited to those that are compatible with higher noise levels to maximize noise-related land use compatibility.	The Section 31 Specific Plan proposes both residential and mixed-use land uses adjacent to arterial roads. Of these, only residential uses would be considered noise sensitive. Residences would be separated by a community wall and landscape buffers from surrounding roads and residences such that interior noise levels would not exceed 45 dBA.
<b>Safety Element</b>	
<b>Goal Safety (SAFE) 1:</b> A community that plans for and is protected from the effects of seismic and geological hazards.	
<b>Policy SAFE 1.7:</b> Developers of projects in areas identified as being subject to a rockfall or landslide hazard shall prepare detailed geotechnical analysis, including site response to seismic events, and require mitigation measures that reduce associated hazards to insignificant levels.	A geotechnical analysis was prepared for the Section 31 Specific Plan that evaluates the Project’s geological and seismic impacts. The Project Site is not located in an area subject to rockfall or landslide hazards. Refer to <b>Section 5.6: Geology and Soils</b> of this Draft EIR for further information related to this topic area.
<b>Policy SAFE 1.8:</b> The City shall encourage the incorporation of wind barriers, architectural design or features, and drought resistant ground coverage in new development site designs to mitigate the impacts from erosion and wind-blown sand.	The Project would be required to prepare a Fugitive Dust (PM10) Plan that identifies methods to control windblown dust during construction. Once construction is complete, permanent groundcover would stabilize the ground and remove the potential for wind-blown sand and erosion.
<b>Flooding and Hydrology – Goal (SAFE) 2:</b> Protection of lives, property, and essential facilities from flooding and other hydrologic hazards in Rancho Mirage.	
<b>Policy SAFE 2.7:</b> Development proposals located in areas that are subject to flooding shall be evaluated to minimize the exposure of life and property to potential flood risks. All development proposed on lands of one acre or larger shall be designed such that all stormwater to the level of a 100-year frequency storm, worst case of the 3, 6, 12, or 24-hour duration, shall be retained onsite.	The Section 31 Specific Plan would be designed to meet all City drainage and retention requirements as reflected on final engineering design plans for the Project.
<b>Public Services and Facilities Element</b>	
<p><b>Goal Public Services and Facilities (PS&amp;F) 1:</b> Water, sewer and utility facilities that safely and adequately meet the needs of Rancho Mirage at build out.</p> <p><b>Goal PS&amp;F 2:</b> Conservation of the quality and quantity of the water basin.</p> <p><b>Goal PS&amp;F 3:</b> A city-wide sewer system that serves all residences and businesses.</p> <p><b>Goal PS&amp;F 4:</b> Lower electricity rates.</p>	

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Goal PS&amp;F 5:</b> Placement of all utility lines underground.	
<b>Policy PS&amp;F 3.2:</b> All subdivisions shall be connected to sewer lines.	The Section 31 Specific Plan would be connected to the public sewer system.
<b>Policy PS&amp;F 5.1:</b> Give utility lines on major streets primary consideration for under-grounding.	The Project would enable the undergrounding of the existing transmission lines along Frank Sinatra Drive on the southern border of the Project Site. Ultimately, undergrounding of on-site utility lines would be subject to available funding. In addition, new underground electrical distribution lines will be constructed within the Project Site to serve the planned uses.
<b>Fire and Police Protection – Goal PS&amp;F 6:</b> A high level of police and fire protection and paramedic service.	
<b>Policy PS&amp;F 6.1:</b> Review all new and improved developments for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.	<b>Section 5.13: Public Services</b> of this Draft EIR evaluates the potential impacts of the Project on public services, and all such impacts would be mitigated to a level of less than significant through payment of the City’s impact fees and annexation into the City’s existing public services Community Facilities District (CFD).
<b>Policy PS&amp;F 6.7:</b> Promote concepts of defensible space for walled and gated communities, recognizing the potential effect those concepts can have on reducing crime in Rancho Mirage.	The Specific Plan includes site design with buildings oriented to areas of pedestrian activity and attention to lighting design to enhance personal safety within the Project Site.
<b>School and Libraries – Goal PS&amp;F 7:</b> Education and library facilities that provide Rancho Mirage with adequate services and convenient access.	
<b>Policy PS&amp;F 7.2:</b> Cooperate in the process to secure school impact fees from developers in accordance with State law and strive to reduce overcrowding and improve the educational quality of the public school system.	The Section 31 Specific Plan would pay all required School Impact Fees required by State law.
<b>Community Design Element</b>	
<b>Goal Community Design (CD) 1:</b> Preservation and promotion of the special identity of Rancho Mirage as an “Oasis in the Desert,” combining quality development with scenic, natural, and open space amenities.	
<b>Goal CD 2:</b> Clearly marked major entry points into Rancho Mirage that incorporate distinctive landscaping, signage, and wall treatments achieving a sense of arrival and symbolizing Rancho Mirage’s identity.	
<b>Goal CD 3:</b> Scenic roadways that impart a sense of place and are attractively landscaped, provide visual continuity along adjacent uses, preserve views, and create focused intersection landscaping.	
<b>Policy CD 1.1:</b> Rancho Mirage’s symbolic identity shall be enhanced through distinct signage, gateways, architecture, and resilient landscaping.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Landscape Plan, Circulation Plan, and Design Guidelines to enhance the symbolic identity of the City of Rancho Mirage. Perimeter road and streetscape improvements, including enhanced landscaping and a Landscaped Edge Multi-Use Path, would enhance the sense of community and symbology in the City by imparting a sense of place and



Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
	adding interest to the streetscape. The Community Design Guidelines included in the Specific Plan address issues of site design, architecture, landscaping, signage, lighting, and sustainability.
<b>Policy CD 1.2:</b> Unique views of mountains and other natural open spaces from Rancho Mirage’s streets shall be preserved and enhanced.	The Grading Plan, Land Use Plan, Development Regulations, and Design Guidelines are designed to preserve and enhance views from Rancho Mirage streets.
<b>Policy CD 1.3:</b> The City shall ensure the development of high-quality, visually distinctive commercial uses.	The Design Guidelines for the Town Center would guide the development of a high-quality, visually distinctive commercial Town Center.
<b>Policy CD 1.4:</b> The planning and design of residential neighborhoods shall provide distinctive and characteristic design elements along public rights-of-way and in the project, creating a recognizable sense of place.	The Section 31 Specific Plan Residential Design Guidelines require the use of a number of design elements along high-traffic areas to the greatest extent feasible in order to create interest and instill a unique sense of place in residential neighborhoods.
<b>Policy CD 1.5:</b> Multi-family residential projects shall provide well-designed and neighborhood enhancing living space, usable and safe private and common open space areas, adequate parking and appropriate automobile storage, screened trash enclosures, a comprehensive landscape program, and perimeter walls and fencing.	The Section 31 Specific Plan Residential Design Guidelines require the use of a number of design elements to the greatest extent feasible in order to enhance visually prominent areas and thematic features and screen facilities that are visually unappealing.
<b>Policy CD 3.2:</b> The City shall ensure the development of well-designed, richly landscaped intersections that are attractive to drivers and pedestrians alike.	The Landscape Plan of the Section 31 Specific Plan envisions a Landscaped Edge Multi-Use Path surrounding the Project Site which would accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and golf carts, as well as visually connect the site to similarly landscaped areas in the vicinity.
<b>Landscape, Goal CD 4:</b> A landscape program that promotes aesthetics, climate change resistance, and place-making.	
<b>Policy CD 4.1:</b> Landscape plans submitted to the City shall be consistent with this element.	This Specific Plan includes a Landscape Plan consistent with the City of Rancho Mirage General Plan.
<b>Perimeter Walls/Fencing, Goal CD 5:</b> Walls and fences that act as attractive elements of the streetscape, while providing privacy and views, creative design, and visual continuity.	
<b>Policy CD 5.1:</b> Wall and fence designs shall be considered important components of the design review process and overall streetscape improvement plans.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes a Wall Plan and Wall Design guidelines.
<b>Signage and Lighting, Goal CD 6:</b> Signage of the highest level of design and construction quality. <b>Goal CD 7:</b> Protection of the star-studded desert night sky from excessive glare.	

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>Policy CD 6.1:</b> The City shall encourage high-quality, low-scale signage that effectively communicates in an attractive manner.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes signage guidelines to ensure all signage would be suitable in quality and scale.
<b>Policy 7.1:</b> Lighting features that preserve the beauty of the desert night while still performing directional, safety, and informational functions shall be designed and incorporated into development projects.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes lighting design guidelines to minimize light spillage. A photometric analysis would be provided at the Preliminary Development Plan stage of the City approval process, as required.
<b>Architecture – Goal CD 8:</b> Architecture that is sensitive to its context, blending quality materials, distinctive detailing, and a strong sense of living with nature.	
<b>Policy CD 8.2:</b> The City shall encourage new development to incorporate “green building” practices to maximize resource conservation and be compatible with the surrounding desert environment.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes architectural and landscaping design guidelines that are derived from and compatible with the desert environment, as described in more detail in Chapter 3: Environmental Sustainability of the Section 31 Specific Plan (see <b>Appendix B</b> ).
<b>Commercial Development – Goal CD 9:</b> Retail centers in Rancho Mirage that are visually attractive, people-friendly, and economically successful.	
<b>Policy CD 9.1:</b> Projects shall incorporate architectural interest and variety in the context of a unified setting, including commonalities of color, landscaping, signage and lighting. Strong architectural detailing including facade articulation and varied building materials, colors, and massing shall be encouraged.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes architectural design guidelines that work to accommodate a variety of design style and a range of colors, materials, building detailing, and building orientations while ensuring a coherent and complementary project.
<b>Policy CD 9.2:</b> Projects shall provide comfortable, attractive, and distinctive pedestrian amenities including sitting areas, shade structures, plazas, and arcades.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes Town Center design guidelines that provide for the creation of pedestrian amenities such as pedestrian paths and shaded public gathering places.
<b>Policy CD 9.7:</b> Monument, retail, and directional signs shall use accent lighting.	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes lighting design guidelines that provide for the use of monument and accent lighting where appropriate.
<b>Parking – Goal CD 10:</b> Distinctly designed parking areas in Rancho Mirage’s commercial centers that incorporate rich paving materials, drought and heat-tolerant landscaping, clear and safe pedestrian and vehicular access, and protection from the desert climate through the use of well-placed trees and/or carports.	
<b>Goal CD 11:</b> Parking areas that are screened from public streets to the greatest extent possible.	
<b>Policy CD 10.1:</b> The City shall encourage layered landscaping with overstory canopy trees for shade and understory shrubs and groundcover in parking areas	The Section 31 Specific Plan includes design guidelines for the Town Center that promote parking lot shading and landscaping in accordance with City standards.
<b>Policy CD 10.2:</b> Projects shall configure parking areas to allow for the free flow of vehicular traffic and convenient vehicular access to customers.	The Section 31 Specific Plan would be implemented by individual project-level PMPs and Tract Maps that would allow for City review and approval of parking and vehicular circulation design.

Relevant General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<p><b>Policy CD 10.3:</b> The City shall encourage the incorporation of permeable paving in new parking lots.</p>	<p>The Project promotes the use of water permeable surfaces in site design.</p>
<p><b>Policy CD 10.4:</b> The City shall encourage the landscaping of parking areas to reduce the deflection of heat into nearby buildings and to reduce the paved surface area. Shade trees and architecturally designed carports are especially encouraged.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes Town Center design guidelines that promote parking lot shading and landscaping in accordance with City standards.</p>
<p><b>Policy CD 10.5:</b> Lighting shall be directed downward to protect from nighttime glare and illuminate pedestrian pathways with bollard lighting.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan includes lighting design guidelines that would minimize light spillage while also promoting pedestrian safety.</p>
<p><b>Economic and Fiscal Element</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal Economic and Fiscal (E&amp;F) 1:</b> A growing and balanced economic base that serves the needs of Rancho Mirage residents, businesses, and visitors while maintaining the City’s high standards of development and environmental protection.</p>	
<p><b>Goal E&amp;F 2:</b> A prudent and progressive financial management program to maintain and enhance the City’s strong fiscal position.</p>	
<p><b>Policy E&amp;F 2.1:</b> The City’s land use designations shall provide opportunities for a broad range of residential, commercial, office, institutional, and light industrial development in appropriate locations.</p>	<p>The Section 31 Specific Plan contains a mix of land uses planned and designed to be appropriate for the site and compatible with surrounding uses to enhance the development opportunities within the City in conformance with this policy.</p>

**Table 5.10-2**  
**SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS Analysis**

Goal	Analysis
RTP/SCS G2: Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.	<p><b>Consistent:</b> Development of the Project would ensure that mobility and accessibility for people and goods would be maximized. The Section 31 Specific Plan takes a multi-modal approach to circulation system planning within the Project Site and encourages a balanced and safe mix of vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, golf cart, and neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV) transit throughout the interior and perimeter of the Project Site.</p> <p><b>Section 5.15: Traffic and Transportation</b> of this Draft EIR addresses local and regional transportation, traffic, circulation, and mobility in more detail. As discussed therein, with implementation of existing regulations and standards, and <b>Mitigation Measures MM 5.15-1</b> through <b>MM 5.15-7</b>, any potential impacts associated with traffic and transportation would remain less than significant. This would ensure that mobility and accessibility for people and goods in the vicinity of the Project Site and greater area continue to be realized.</p>
RTP/SCS G3: Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.	<p><b>Consistent:</b> All modes of transit would be required to follow safety standards set by corresponding regulatory documents. Streets, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes would follow safety precautions and standards established by local and regional agencies.</p>
RTP/SCS G4: Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.	<p><b>Consistent:</b> As mentioned previously, <b>Section 5.15</b> of this Draft EIR evaluates impacts of the Project related to traffic and transportation. As determined therein, with implementation of existing regulations and standards, and <b>Mitigation Measures MM 5.15-1</b> through <b>MM 5.15-7</b>, any potential impacts associated with traffic and transportation would remain less than significant</p> <p>As part of this mitigation, individual project developments within the Project Site would pay the fair share contribution of the Coachella Valley Association of Government's (CVAG) Traffic Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) fee contributing to development of planned regional transportation system. The TUMF program was developed to generate additional funds to fund improvements to the regional arterial roadway system.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Section 5.15</b>, which addresses local and regional transportation, traffic, circulation, and mobility in more detail.</p>
RTP/SCS G5: Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.	<p><b>Consistent:</b> The local and regional transportation system would be improved and maintained to encourage efficiency and productivity. The Project strives to maximize productivity of the region's public</p>

Goal	Analysis
	<p>transportation for residents, visitors, and workers coming into the Project Site. There is an existing bus stop on the corner of Bob Hope Drive and Gerald Ford Drive; the Project does not change or prohibit bus facilities or transit routes. The Project would enable direct access to transit facilities adjacent to the Project Site to ensure accessibility and maximize the productivity thereof.</p>
<p>RTP/SCS G6: Protect the environment and health for our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (e.g., bicycling and walking).</p>	<p><b>Consistent:</b> The reduction of energy use, improvements in air quality, and promotion of more environmentally sustainable development would be encouraged by planning for the use of alternative transportation modes, green design techniques for buildings, active and passive solar design for non-residential buildings, and other energy-reducing techniques. For example, developers and builders shall implement, to the greatest extent feasible, sustainable building and development practices into final design/build. Every effort is to be made to implement as much of the 2016 California Green Building Standard Code as practicable and other best management practices to reduce energy demands.</p> <p>As proposed, the Section 31 Specific Plan allows a mixture of residential, mixed-use, resort, and open space that allow residents to consume services on site. This serves to reduce vehicle trips, thereby reducing air quality emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic impacts.</p>
<p>RTP/SCS G7: Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible.</p>	<p><b>Consistent:</b> The Project would allow for the circulation of automobiles and service vehicles in a safe and efficient manner. The street pattern is organized to provide efficient circulation and access to each of the planning areas included in the system. Innovation in desert-sensitive architectural design would be used, including energy-efficient Energy Star certified lighting fixtures and equipment and active and passive solar design for non-residential buildings.</p> <p>Project designs would increase the structures energy efficiency, water efficiency, and overall sustainability. The Project is also located in an urban area that would reduce vehicle trips and vehicles miles traveled due to the urban infill characteristics and proximity to public transit. These measures and features are consistent with existing recommendations to reduce GHG emissions.</p>
<p>RTP/SCS G8: Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and non-motorized transportation.</p>	<p><b>Consistent:</b> The Specific Plan as proposed requires a “Complete Streets” approach in the planning and design of a Vehicular Circulation Plan for the streets. The SunLine Transit Authority is the provider of public transit service within the Coachella Valley. As development matures within the Project Site, sufficient demand may be generated to support additional bus lines or a change in routes to stop at additional locations along the Project Site or within the Town Center Planning Area.</p>

## **5. Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts would be less than significant, and the Project would not have a considerable contribution to potential land use impacts. Development of the Project, in conjunction with other cumulative development in the area permitted by the City's General Plan, would not result in citywide and regional land use and planning impacts. Upon adoption of the Project, the Project would be consistent with applicable goals and policies of the City's General Plan.

The proposed uses within the Project Site would be consistent and compatible with existing and planned land uses surrounding the Project Site, including the existing predominantly residential uses to the north and south and country club resort uses to the east and west. Additionally, the Project would conform to the provisions of the Covenant established between the Annenberg Foundation Trust and ECRMH regarding additional height restrictions for buildings at the western/southwestern portion of the Project Site. These terms are intended to minimize visual and other impacts from the Project on the Annenberg Properties, located west of the Project Site. Therefore, development of the Project would create a cohesive community of residential, mixed-use, and resort uses, thereby contributing to the development of a prominent center within the City of Rancho Mirage.

As with the Project, related projects and other future growth would be subject to compliance with the local and regional plans reviewed in this section. Therefore, implementation of related projects in accordance with plans would not combine with the Project to result in potentially significant cumulative land use impacts. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **C. MITIGATION MEASURES**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **D. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE**

No significant impacts have been identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.