# City of Indio
# Downtown Specific Plan
# Final Environmental Impact Report

**Lead Agency:**

**City of Indio**
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# 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), requires the preparation of an objective, full-disclosure document in order to (1) inform agency decision-makers and the general public of the direct and indirect potentially significant environmental effects of a proposed action; (2) identify feasible or potentially feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant adverse impacts; and (3) identify and evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project. In accordance with Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 of the *California Code of Regulations [CCR]*), this is a Program EIR that addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed City of Indio Downtown Specific Plan Project.

## 1.2 Specific Plan Location

The City of Indio (City) is located within the Coachella Valley, west of the San Bernardino Mountains in Riverside County, California. Regionally, the City is approximately 10 miles west of Joshua Tree National Park, 17 miles northwest of the Salton Sea, and 15 miles east of the City of Palm Springs. Interstate 10 (I-10) runs east-west through the City. State Route 111 (SR-111) is the main north-south highway and retail corridor through the City. The Indio Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area covers approximately 140 acres in the southeast part of the City. The Specific Plan area is generally bordered by Indio Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the north; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; Jackson Street and Grace Street to the east; and Deglet Noor and King Street to the west (see Figure 3-2 in Section 3.0, *Project Description*).

## 1.3 Specific Plan Summary

### *1.3.1 Indio Downtown Specific Plan*

The proposed Specific Plan evaluated in this Program EIR is the Indio Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The proposed Specific Plan would supersede the 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan with a plan that emphasizes a walkable, mixed-use environment that complements the City's historic characteristics while embracing new development opportunities. The goal of the proposed Specific Plan is to encourage and promote economic development and revitalization to enhance the City's attractiveness in the local and regional marketplace. The proposed Specific Plan seeks to facilitate the adaptive reuse of existing structures, where appropriate, and promote infill development on vacant and underutilized properties. The Specific Plan would also facilitate and encourage residential mixed-use, commercial/retail, and transit-supportive development.

The Specific Plan describes the goals and policies, development standards, design guidelines, infrastructure improvements, and implementation strategies for the Specific Plan area. The City of Indio City Council adopted the City's updated General Plan, new Climate Action Plan and associated Final EIR on September 18, 2019. The City of Indio General Plan 2040 describes the City's vision to reestablish the Specific Plan area as a special place within the City and the Coachella Valley with enhanced commercial opportunities, public spaces, a pedestrian environment, and a multimodal transportation hub. Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan may generate the need for offsite utility infrastructure

improvements (such as, but not limited to, new/upgraded electrical infrastructure). The size, nature, and locations of needed improvements are not known at this time.

The standards and provisions of the proposed Specific Plan constitute the primary land use and development guidance for the Specific Plan area. As part of the implementation of the project, the Interim Development Standards for the Downtown Specific Plan would be incorporated into the City Zoning Code.

The Specific Plan's estimated growth forecast, which includes existing development, is 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential development and 1,188 dwelling units totaling 1,113,074 gsf. Table 1-1 provides a complete summary of the proposed uses and growth forecasts for the Specific Plan area.

**Table 1-1 Indio Downtown Specific Plan Growth Forecast**

| Uses | Dwelling Units | Gross Square Feet[1] | Parking |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Non- Residential** | | | |
| Retail | -- | 456,250 | 1,141 |
| Office | -- | 500,000 | 1,500 |
| Hotel[2] | -- | 205,000 | 323 |
| Civic[3] | -- | 214,000 | 428 |
| **Residential** | | | |
| Studios | 312 | 202,800 | 312 |
| Small Apartments | 304 | 258,400 | 380 |
| Medium Two-bedroom Apartments | 278 | 278,000 | 417 |
| Condominiums | 139 | 166,800 | 243 |
| Townhouses | 105 | 147,000 | 210 |
| Single Family Detached | 50 | 60,000 | 100 |
| **TOTAL[4]** | **1,188** | **2,488,324** | **5,053** |

[1] Residential square footages are based on an average size calculation
[2] Hotel calculations based off 30,000 square feet of retail space and 350 rooms at average size of 500 sf (175,000 gsf)
[3] Civic uses include City Hall/Library, Museum/Indio Performing Arts Center, College of the Desert/Loma Linda, and a Rail Station
[4] Totals do not add up due to rounding in residential average size square foot calculations

Project implementation requires multiple approvals, permits, and/or actions as listed below. The Indio City Council will be responsible for certification of the Final EIR as set forth in the CEQA Guidelines § 15090 based on the standards for adequacy for an EIR (CEQA Guidelines § 15151). Certification of the Final EIR would precede consideration of discretionary actions by the City:

- ***Indio Downtown Specific Plan*.** Adoption of the Specific Plan by the City Council by Ordinance; adoption of the Specific Plan Design Guidelines by Resolution.
- ***General Plan Amendment*.** Amendment to the General Plan by the City Council to change the boundaries of the Specific Plan; amendment by Resolution.
- ***Zone Change*.** Approval by the City Council to change the Specific Plan area boundaries on the Indio Zoning Map; approval by Ordinance.
- ***Interim Design Standards.*** Approval by the City Council to adopt interim design standards for

the regulation of existing and future development within the boundaries of the Specific Plan; approval by Ordinance.

Subsequent activities would be examined in light of the Final Program EIR to determine whether additional CEQA documentation would be required pursuant to the requirements of Section 21166 of CEQA (*Public Resources Code[PRC]* § 21166) and Sections 15162 and 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR) for subsequent approvals including but not limited to the following:

- Site Plans
- Conditional Use Permits
- Tentative Parcel or Tract Maps and Master Plans
- Grading Permits
- Building Permits
- Water Quality Plans
- Particulate Matter 10 ($PM_{10}$) Plans
- Encroachment Permits

The Final Program EIR would also provide environmental information to responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other public agencies which may be required to grant approvals and permits or coordinate with the City of Indio as a part of Specific Plan implementation.

## 1.4 Specific Plan Objectives

The proposed Specific Plan was developed to be an extension of the 2040 General Plan, accomplishing the same goals and objectives but tailored to the Downtown area. These objectives and key outcomes are outlined below:

- Quality of Life: A high quality of life for all residents.
  - One of the main missing pieces in Indio's generally high quality of life offerings is a lack of places for family outings, evenings with friends, weekends with out-of-town guests, and living environments within a comfortable walk of commercial amenities, jobs and transit. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to increase these types of uses.
- Night Life, Entertainment, and Recreation: A lively Downtown Indio, exceptional city-wide events, and regional parks and trails that will attract visitors and residents alike.
  - The Downtown is envisioned to fill a void of community gathering places suitable for public events that are not best accommodated in regional parks. As passenger rail service is reestablished to Downtown Indio, the Downtown has an opportunity to create a fun, activity-rich destination for visitors, as a place to stay and spend time and money, and not just a pass through place.
- Multi-Modal Transportation Network: An interconnected transportation network that serves all users and modes in a healthy, equitable manner.
  - With a strong focus on pedestrian safety and comfort, the Downtown is envisioned as the most

complete multi-modal, human scale environment in Indio.

- Sustainable Community: An efficient community that can persist for generations.
  - Envisioned as the most walkable (least auto-dependent), mixed-use, urban environment of the City, Downtown is expected to set the standard for this goal, not only citywide, but regionally, and the Specific Plan is provides the vision, development standards, and implementation processes to accomplish this goal.
- Range of Housing Options: A wide variety of housing types to serve a broad and diverse community of new and existing residents, providing housing opportunities for households of all ages, types, incomes, and lifestyles.
  - The Downtown is an ideal place to diversify Indio's housing stock, which is currently skewed heavily to households seeking single-family detached suburban homes or garden apartments, to include housing types in an amenity-rich urban environment, targeting students, young professionals, families, and older residents seeking active, healthy outdoor lifestyles.
- Exceptional Educational Opportunities: Extensive educational and vocational training opportunities that help develop a diverse and well-trained workforce.
  - With the expanding College of the Desert campus and Loma Linda Health campus, the Downtown is ideally positioned to link education, culture and employment.
- Expanded Employment: A strong, resilient economy that offers opportunities for entry level, service, technology, and entrepreneurial employment to meet the needs of Indio's residents and to attract future residents to the region.
  - Located between a significant employment district to the north and the growing Riverside County Justice Center to the south, Downtown is ideally positioned as a prime location for new offices and housing.
- City of Festivals: Indio's internationally-known festivals will continue to attract and support entertainment and hospitality that enhance Indio as the City of Festivals.
  - The large music festivals with national and international patronage bring large amounts of visitors to Indio annually. The high-quality streetscapes, plazas and parks envisioned in Downtown will provide additional venues for festivals, the arts, entertainment and special community events related to the large festivals and also throughout the year.
- Compelling Retail and Commercial Uses: A retail sector that fully serves the needs of all Indio residents, offering both quality every-day and specialty retail uses at locations throughout the City.
  - While Indio's numerous shopping centers offer a wide range of retail and commercial businesses typical of most California cities, the Downtown offers a distinctive setting for unique retail shops, restaurants, art galleries and entertainment venues that define the culture and character of Indio for local and regional shoppers and international visitors. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to accommodate and grow these uses.
- Efficient Use of Infrastructure: A well-planned and smartly-developed City that grows in concert with its ability to provide services.

- Downtown is where Indio was established, as a small rural town centered on a railroad depot. With its original block structure and most of its street network still intact, and in need of refreshing/landscaping, it represents a unique opportunity to restore and update Indio's oldest and most elegant core of sustainable infrastructure.

## 1.5 Summary of Specific Plan Alternatives

Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that "an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives".

Section 6.0, *Alternatives*, evaluates three alternatives to the proposed Specific Plan Project, and evaluates the comparative merits of each alternative. In addition to these alternatives that are evaluated in this Program EIR, additional alternatives were considered but not carried forward. Potential environmental impacts associated with each alternative evaluated in Section 6.0 are compared to the impacts of the Specific Plan. The alternatives are Alternative A: No Project/Existing Specific Plan; Alternative B: No Project/No Development; and Alternative B: Reduced Density. The alternatives were developed to avoid or minimize impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan. Given the nature and scale of the Project, complete avoidance of significant impacts was not feasible for any alternative other than the No Project/No Development Alternative.

**Alternative A: No Project/ Existing Specific Plan.** As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e), the No Project/Existing Specific Plan Alterative describes growth of the Specific Plan area consistent with the existing zoning and General Plan land use designations and policies of the 1997 Old Town Specific Plan. There are no estimated growth forecasts under Alternative A, as no forecasts were projected for the number of dwelling units or non-residential square footage in the 1997 Old Town Specific Plan boundaries. Due to the larger planning area of the 1997 Old Town Specific Plan compared to the proposed, the amount of potential development under this alternative could be greater than the proposed Specific Plan.

**Alternative B: No Project/No Development.** The No Project Alternative assumes existing conditions within the Specific Plan area and no additional development would occur. Land uses within the Specific Plan area would remain the same as the existing conditions: 102 dwelling units, 799,232 sf of commercial, manufacturing and public/institutional development, and approximately 22 acres of vacant property.

**Alterative C: Reduced Density.** Under this Reduced Density Alternative, the Specific Plan would allow for and accommodate a growth forecast of around 650,000 square feet of net new non-residential uses and approximately 750 total dwelling units. The purpose behind this Reduced Density Alternative is to provide for an Alternative that accommodates and allows new growth, with respect to potential market conditions and realistic growth assumptions.

## 1.6 Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Program

### *1.6.1 Issues to be Resolved/Areas of Controversy*

This Program EIR addresses environmental issues to be resolved and any areas of environmental controversy which are known to the City of Indio or were raised by agencies and the public during the scoping process. The City hosted a scoping meeting on April 2, 2015, at the City of Indio Council Chambers.

Two individuals attended the April 2, 2015 scoping meeting. No specific environmental concerns were raised at the scoping meeting. The concerns voiced were with respect to crime and loitering issues.

The City did not receive comments during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) public review period, except for a response received on May 29, 2015 from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians requesting government-to-government consultation. The NOP is included as Appendix A and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians letter is included in Appendix B-1. The City has been in consultation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians pertaining to this Project, including a conference call on September 23, 2015, to identify additional concerns of the tribe regarding the Downtown Specific Plan project.

Section 1.6.2 of the Program EIR identifies impact categories where no impacts would occur and no further discussion is provided in the Program EIR. With the exception of these topics, all environmental issues are addressed. No environmental areas of controversy were identified.

### *1.6.2 Effects Found Not to be Significant*

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines was utilized to determine the impact categories to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed Downtown Specific Plan Project. The following includes a discussion of the impact categories where the proposed Project would have a less than significant or no impact on the environment and a summary discussion of why this determination was reached. There is no further evaluation of these Environmental Checklist questions in the Program EIR.

#### Aesthetics

*a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

Scenic views are defined as expansive views of highly valued landscapes from publicly accessible viewpoints. Scenic vistas include views of natural features such as topography, watercourses, rock outcroppings and natural vegetation, as well as man-made scenic structures. As discussed in the City's General Plan, there are no adopted designated scenic views, scenic corridors, or scenic points in the City (City of Indio 2019).

Although not designated, views of the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast and the Santa Rosa Mountains to the southwest of the Specific Plan area occur. These views are limited and often obstructed by existing structures within the Specific Plan area. Because the Specific Plan area is not located within a General Plan-designated scenic corridor and does not have hillside roadways or hillside residential uses, impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

*b) Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, or other locally recognized desirable aesthetic natural feature within a state scenic highway?*

The Specific Plan area is located more than 9.5 miles east of the nearest designated State Scenic Highway: SR-74, and more than 11 miles northwest of the nearest eligible State Scenic Highway: SR-111 (Caltrans 2011). Because the Downtown Specific Plan area is not adjacent to or visible from a designated State Scenic Highway, no impact would occur.

#### Agriculture and Forest Resources

*Would the Project:*

a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*

b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*

c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?*

d) *Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

e) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. No portion of the Planning Area is covered by a Williamson Act Contract. Additionally, the Planning Area does not include forest resources, including timberlands, and is not zoned for agriculture. For these reasons, no impacts with respect to agricultural or forestry resources would occur.

### Biological Resources

b) *Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area does not contain critical habitat, as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Specific Plan area is within the built environment and has no waterways or riparian habitat. For this reason, no impact would occur.

c) *Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area of the City of Indio is surrounded by the built urban environment and the Planning Area has been developed for several decades. There are no waterways within the Specific Plan area. The area does not contain any federal or State protected wetland, marshes or vernal pools. For this reason, no impact would occur.

d) *Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area is in a built urban environment and there are no waterways in or near the Planning Area. The area has been developed for several decades and does not contain any federal or State protected wetland, marshes or vernal pools. The Specific Plan area is isolated from open space and land containing sensitive biological resources. Therefore, the Project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impeded the use of native wildlife nursery sites. For this

reason, no impact would occur.

*e) Conflict with provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

The overall goal of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) is to maintain and enhance the biological diversity of the desert ecosystem, while allowing future economic growth within the City's Planning Area. While the majority of the City's Sphere of Influence and part of the northeastern portions of the City are located in the CVMSHCP, the Specific Plan area is not. Because the Specific Plan area is not within an HCP, NCCP, or other local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan, there would be no conflict and no impact.

### Energy

*a) Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*

*b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

As part of its General Plan Update effort, the City adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in September 2019. The CAP includes measures to reduce GHG emissions from various sectors and emission sources, including transportation, waste generation, water use and energy use. Section 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, describes effects of greenhouse gas emissions that would be caused by implementation of the project, including a discussion on the effects of the Specific Plan on energy as it relates to greenhouse gas emissions. Individual projects developed in the Specific Plan area would be required to comply with applicable building codes and energy conservation measures mandated by the City Municipal Code, as well as which City policies and proposed mitigation measures identified in this Program EIR, would result in lower energy consumption and higher energy conservation that older structures built under prior editions of applicable building code requirements. The Specific Plan would facilitate the reuse of existing structures and promote infill development of currently vacant or underutilized properties, while providing a flexible plan that emphasizes a walkable and mixed- use environment, which would reduce the energy needs of future development under the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan does not include unusual or excessive energy-consuming land uses. As discussed in Section 4.11, *Utilities and Service Systems*, Mitigation Measures UTIL-7 through UTIL-11 require that projects under the Specific Plan would incorporate numerous energy efficiency measures and design features to enhance efficiency in all aspects of a building's life-cycle (low energy use lighting, automatic timers, use of natural sunlight/shade, LEED certifications, etc.). These designs/measures would increase a structure's energy efficiency, and overall sustainability. Individual projects under the Specific Plan would also be required to adhere to the most recent applicable code updates that the City has adopted.

The construction and operation of individual projects would consume resources such as water, electricity, and fossil fuels. Individual projects under the Specific Plan would be required to comply with all applicable building codes, as well as City policies and the mitigation measures identified in this Program EIR, which would ensure that all natural resources are conserved to the maximum extent possible. Additionally, individual projects would be subject to site plan review and project-specific environmental review. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Geology and Soils

a) *Would the Project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*

*iv) Landslides?*

Strong shaking has the potential for activating landslides on hillsides; slope failures on creek banks; and, tension cracking in areas underlain by loose, low-density soil, such as extensive fill. However, Indio is generally located on the Coachella Valley floor, and the Specific Plan area is relatively level and flat. There is little to no risk of landslide within the Specific Plan area. Impacts from the project are considered less than significant.

e) *Would the Project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?*

The proposed project would not use septic systems or alternative waste water disposal systems and new development would connect to the City's existing wastewater network. Because the Project would not utilize septic tanks or alternative systems, no impacts related to unsuitable soils would occur.

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

All future development Projects within the Planning Area would be required to comply with applicable federal and state laws and local regulations pertaining to the transport, use, disposal, and accidental release of hazardous materials, including but not limited to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Title 22 of the California Public Health and Safety Code, the Uniform Fire Code, and Section 70.120 of the City's Municipal Code (which restricts vehicles transporting hazardous materials to the use of I-10 within the City limits). As future projects within the Planning Area are planned and developed, they must adhere to the City's General Plan policies and applicable federal and state laws and local regulations governing the transport, use and disposal of hazardous materials.

d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

All future development Projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be required to comply with applicable federal and state laws and local regulations pertaining to hazardous materials, including but not limited to CERCLA, RCRA, Title 22 of the California Public Health and Safety Code, the UFC, and CEQA. Future development on hazardous materials sites are exceptions to any applicable exemptions under CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, which states that "a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code." Therefore, future development projects on known hazardous materials sites would be subject to future environmental review pursuant to CEQA and would be required to identify and assess the impacts of hazardous materials during the land use permitting

process. If any future development site exceeded regulatory action contamination levels or the set environmental screening levels (ESLs) for the site, the individual project proponent would be required to undertake remediation procedures under the supervision of the County Environmental Health Division, DTSC, or RWQCB, depending on the nature of the contaminants. Impacts would be less than significant.

*e) For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?*

The nearest airport to the Planning Area is the Bermuda Dunes Airport located adjacent to the western portion of the City. Although a portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area is within an airport land use plan, future development projects would be required to be consistent with the densities, intensities, and prohibited uses, and other development conditions defined in the Bermuda Dunes Airport Compatibility Plan, reducing the risk of aviation related safety hazards. In addition, the Planning Area is not located in the 55 to 65+ CNEL airport noise contours (City of Indio 2019). For these reasons, no impacts would occur related to aviation related hazards or excessive noise.

*f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, as the General Plan Circulation Element would not change and the pattern and allowable land uses are consistent with that currently permitted in the Planning Area. No new roads or alteration of existing roads are proposed. For these reasons, no impacts would occur.

*g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?*

The Planning Area is in an established urban area in the downtown area of the City of Indio. The surrounding area has long been urbanized and is developed with a variety of residential, institutional, light industrial and commercial uses. The Planning Area is not prone to any major wild land fires due to the urban built-up development within the desert environment, which does not support large amounts of brush. Based on the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, wildfire probability is low, with moderate severity. Because the Downtown Specific Plan area is in an urbanized area and is not adjacent to high wildland fire areas, there would be no impact relative to wildfire hazards.

### Hydrology and Water Quality

*d) Would the project, in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?*

#### Flood Hazard Zones

Based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panels 06065C2251H, 06065C2252H, 06065C2253H, and 06065C2254H (all effective as of date 3/6/2018), the proposed project is located within Zone X, indicating that the Specific Plan area lies outside the 0.2 percent annual chance flood (i.e., the 500-year floodplain), areas of one percent annual chance flood with average depths of less than one foot or with drainage areas less than one square mile and areas protected by levees from the one percent chance flood. These areas are protected by levee, dike, or other structures. Therefore, implementation of the

proposed Downtown Specific Plan project would not result in the risk of releasing pollutants due to flood hazards.

### Tsunami/Seiche/Mudflow

There are no large water bodies in the Planning Area's vicinity that could create a hazard of producing a tsunami. There are no impounding levees, dams or large water storage tanks that could expose people or structures to a seiche. The Planning Area and surrounding area is relatively flat and more than two miles from the nearest slopes, therefore, the proposed project would not be subject to mudflow. Implementation of the proposed Downtown Specific Plan project would not result in the risk of releasing pollutants due to tsunami, seiche, or slope related hazards.

## Land Use

*a) Would the project physically divide an established community?*

The Specific Plan area is developed but has scattered vacant properties. The surrounding area is also urbanized with residential, commercial, and manufacturing; Indio Boulevard and the railroad tracks are located on the Specific Plan area's northern boundary. Land uses to the north of Indio Boulevard include residential, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing. The proposed Specific Plan would replace the 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan with a flexible plan that emphasizes a walkable and mixed-use environment that complements the City's Downtown characteristics while embracing newer development. A couple of the goals/objectives of the proposed Specific Plan are to generate cohesive streetscapes to unify the area and promote walkability and non-motorized mobility. The proposed Specific Plan is anticipated to facilitate the reuse of existing structures and promote infill development of currently vacant or underutilized properties. The proposed project would also facilitate and encourage residential mixed- use development, commercial/retail areas, and transit-oriented development in proximity to the Indio Transportation Center. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan project would not divide the established Specific Plan area, but rather would better connect the community by establishing a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.

## Mineral Resources

*a) Would the Project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

*b) Would the Project result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?*

As shown in the Mineral Resource Zones Figure of the City's 2040 General Plan (4.11-1), there are no Mineral Resource Zones identified with significant mineral deposits underlying the Downtown Planning Area (City of Indio 2019). Development within the Downtown Specific Plan area would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources and would not result in the loss of locally-important mineral resources. In addition, there are no active mines in the Planning Area and the project would not result in the exploration for oil or mineral resources. There would be no impact regarding the loss of availability of mineral resources.

## Noise

*c) For a Project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would*

*the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?*

The nearest airport to the Planning Area is the Bermuda Dunes Airport located adjacent to the western portion of the City. Although a portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area is within an airport land use plan, future development projects would be required to be consistent with the densities, intensities, and prohibited uses, and other development conditions defined in the Bermuda Dunes Airport Compatibility Plan, reducing the risk of aviation related safety hazards. The Planning Area is not located in the 55 to 65+ CNEL airport noise contours (City of Indio 2019). For these reasons, no impacts would occur related to excessive aviation related noise.

### Population and Housing

a) *Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

The project would provide 1,188 dwelling units in the Downtown Specific Plan area. The Project would provide for development of vacant lands, infill development, and reuse of vacant buildings within the Specific Plan area and growth forecasts anticipated by the Downtown Specific Plan would not exceed local and regional growths anticipated by the City. For this reason, no impacts would occur.

b) *Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

There are currently 82 dwelling units in the Planning Area. Implementation of the project would result in the development of 1,188 total dwelling units. The project would provide for development of vacant lands, infill development, and reuse of vacant buildings within the Specific Plan area. The project would not displace a substantial amount of people or housing, would not necessitate the construction of housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

### Public Services

a. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:*

   i. *Fire protection?*

   ii. *Police protection?*

   iii. *Schools?*

   iv. *Parks?*

   v. *Other public facilities?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area would continue to develop based on the recently adopted 2040 General Plan land use designations and zone requirements. Growth forecasts anticipated by the Downtown Specific Plan would not exceed local and regional growths anticipated by the City, and therefore would not result in an increased need for public services, such as fire, police, schools, and libraries, beyond that previously forecasted and anticipated in the General Plan. Further, individual

development projects would be required to mitigate impacts from increased demand as they pertain to schools, parks, and other public facilities through payment of in-lieu fees for new development. No impacts would occur.

### Recreation

a) *Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated?*

b) *Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

The Downtown Specific Plan area would continue to develop based on the recently adopted 2040 General Plan Update's land use designations and zone requirements. Growth forecasts anticipated by the Downtown Specific Plan would not exceed local and regional growths anticipated by the City, and therefore would not result in an increased need for recreational facilities, beyond that previously forecasted and anticipated in the General Plan. Further, individual development projects would be required to mitigate impacts from increased demand as they pertain to parks and recreation facilities through payment of in-lieu fees for new development. No new recreational facilities are proposed as part of the project beyond those included in the project description. No impacts would occur.

### Tribal Cultural Resources

a) *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1 (k)?*

b) *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?*

Assembly Bill (AB) 52, which went into effect July 1, 2015, requires local governments to engage in early consultation with California Native American Tribes on all projects. AB 52 creates a new CEQA resource: Tribal Cultural Resources. AB 52 applies to projects with a Notice of Preparation (NOP) or notice of a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration issued on or after July 1, 2015. The NOP for this project was issued on April 1, 2014. AB 52 would apply to future development projects in the Specific Plan area that requires environmental review under CEQA.

City of Indio sent out SB 18 outreach letters to organizations identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as part of the NOP process (Appendix B-1). The letters were sent May 5, 2015 to the Agua

Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Morongo Band of Missions Indians, the Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, and the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. A response letter was received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians which requested consultation under SB 18 (Appendix B-1). In addition, another comment letter from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians was received June 7th, 2017, with editorial comments based on the previously circulated Draft EIR (Appendix B-2). These comments have been incorporated into this Draft EIR. Because the City has completed consultation requirements under SB 18 with tribal cultural affiliations in the area, implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would have a less than significant impact on tribal cultural resources.

#### Wildfire

Would the project:

a) *Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

b) *Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

c) *Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*

d) *Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?*

The Planning Area is in an established urban area in the downtown area of the City of Indio. The surrounding area has long been urbanized and is developed with a variety of residential, institutional, light industrial and commercial uses. The Planning Area is not prone to any major wild land fires due to its urban built-up development within the desert environment, which does not support large amounts of brush. Based on the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, wildfire probability is low, with moderate severity. Because the Downtown Specific Plan area is in an urbanized area and is not adjacent to high wildland fire areas, there would be no impact relative to wildfire hazards.

### *1.6.3 Summary of Significant Unavoidable Impacts*

An impact that remains significant after including all feasible mitigation measures is considered a significant and unavoidable impact. The impacts discussed below have been identified as significant and unavoidable for the proposed Specific Plan.

#### Air Quality: Construction and Operational Emissions

Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate construction-related and operational emissions of criteria pollutants. While Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce emissions associated with construction and operation of anticipated developments, individual projects would have the potential to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds. As such, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Air Quality: Cumulative

Future development associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan could result in

increased emissions of regional criteria air pollutants and precursors that would be projected to exceed SCAQMD's project-level significance thresholds. Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce potential construction and operational air quality emissions associated with future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, individual projects would still have the potential to exceed applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and therefore, cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Historic Resources

Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR, in combination with Mitigation Measure CR-1, would reduce the potential for impacts to historic resources to the degree feasible through identification of historic resources and, as feasible, avoidance of adverse effects to such resources. Nevertheless, because future Specific Plan Area development could still involve permanent alterations to or demolition of historic resources, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Historic Resources: Cumulative

Development under the Specific Plan may result in significant and unavoidable impacts to historic resources in the Downtown Area. Because these sites are resources that hold significant historical value to the City and the Downtown area, cumulative impacts from the Specific Plan on historic resources would be cumulatively considerable.

### *1.6.4 Impacts and Mitigation Program Summary*

Table 1-2 presents a summary of the potential environmental impacts of the Specific Plan discussed in this EIR, the mitigation measures, if applicable, to ensure the Specific Plan impacts are mitigated to a less than significant level (or to the extent feasible for significant and unavoidable impacts), and the expected residual impacts following the implementation of the mitigation. The mitigation measures serve to preclude, reduce, and/or fully mitigate potential environmental impacts. The detailed evaluation of the environmental issues discussed in this EIR, as well as the full text of the associated mitigation, is presented in EIR Sections 4.1 through 4.11. Impacts that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact are not included in the Table 1-2, and can be found in Section 1.6.2, above.

**Table 1-2 Summary of Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts**

| Environmental Impact Summary | Mitigation Program | Significance After Mitigation |
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| **AESTHETICS** | | |
| **Impact AES-1.** All future development projects would be required to adhere to the Specific Plan's Development regulations that intend to preserve and enhance the scenic quality of the Downtown area. Through required adherence to the Specific Plan's Development regulations and City's General Plan and City Municipal Code, impacts to scenic quality would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact AES-2.** Development in the Specific Plan area would increase the amount of light and glare compared to existing conditions. All development would be required to adhere to the Specific Plan's Development regulations, as well as City Municipal Code regulations that govern light and glare. With incorporation of mitigation measures AES-1 through AES-3, all development proposals in the Specific Plan area would be reviewed for consistency with the Development regulations and impacts would be less than significant. | **AES-1** Project applicants shall submit plans as part of the design review submittal to the City of Indio identifying all potentially reflective building materials and surfaces and demonstrate how these materials and surfaces shall be painted or otherwise treated to minimize reflectivity, except as necessary to achieve desired green building objectives. All glass used on external building walls shall be low-reflectivity.<br>**AES-2** Development plans shall be reviewed to assure their substantial compliance with the basic design parameters set forth in the Indio Downtown/Old Town Specific Plan and individual project architectural plans package.<br>**AES-3** Prior to the issuance of grading and building permits, the landscaping palette and design, as well as lighting elements for the development project, shall be reviewed for conformance with the Indio Downtown Specific Plan architectural design and the specific project's responsiveness to design issues raised during individual project review. | With incorporation of mitigation measures AES-1 through AES-3, all development proposals in the Specific Plan area would be reviewed for consistency with the Development Code regulations, ensuring that light and glare is minimized. Impacts would be less than significant. |
| **Impact AES-3.** Development in the Specific Plan area would contribute to cumulative impacts since new development projects would increase the amount of light and glare in the area. All new development projects would be required to adhere to zoning requirements, as well as adhere to the Specific Plan's Development regulations pertaining to protecting visual quality and reducing light and glare. The project's contribution to aesthetic impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. | To minimize the project's contribution to cumulative light and glare impacts, Mitigation Measures AES-1 through AES-3 would be required. | Cumulative impacts would be less than significant. |

| AIR QUALITY | | |
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| **Impact AQ-1.** Growth forecast under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate increases in population and employment in Indio. Such increases would not exceed growth projections for the city that form the basis for the land use and transportation control portions of the 2016 AQMP. Therefore, the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan, and this impact would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact AQ-2.** Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate construction-related and operational emissions of criteria pollutants. While Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce emissions associated with construction and operation of anticipated developments, individual projects would have the potential to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds. As such, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. | **AQ-1** The City shall require future development projects that are subject to discretionary review to incorporate the following measures:<br>a. Contractors shall use high-pressure-low-volume (HPLV) paint applicators with a minimum transfer efficiency of at least 50 percent;<br>b. Use required coatings and solvents with a VOC content lower than required under SCAQMD Rule 1113. To the extent locally available, use zero VOC content paints.<br>c. Diesel-powered off-road construction equipment (50 hp, or greater) shall meet U.S. EPA Tier 4 emissions standards, to the extent locally available.<br>d. Idling of all on- and off-road diesel-fueled vehicles shall not be permitted when not in use. Signs shall be posted in the designated queuing areas and or job site to remind drivers and operators of the no idling limitation.<br>e. Fuel all off-road and portable diesel powered equipment with the Air Resources Board (ARB) certified motor vehicle diesel fuel (non-taxed version suitable for use off-road);<br>f. Construction equipment engines shall be maintained in good conditions and properly tuned, in accordance with manufacturer's specifications;<br>g. Building materials that do not require painting shall be used during construction to the extent available.<br>h. Use alternatively-fueled (e.g., compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, propane, biodiesel) or electrically powered equipment, to the extent locally available.<br>i. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles: | While Mitigation Measure AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce impacts associated with construction and operational air quality emissions, respectively, individual projects constructed under the Downtown Specific Plan would potentially exceed SCAQMD regional and localized significance thresholds, even with mitigation. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable. |

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| | j. Prohibit idling of a vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and,<br>k. Prohibit the operation of a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation.<br>l. All demolition and construction activities that can generate fugitive dust shall be required to implement dust control measures in accordance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403, Fugitive Dust, and Rule 403.1, Supplemental Fugitive Dust Control Requirements for Coachella Valley Sources. In accordance with SCAQMD requirements, larger construction projects (e.g., activities with a disturbed area of more than 5,000 square feet) may also be required to prepare a fugitive dust control plan. Fugitive dust control measures to be implemented are identified in Rule 403 and Rule 403.1<br>**AQ-2** The City shall require future development projects that are subject to discretionary review to incorporate emission-reduction measures to address significant long-term regional air quality impacts. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:<br>a. Increase building envelope energy efficiency standards in excess of applicable building standards and encourage new development to achieve zero net energy use.<br>b. Install energy-efficient appliances, interior lighting, and building mechanical systems. Encourage installation of solar panels for new residential and commercial development.<br>c. Incorporate renewable energy sources in the project design (e.g., solar photovoltaic panels).<br>d. Install higher efficacy public street and exterior lighting.<br>e. Use daylight as an integral part of lighting systems in buildings.<br>f. Use trees, landscaping and sun screens on west and south exterior building walls to reduce energy use.<br>g. Install light colored "cool" roofs, cool pavements.<br>h. Install solar and tankless hot water heaters.<br>i. Encourage energy audits to be performed on residences prior to sale or other transfer of title. Provide prospective owners with recommendations for retrofit measures to be given to the buyer prior to transfer of title.<br>j. Include mixed-use, infill, and higher density in development projects to support | |

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| | the reduction of vehicle trips, promote alternatives to individual vehicle travel, and promote efficient delivery of services and goods.<br>k. Limit idling time for commercial vehicles, including delivery and construction vehicles.<br>l. Prohibit the installation of wood-burning fireplaces and stoves.<br>m. Incorporate design measures and infrastructure that promotes safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation (e.g., neighborhood electric vehicles, bicycles) pedestrian access, and public transportation use. Such measures may include incorporation of electric vehicle charging stations, bike lanes, bicycle-friendly intersections, and bicycle parking and storage facilities.<br>n. Incorporate design measures that promote ride sharing programs (e.g., by designating a certain percentage of parking spaces for ride sharing vehicles, designating adequate passenger loading and unloading and waiting areas for ride sharing vehicles, and providing a web site or message board for coordinating rides).<br>o. Incorporate measures that reduce water use (e.g., installation of low-flow fixtures, water-efficient irrigation systems and landscaping)<br>p. Incorporate measures that reduce waste generation.<br>q. Encourage new residential development to be constructed to allow for easy implementation of gray water systems that redirect water from washbasins, showers, and tubs for use in toilet flushing, irrigation, and other non-potable uses. | |

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| **Impact AQ-3.** Construction activities associated with growth under the Downtown Specific Plan would emit Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs), such as diesel-exhaust particulate matter. Future projects in the Specific Plan area have the potential to be large enough that the project-level significance thresholds would be exceeded during construction. Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan is not associated with operational emissions of TACs and forecast growth under the plan would not generate mobile source emissions along area roadways in excess of applicable health risk screening criteria. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **AQ-3** To reduce the potential for short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs emitted during demolition and construction-related activities, the following measures shall be implemented:<br>a. Implement MM AQ-1.<br>b. Demolition of onsite structures shall comply with SCAQMD Rule 1403, Asbestos Emissions from Demolition/Renovation.<br>c. If during demolition of existing structures, paint is separated from the construction materials (e.g. chemically or physically), the paint waste shall be evaluated independently from the building material by a qualified hazardous materials inspector to determine its proper management. All hazardous materials shall be handled and disposed in accordance with local, State and federal regulations. According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control, if paint is not removed from the building material during demolition (and is not chipping or peeling), the material can be disposed of as construction debris (a non-hazardous waste). The landfill operator shall be contacted prior to disposal of building material debris to determine any specific requirements the landfill may have regarding the disposal of lead-based paint materials. The disposal of demolition debris shall comply with any such requirements.<br>d. Projects exceeding five acres of disturbance area shall prepare a construction Health Risk Assessment (HRA) consistent with SCAQMD methodology and modeling guidelines for HRAs. The HRA shall use project-specific dispersion modeling to analyze potential health risks at nearby receptors. If health risks from construction activities are determined to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds of maximum incremental cancer risk of 10 in one million or greater, a cancer burden of greater than 0.5, or a chronic and/or acute hazard index of 1.0 or greater, measures such as phasing of ground disturbance, shall be implemented to reduce construction-related health risks below such thresholds. | Mitigation Measure AQ-3 would require projects with the potential to result in health risks in excess of SCAQMD thresholds to prepare project-specific HRAs and implement measures, such as phasing of ground disturbance, to reduce potential health risks. Furthermore, land uses anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan are not associated with operational emissions of TACs. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact AQ-4.** Land uses proposed in the Downtown Specific Plan area are similar to those that already exist in the Planning Area and are not associated with odor generation during operation. Construction associated with implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would result in temporary emissions of odors related to operation of diesel-powered equipment and paving and architectural coating activities. Such odors would be temporary in nature and subject to applicable local and regional regulations. Therefore, this impact would be less than | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |

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| significant. | | |
| **Impact AQ-5.** Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce potential construction and operational air quality emissions associated with future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, individual projects would still have the potential to exceed applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and therefore, cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable. | Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3. | Cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable. All other impacts would be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** | | |
| **Impact BIO-1.** Although the likelihood of encountering special status species in the Downtown Specific Plan area is low, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would ensure that pre-construction surveys are conducted in areas where vegetation and potential habitat may be present. With mitigation incorporated, and with adherence to existing local regulations, impacts would be less than significant. | **BIO-1** As determined appropriate by the City of Indio Community Development Department, prior to issuance of any development project permits, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted focusing the survey on vegetation and unpaved property. Preconstruction surveys shall be conducted prior to the start of construction activities and within the typical blooming season or spring and early summer (generally March/April to August) for easy identification. If special-status species are identified, the area shall be flagged for avoidance. If a special-status species is identified and cannot be fully avoided, a mitigation plan shall be prepared and approved by both the City of Indio and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Activities shall comply with any other development permits, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems Permit, as well as regulatory agency standards, including, but not limited to, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission.<br>**BIO-2** For all construction-related activities that take place during the nesting season, accepted as February 15 through August 31, a preconstruction nesting-bird survey for migratory birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than two weeks prior to project initiation within the project development site and a 300-foot buffer. If active nests are found, a no- disturbance buffer zone shall be established, the size of which will be determined in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Within this buffer zone, no construction shall take place until August 31 or the project biologist determines that the nest is no longer active.<br>**BIO-3** Individual project developers shall continuously comply with the following during construction activities for any development in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area:<br>▪ Prior to any earth disturbing activities for any development project on undeveloped and unpaved parcels, all construction personnel shall be trained in | With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, any potential nesting birds or special status species would be identified and avoided. Impacts would be less than significant. |

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| | sensitive species identification and avoidance techniques. Proof of training shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department. Any evidence, such as ground squirrel/burrowing owl burrows, observed at any time during construction, shall be promptly reported to the project's biologist, the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and any other applicable reviewing agency to determine the appropriate course of action.<br>▪ During construction activities, if an injured or dead State or federally listed species (or candidate species) is encountered, the project proponent shall stop work within the immediate vicinity. The project proponent and or their lead biologist shall notify the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and the appropriate resources agency (e.g., United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] or California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW]) to determine the appropriate course of action, such as the need for an Incidental Take Permit, if not covered by the Coachella Valley MSHCP.<br>▪ At the end of each work day, the project contractor shall ensure that all potential wildlife pitfalls (trenches, bores, and other excavations) have been backfilled. If backfilling is not feasible, all trenches, bores, and other excavations shall be sloped at a 3:1 ratio at the ends to provide wildlife escape ramps, or covered completely to prevent wildlife access, or fully enclosed with exclusion fencing. If any wildlife species become entrapped within the immediate vicinity, construction shall not occur until the animal has left the trench or has been removed by a qualified biological monitor as feasible. Employees and contractors shall look under vehicles and equipment for the presence of wildlife before moving vehicles and equipment. If wildlife is observed, no vehicles or equipment would be moved until the animal has left voluntarily or is removed by the project biologist. No listed species will be handled without appropriate permits.<br>▪ If an entrapped special-status species is encountered, the project biologist (or their designee) shall stop work within the immediate vicinity. Prior to the recommencement of construction, the project proponent shall notify the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and the appropriate resources agency (e.g., USFWS or CDFW) and shall consult with the appropriate resource agencies to determine the appropriate course of action. Any entrapped species that is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) or California Endangered Species Act (CESA) shall not be disturbed unless the appropriate authorization is obtained from the appropriate resource agency. | |

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| **Impact BIO-2.** Development under the Specific Plan would be required to adhere to the City ordinance protecting heritage trees, which would ensure that heritage trees are not damaged or removed unless properly permitted. Because there are no other adopted policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, the project would not result in conflicts and impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact BIO-3.** Future project proposals and individual development projects would be required to comply with policies and regulations set out by the proposed Specific Plan, the City's General Plan, the City's Municipal Code, and the Coachella Valley MSHCP. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, and compliance with the applicable plans and policies, the Specific Plan would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to biological resources. | Implement Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, any potential nesting birds or special status species would be identified and avoided, and the potential cumulative impacts of the Downtown Specific Plan would not be cumulatively considerable. |
| **CULTURAL RESOURCES** | | |
| **Impact CUL-1.** Future development projects in the Downtown specific plan area, through either demolition or alteration activities, may have the potential to damage/change existing or currently undesignated historical resources. Although Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires findings of significance for individual development projects, the potential permanent loss or alteration of historical resources would result in a significant and unavoidable impact. | Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires a finding of significance for individual development projects, development of Mitigation Plans and the halting of work if resources are identified.<br>**CR-1** The applicant for individual development proposals in the Downtown Specific Plan Area with the potential to disturb historic resources identified as part of Mitigation Measure MM-CR-1 of the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR (June 2019) shall commission a historic evaluation of the proposal. The historic evaluation shall be conducted by a qualified historian approved by the City and shall be subject to City review and approval. If the evaluation concludes that the proposal would significantly affect a historic resource, feasible methods to avoid or minimize the historic resource impact shall be implemented. Such methods include, but are not limited to the standards that guide new development and alterations to existing structures in historic districts and local conservation zones to be developed in accordance with MM-CR-2 of the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR (June 2019). | With implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1, a finding of significance for individual development projects would be made, and development of Mitigation Plans and the halting of work would be required if resources are identified. Although this mitigation measure would reduce impacts to the extent feasible, due to potential permanent alterations or demolitions to historic resources that may occur as a result of development under the Specific Plan, impacts would be significant and unavoidable. |

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| **Impact CUL-2.** There are no known archaeological resources known in the Downtown area. Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would facilitate construction activities which could have the potential to impact previously undiscovered resources. However, with implementation of applicable General Plan policies and General Plan Final EIR mitigation, impacts would be less than significant. | No mitigation is required beyond implementation of applicable General Plan policies and the measure included in the Indio General Plan Final EIR. | Residual impacts related to disturbing archaeological resources would be less than significant as mitigation measures have been provided to screen for, survey, halt work, and engage in consultation procedures with applicable entities if resources are identified. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1, impacts would be less than significant. |
| **Impact CUL-3.** Although the likelihood of discovering human remains in the Specific Plan area is low, the potential exists during ground disturbing activities. Adherence to existing laws and regulations such as the California health and Safety Code and Public Resources Code would ensure that proper procedures are followed in the event they are discovered. Impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact CUL-4.** Development under the Specific Plan may result in significant and unavoidable impacts to historic resources in the Downtown Area. Because these sites are resources that hold historical value to the City and the Downtown area, potential impacts from the Specific Plan on historical resources would cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts related to archaeological and cultural resources would be less than significant with mitigation. | Implement Mitigation Measure CR-1. | Cumulative archaeological and tribal cultural resource impacts would be less than significant as development projects in the Downtown Specific Plan Area would be adequately screened and surveyed prior to development, and if resources are found, procedures such as halting work, site-specific investigations, and submittal of mitigation plans would be required. Cumulative historic resource impacts would remain significant and unavoidable due to the potential permanent loss or alteration of historic resources. |

| GEOLOGY AND SOILS | | |
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| **Impact GEO-1.** Development in the specific plan area would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects from fault rupture, as there are no active faults in the planning area. All new Specific Plan area development would be subject to general plan policies as well as applicable state and local laws and regulations. This impact would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact GEO-2**. Development in the Specific Plan area would not increase ground shaking potential, but would expose workers and residents to strong seismic ground shaking. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 and GEO-2 would require building plan review and submittal of geotechnical surveys in order to identify appropriate engineering design measures to reduce potential impacts from strong seismic ground shaking to a less than significant level. | **GEO-1** Prior to any development project permits, building plans shall be prepared and submitted to the Indio Building Department for review and approval. Plans will show that all structures on the development site have been designed, and will be constructed, in accordance with seismic safety design criteria specified in the most recent California Building Code requirements, at a minimum, or as otherwise recommended by a qualified registered structural engineer. This measure shall be implemented on a project-by-project basis by each development applicant at the time of final design of improvements for project development under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan. Plans for improvements shall be subject to approval by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division.<br>**GEO-2** For any development project proposed under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, a specific geotechnical survey may be necessary in order to refine engineering design parameters regarding site preparation, grading, and foundation design, to assure design criteria responsive to specific project development site soils and the effects of differential settlements resulting from identified ground shaking potential, as well as effects of subsidence, lateral spreading, and collapse potential. Any geotechnical recommendations identified in the geotechnical analysis shall be incorporated into development plans prior to the approval. Development plans shall be approved by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2, impacts related to site specific seismic ground shaking would be less than significant, as development projects would adequately reviewed for building safety, and geotechnical surveys would be prepared to identify and require incorporation of engineering design parameters to minimize exposure to geologic related hazards. |
| **Impact GEO-3.** Development in the Specific Plan area would not exacerbate liquefaction potential, but would expose workers and residents to liquefaction hazards; however, implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 and GEO-2 would require detailed project-specific geotechnical mitigation measures be developed based on design-level geotechnical reports. This would reduce potential impacts | **GEO-3** Prior to issuance of any project-specific permits, detailed project-specific geotechnical mitigation measures shall be developed based on design-level geotechnical reports and depicted on plans prepared by the geotechnical engineer of record or on plan sheets included within final grading plans. Proposed mitigation methods shall be subject to approval by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division, the Engineering Services Division, and/or Fire Safety Division. Mitigation shall be implemented by the individual project proponent, where appropriate, based on cost, and constructability considerations, and project specific requirements, and may include the following: | With implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-3, impacts related to exposure to liquefaction hazards would be less than significant because engineering design parameters would be incorporated into project design. |

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| relative to liquefaction hazards to a less than significant level. | a. Removal of any liquefiable/collapsible soils, if present, and replacement with engineered fill. Removal and replacement will be feasible above the water table or in dewatered excavations; and<br>b. Liquefiable/collapsible soils both above and below the water table, if present, can be improved by in situ ground densification using deep dynamic compaction, rapid impact compaction, compaction with vibratory probes (e.g., vibroflotation, terraprobe), stone columns, and/or compaction piles.<br>c. Increase soil density and shear strength and reduce soil moisture content of soils subject to cyclic softening, ground lurching, and static compression through consolidation under fills. The level of soil improvement will be sufficient to bring estimated prost-construction settlement or seismic ground deformation to acceptable levels. Depending on the proposed fill thickness and site-specific soil conditions, mitigation could be effected either by project fills or by the application of temporary surcharge fills;<br>d. Support large, heavy, or multi-story structures on deep foundations, such as driven piles, reinforced concrete caissons, or structural mat foundations, if ground improvement by placement of surcharge fills will not be effective;<br>e. Dewater, if necessary, and remove soft, compressible soils, if present, and replace them with engineered fill; and<br>f. Design any proposed project to avoid areas underlain by soils subject to cyclic softening, ground lurching, and static compression.<br>Geotechnical surveys shall be used to determine the appropriate engineering for foundations and support structures as well as building requirements to minimize geotechnical hazard impacts when implementing the Indio Downtown Specific Plan. Copies of all analyses shall be submitted to the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division for review and approval. An approved copy of the evaluation shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department. | |
| **Impact GEO-4.** Although construction activities in the Specific Plan area would result in the exposure of topsoil with potential for erosion, adherence to the City's Municipal Code and Mitigation Measure GEO-4 would ensure that site specific best management practices are implemented to reduce these effects. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **GEO-4** For discretionary development projects in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area, individual project developers shall limit grading to the minimum area necessary for construction and operation of a project. Final grading plans shall include best management practices (BMPs) to limit on-site and off-site erosion and a water plan to treat disturbed areas during construction and reduce dust. The plans shall be submitted to the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division for review and approval. A copy of the approved plan shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-4, impacts related to soil erosion and loss of topsoil would be less than significant, as grading would be limited to the minimum area necessary, and BMPs would be implemented to minimize erosion and fugitive dust. |

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| **Impact GEO-5.** Development in the Specific Plan area would not increase risks of exposing buildings or people to expansive soil hazards as soils in the Specific Plan Area have low expansion potential. Regardless, implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4 would ensure that site specific geotechnical surveys and any geotechnical mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce on-site soil hazards. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Implement Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, site specific expansive soil hazards would be identified and addressed on a project to project basis. Impacts would be less than significant. |
| **Impact GEO-6.** Although the likelihood of discovering paleontological resources in the Specific Plan Area is low, the potential exists during ground disturbing and excavation related activities. Mitigation Measures GEO-5 and GEO-6 would require project proponents to provide awareness training on potential paleontological resources and provide appropriate course of action if resources are identified, ensuring that any encountered resources are not destroyed. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **GEO-5** Prior to the commencement of construction activities, the project proponent shall provide for a qualified paleontologist to provide construction personnel with orientation and awareness training on potential paleontological resources. Such training shall include familiarization with the stop-work restrictions, noticing, and handling procedures, and ultimate disposition of ratifications. An information package shall be provided for construction personnel not present at the initial preconstruction briefing. The operator shall provide the City of Indio Community Development Department with verification of the employees completing the orientation.<br>**GEO-6** If paleontological resources are discovered during any development project within the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area, the contractor shall stop all earth-moving activities within and around the immediate discovery area and the project proponent shall retain a qualified paleontologist to evaluate the significance of the finding and appropriate course of action. The person who made the discovery shall contact the City's Community Development Department so that they may coordinate an appropriate plan of action. If the find is determined by paleontologists to require further treatment, the area of discovery will be protected from disturbance while qualified paleontologists and appropriate officials, in consultation with a recognized museum repository (e.g., the San Diego Natural History Museum or the University of California Museum of Paleontology), determine an appropriate treatment plan. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-5 and GEO-6, impacts related to paleontological resources would be less than significant as proper training, identification, and handling procedures would be implemented, ensuring that no paleontological resources are destroyed. |
| **Impact GEO-7.** Development in the Specific Plan area would not contribute to cumulative impacts, as geologic and soils impacts are site-specific and do not compound or increase in combination with projected development elsewhere in neighboring communities. Although impacts would be less than significant, because mitigation is required for site specific impacts, these mitigation measures would be incorporated | Implement Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-6. | Cumulative impacts would be less than significant as geologic related hazards in the Specific Plan area would be adequately identified and mitigated, and implementation of the Specific Plan would not exacerbate geologic related hazards in other areas of the City. |

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| nonetheless. | | |
| **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** | | |
| **Impact GHG-1**. Development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be consistent with the land use assumptions and other development policies contained in the City's adopted General Plan and the growth projections anticipated in the Climate Action Plan. Emissions forecasts in the CAP meet the 2030 per capita and per service population emissions targets intended to meet statewide emissions targets under SB 32 and demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the State's long-term emissions reduction goals. This impact would be less than significant. | While this impact would be less than significant, implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 from Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, would further reduce potential impacts associated with GHG emissions. Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would reduce GHG emissions associated with construction by requiring the use of alternatively-fueled or electrically-powered equipment, to the extent locally available, and restricting idling of diesel-fueled motor vehicles. Mitigation Measure AQ-2 would reduce operational GHG emissions by requiring the implementation of energy-efficient design features, including, but not limited to, energy-efficient appliances, interior lighting, and building mechanical systems; incorporation of renewable energy sources in project design; and installation of light-colored "cool" roofs and pavements. | Less than significant |
| **Impact GHG-2.** The Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and the City's Climate Action Plan. Where not directly consistent, mitigation incorporated throughout this document would improve the Downtown Specific Plan's consistency with applicable plans and policies adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Implement Mitigation Measure AQ-2 from Section 4.2, Air Quality. | Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2 require future projects implemented under the Downtown Specific Plan to incorporate design measures that would improve consistency with SCAG's 2016-2040 RTP/SCS and the City's Draft CAP, as demonstrated in Table 4.6-7 and Table 4.6-8 above. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact GHG-3.** Impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are, by definition, cumulative impacts, as they affect the accumulation of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. The Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with applicable plans and programs aimed at reducing emissions and would be consistent with the growth and development anticipated in the City's Climate Action Plan emissions forecasts. | Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 from Section 4.2, Air Quality. | With implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2, the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with applicable plans and programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |

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| Therefore, the Specific Plan's cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. | | |
| **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** | | |
| **Impact HYD-1.** Construction activities associated with development under the Downtown Specific Plan would result in ground disturbance and use of construction-related chemicals, such as oil, lubricants, and solvents. The Downtown Specific Plan would generally involve redevelopment of existing developed and vacant land in the Planning Area. Such development would have the potential to increase impervious surface cover, resulting in potential water quality impacts. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **HYD-1** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the Public Works Department and an approved copy of the following: a) Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); b) the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES); and c) Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board to include the project site.<br>The requirements of the SWPPP and NPDES shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices for the construction phases may include the following:<br>1. Stockpiling and disposing of demolition debris, concrete, and soil properly.<br>2. Protecting existing storm drain inlets and stabilizing disturbed areas.<br>3. Implementing erosion controls.<br>4. Properly managing construction materials.<br>5. Managing waste, aggressively controlling litter, and implementing sediment controls.<br>Projects which are not subject to the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit because they involve less than one acre of disturbance area shall implement, at a minimum, the following measures:<br>▪ Silt fencing, straw bales composed of rice straw (that are certified to be free of weed seed), fiber rolls, gravel bags, mulching erosion control blankets, soil stabilizers, and storm drain filters shall be used, in conjunction with other methods, to prevent erosion throughout the entire project site.<br>▪ Temporary berms and sediment basins shall be constructed to avoid unnecessary siltation into local waterways or the storm drain during construction activities.<br>▪ Erosion controls that protect and stabilize stockpiles and exposed soils shall be used to prevent movement of materials. Potential erosion control devices include plastic sheeting held down with rocks or sandbags over stockpiles, silt fences, or berms of hay bales.<br>▪ Temporary stockpiling of excavated material shall be minimized. However, excavated material shall be stockpiled in areas where it cannot enter the waterways or the storm drain system. Available stockpiling sites at or near the project site shall be determined prior to the start of construction.<br>▪ Upon completion of project construction, all exposed soils present in and around | Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term water quality impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |

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| | the project site shall be stabilized within seven days using mulch, revegetation, geotextile binding fabrics or other appropriate erosion control technique.<br>▪ An adequate supply of erosion control materials (gravel, straw bales, shovels, etc.) shall be maintained on-site to facilitate a quick response to unanticipated storm events or emergencies.<br>**HYD-2** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the Public Works Department all storm water control and storm drain plans that include low impact development (LID) techniques. LID techniques shall include, but are not limited to:<br>▪ Onsite surface water collection and bio-filtration treatment of runoff;<br>▪ Subsurface drainage facilities within each development site to store and percolate onsite runoff;<br>▪ Specific to each development site, onsite capacity to store up to 100 percent of the 100-year onsite runoff; and<br>▪ Bio-remediation for runoff prior to percolating into subsurface soils;<br>▪ Rain barrels and cisterns that allow rainwater to be captured and used for irrigation purposes; and<br>▪ Permeable paving materials that allow water to percolate into the ground.<br>**HYD-3** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the City of Indio Public Works Department a Water Quality Management Plan for review and approval. The Water Quality Management Plan shall include details regarding the control and reduction of urban runoff, incorporating the measures taken through MM HYD-1 and MM HYD-2, at any development sites in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan. | |

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| **Impact HYD-2.** Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would be served by the Indio Water Authority, which obtains potable water supplies from the underlying Indio Subbasin. While the Indio Subbasin has been in a state of overdraft since 1936, growth assumptions associated with the Downtown Specific Plan are consistent with population projections that form the basis of IWA's water demand planning. Projects would implement measures to reduce potential water demand and would not impede ongoing recharge and water conservation efforts intended to end overdraft in the Coachella Valley. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 described in Section 4.11, *Utilities and Service Systems*, would apply to this impact and would reduce future development's water demand by requiring efficient irrigation systems, xeriscaping, and building strategies to reduce necessary fire flow. Additionally, the following mitigation measures would reduce potential decreases in groundwater supplies associated with future development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan.<br>**HYD-4** Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permit for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit a landscape plan to the City of Indio Public Works Department and/or Community Development Department. The landscape plan for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following:<br>▪ To the greatest extent practicable for each development site, native plant materials and other approved drought-tolerant plants shall be used in all project landscaping.<br>▪ Any proposed irrigation systems shall be reviewed and an irrigation system performance analysis shall be conducted to maximize the efficiency of the system and further reduce water demands.<br>▪ Any irrigation system installed shall be maintained effectively to ensure that runoff and evaporation is kept to a minimum. This includes maximizing the effective watering of plant roots, using drip irrigation, moisture detectors, and computer- controlled systems to increase the efficiency.<br>**HYD-5** Prior to the issuance of a building permit for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit final design plans. These plans shall include the use of low-flush toilets and water-conserving shower heads and faucets shall be required in conformance with Section 17921.3 of the Health and Safety Code, Title 20, California Code of Regulations 1601(b), and applicable sections of Title 24 CCR. | Mitigation Measures HYD-4, HYD-5, and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would reduce potential water demand associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan. Because anticipated development would be required to implement these water conservation measures and growth assumptions would be consistent with population estimates that form the basis of IWA's demand projections, such development would not impede sustainable management of the Indio Subbasin and this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact HYD-3.** Anticipated development under the Downtown Specific Plan would have the potential to alter drainage patterns through the addition of impervious surfaces in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation. With adherence to applicable federal, state, and local water quality and erosion control regulations and Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3, this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3. | Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term erosion and siltation impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |

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| **Impact HYD-4.** Anticipated development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would increase impervious surface area, resulting in potentially increased stormwater runoff and flooding. Implementation of low impact development techniques pursuant to existing regulations and Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3 would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. | Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3. | Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential downstream flooding. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact HYD-5.** Future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan would alter the existing drainage pattern through the addition of impervious surface area. Planned improvements to the stormwater system and implementation of erosion-control and low impact development techniques pursuant to existing regulations and Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would render this impact less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3. | Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term polluted runoff from future project sites. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact HYD-6.** Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region. Future projects would obtain water supply from the Indio Water Authority, which draws from the underlying Indio Subbasin. Projects would implement measures to reduce potential water demand and would not impede ongoing recharge and water conservation efforts intended to end overdraft in the Coachella Valley. As such, the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Coachella Valley Water Management Plan. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6. | This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |

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| **Impact HYD-7.** Future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan in combination with other planned, pending, and reasonably foreseeable development would have a less than significant cumulative impact on water quality, runoff, and flooding, with mitigation incorporated. While cumulative impacts with respect to depletion of groundwater supplies and conflict with the sustainable groundwater management plan would be potentially significant, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution such impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. | Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1 through HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6. | Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would reduce anticipated water demand associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan. While cumulative impacts related to groundwater supplies and consistency with the CVWMP would be potentially significant, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to such impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. All other cumulative impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **LAND USE AND PLANNING** | | |
| **Impact LU-1.** All future development projects would be required to adhere to the Specific Plan's Development standards, applicable City zoning requirements, and the City's General Plan policies. Through required adherence to these development standards, requirements, and policies, the Downtown Specific Plan would not cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict, and impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact LU-2.** Future development in the Specific Plan area is anticipated to occur in accordance with the 2040 General Plan, Zoning Regulations, or as otherwise approved by the City, and as such, would not contribute to cumulative effects relative to land use and planning | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |

| NOISE | | |
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| **Impact N-1.** Construction of new development in the Specific Plan area could result in noise levels that exceed established thresholds. Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would be implemented to reduce construction noise impacts to less than significant. Development in the Specific Plan Area may be subjected to traffic and rail noise levels that exceed noise land use compatibility standards. Mitigation Measure N-3 would be implemented to ensure noise land use compatibility of Specific Plan development. | **N-1** The City shall ensure that future demolition and construction activities occur in accordance with applicable regulations and, if necessary, shall require implementation of site-specific noise reduction measures to minimize impacts to nearby land uses. Mitigation measures typically implemented to reduce construction-related impacts include, but are not limited to, the following:<br>▪ Utilize best available noise control techniques for construction equipment, including the use of intake silencers, mufflers, and engine shrouds.<br>▪ To the extent locally available, utilize quieter construction techniques and alternatively powered equipment, such as electrically powered equipment.<br>▪ Stationary construction equipment, such as power generators, should be located as far from adjacent sensitive receptors as possible.<br>▪ Use of portable barriers or other measures as determined by the City (or other appropriate government agency) when demolition or construction activities are expected to exceed 90 dBA Leq at nearby noise sensitive receptors.<br>**N-2** Noise-generating construction activities shall be limited to the hours set forth in Section 95C.08.B of the City's Municipal Code:<br>a. Pacific Standard Time.<br>Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM through 6:00 PM Saturday, 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM<br>Sunday, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM<br>Government Holidays, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM<br>b. Pacific Daylight Time.<br>Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM through 6:00 PM Saturday, 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM<br>Sunday, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM<br>Government Holidays, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM<br>**N-3** Future development projects undergoing discretionary review shall be required to analyze project-related noise impacts and incorporate necessary noise-reduction measures to ensure the compatibility of proposed land uses with applicable noise standards, including attainment of a 45 dBA CNEL interior noise level. Noise-reduction measures typically implemented to reduce traffic and rail noise include increased insulation, setbacks, and construction of sound barriers. | Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would reduce potential construction-related noise impacts by requiring projects to comply with all applicable City regulations and limiting construction to daytime hours specified in the City's Municipal Code. Mitigation Measure N-3 would require future projects to implement noise-reduction measures to meet land use compatibility standards, reducing potential operational noise impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact N-2.** Construction for development in the Specific Plan area could result in potentially significant vibration impacts. Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would be implemented | Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2, described above, would apply. | Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would incorporate construction noise- and vibration-reduction requirements, including restricting construction hours to |

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| to reduce vibration impacts to a less than significant level. | | less sensitive daytime hours. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |
| **Impact N-3.** Development in the Specific Plan area along with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in Indio could result in potentially significant increases of traffic noise. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, future development projects would be required to analyze project-related noise impacts and incorporate necessary noise-reduction measures sufficient to achieve the applicable noise standards, and impacts would be less than significant. | Mitigation Measure N-3, described above, would apply. | Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3 would reduce the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to potential cumulative impacts associated with operational transportation noise such that it would not be cumulatively considerable. All other potential cumulative noise impacts would be less than significant. |
| **TRANSPORTATION** | | |
| **Impact T-1.** Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would increase vehicle trips in the City, the increase in vehicle trips associated with the specific plan would not decrease the level of service of intersections or roadway segments to below City established standards under existing with project conditions. The intersection of Jackson Street and Highway 111 is projected to operate at a deficient LOS (E) during PM peak hours under both the Future and Future with project traffic conditions. Inclusion of mitigation measure T-1 would ensure that the intersection is monitored by the City to verify when the intersection operates deficiently and that the improvement(s) is implemented when necessary. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **T-1** The City of Indio shall monitor traffic growth at the intersection of Jackson Street and State Route 111, in order to identify when the intersection operates at or below Level of Service (LOS) "E" conditions. When LOS "E" conditions are identified, the City shall implement the necessary improvement(s) to improve the LOS at the intersection to acceptable conditions (LOS D or better), such as adding a second eastbound left-turn lane. | With implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1, the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 would operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS D). |
| **Impact T-2.** By implementing the Downtown Specific Plan, the VMT per service population in the City of Indio will decrease, indicating a net positive effect on VMT in the City. The project would not conflict with the provisions of SB 743 and this impact would be less than | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |

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| significant. | | |
| **Impact T-3.** No incompatible uses or hazardous design features, such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections, are proposed as part of the Downtown Specific Plan. All new development projects would be reviewed by the City and would adhere to the City's roadway design standards and roadway engineering standards contained in the City Municipal Code. Impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact T-4.** All future development projects would be required to adhere to applicable Fire and Building Codes for emergency vehicle access, as well as adhere to the City's Municipal code and design review process, ensuring that adequate emergency access is maintained. Impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS** | | |
| **Impact UTIL-1.** Future development projects in the Specific Plan Area would increase demand for water, wastewater and stormwater facilities, electricity, natural gas and telecommunications. Because existing infrastructure is available, and through required adherence to existing utility requirements and individual project design review, impacts related to requiring wastewater, natural gas and telecommunication facilities would be less than significant. With implementation of mitigation measures, impacts related to requiring new water and electrical facilities would be less than significant. | **UTIL-1** Individual project developers shall utilize xeriscape planting principles and use of native and/or drought-tolerant plant materials that require little or no irrigation. Plants with similar water requirements shall be grouped together, a technique known as hydro zoning. Decorative water features shall be designed to minimize water consumption and evaporation.<br>**UTIL-2** Automated, high-efficiency irrigation systems (such as bubbler irrigation and low-angle, low-flow spray heads) shall be installed to reduce water demand and use. Moisture sensors and other similar irrigation technology shall be utilized to ensure that landscaping is watered only as needed.<br>**UTIL-3** Individual project developers shall minimize use of turf except within active outdoor recreation uses.<br>**UTIL-4** When possible, individual project developers shall utilize the building construction class that minimizes the amount of fire flow required.<br>**UTIL-5** If necessary, individual project developers shall incorporate fire wall(s) to allow a single structure to be essentially classified as two smaller buildings and reduce the fire flow.<br>**UTIL-6** Individual project developers shall incorporate automatic fire suppression systems components that reduce the flow and pressure requirements.<br>**UTIL-7** "Dark Sky-Friendly" lighting shall be designed to protect the beauty of the | Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would further reduce water demand associated with development under the Specific Plan to a less than significant level. With implementation of Mitigation Measures UTIL-7 through UTIL-11, the Specific Plan would incorporate numerous energy efficiency measures and design features to enhance efficiency in all aspects of a building's life-cycle. These designs would increase a structure's energy efficiency, and overall sustainability. The Specific Plan would also exceed Title 24 energy requirements by 15 percent, consistent with the Voluntary |

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| | desert sky and shall respect the requirements and guidelines of the Mount Palomar restricted nighttime light zone, as identified in Riverside County's Ordinance No. 655. Up-lighting is discouraged except for well-shielded landscape accent lighting. Maximum lamp wattage requirements shall be established for different lighting types to minimize obtrusive and unnecessary lighting and conserve energy resources to the greatest extent possible.<br>**UTIL-8** Automatic timers shall be programmed to maximize personal safety at night while conserving energy.<br>**UTIL-9** Buildings shall be sited and designed to maximize the use of sunlight and shade for energy savings and respect the right to solar access of nearby and adjacent buildings. Whenever appropriate, buildings shall be oriented so that the long axis of the building is oriented east–west to maximize the opportunity for north- and south facing windows, which receive indirect, diffused light with low heat gain for the building, reducing cooling costs during summer months.<br>**UTIL-10** The pursuit of already established sustainable best management practices, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, ComfortWise and EnergyStar Home shall be utilized throughout the Specific Plan. For maximum flexibility, however, developers and builders shall implement sustainable building and development practices identified within the Voluntary Green Building Program and the Voluntary Green Building Manual.<br>**UTIL-11** Individual project developers shall participate in programs offered or sponsored by local utilities such as California EnergyStar New Homes Program, Residential Property Development Program, California Home Energy Efficiency Rating System (CHEERS) Program, and Savings by Design Program. | Green Building Program. Residual impacts would be less than significant. |
| **Impact UTIL-2.** Because of the large storage capacity of the groundwater basin, the water supply would be sufficient even during dry and multiple dry years. following required review and approval of future projects within the Specific Plan area, impacts related to water supplies would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact UTIL-3.** Although implementation of the Specific Plan would increase the amount of wastewater generated in the Downtown area, adequate wastewater infrastructure is available to service the area. In addition, growth anticipated by the Specific Plan is within densities proposed by the General Plan, which would ensure that existing and planned facilities can accommodate proposed growth. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |

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| Impacts would be less than significant. | | |
| **Impact UTIL-4.** Although development under the Specific Plan would increase the amount of solid waste sent to local transfer stations and landfills in the region, facilities have adequate capacity to service the Specific Plan's demand. Impacts would be less than significant. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact UTIL-5.** With adherence to State and local regulations, the Specific Plan 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. | Impacts would be less than significant | Less than significant |
| **Impact UTIL-6.** Although the Specific Plan would contribute to cumulative impacts by requiring services by utility providers, the Specific Plan's contribution, through standard regulatory compliance and mitigation measures, would not be cumulatively considerable. | Implement Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-11 to reduce impacts related to water and electricity demands. | With implementation of Mitigation Measures, standard conditions, regulatory requirements and the review and approval process of the applicable agencies, impacts associated with Specific Plan's contribution to utilities and services system infrastructure would be less than significant. |

# 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Indio (City) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and has determined that a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR or Program EIR) is required to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the Indio Downtown Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2015031057) (Specific Plan or Project). This Program EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] § 21000 et seq.); CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, § 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of CEQA, as adopted by the City. An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in the CEQA Guidelines, and provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project to the extent feasible. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a project that may have the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines by the City and distributed to the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, and other interested parties. The NOP for the Original Draft EIR was circulated for 30 days, from March 18, 2015 and ending April 17, 2015. Appendix A contains a copy of the NOP and written responses to the NOP, respectively. The Original Draft EIR was released for public review on April 24th, 2017 and was available for review and comments until June 7th, 2017. The Recirculated EIR included revisions to all sections of the Original DEIR since the City has made a number of substantial changes to the Specific Plan since circulation of the original Draft EIR. The current Specific Plan is described in Section 3.0, *Project Description*.

The proposed Indio Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is in the southeast part of the City. The Specific Plan area is generally bordered by Indio Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the north; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; Jackson Street and Grace Street to the east; and Deglet Noor and King Street to the west (see Figure 3-2 in Section 3.0, *Project Description*).

The project requires an amendment to the General Plan land use map; adoption of the Specific Plan; and a change to the Specific Plan boundaries as shown in the City Zoning Map. For more detailed information regarding the project, refer to Section 3.0, *Project Description*.

## 2.1 Purpose of this Program Environmental Impact Report

In accordance with Section 15121 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is a public informational document used in the planning and decision-making process to inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. This program-level EIR analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the project. The City of Indio Planning Commission and City Council will consider the information in the Program EIR, including the public comments and staff response to those comments, during the public hearing process. As a legislative action, the final decision would be made by the City Council, who may approve, conditionally approve, or deny the project.

While Sections 15120 to 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines generally describe the content of an EIR, CEQA does

not contain specific, detailed, quantified standards for the content of environmental documents. Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines states:

> *An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information that enables them to make a decision that intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have not looked for perfection but for adequacy, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.*

The purpose of an EIR is to identify:

- The significant potential impacts of the project on the environment and indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be avoided or mitigated;
- Any unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated; and
- Reasonable and feasible alternatives to the project that would eliminate any significant adverse environmental impacts or reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

An EIR also discloses potential growth-inducing impacts; impacts found not to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of the project when taken into consideration with past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects.

CEQA requires an EIR to reflect the independent judgment of the lead agency. A Draft EIR is circulated to responsible and trustee agencies with resources affected by a project, and to interested agencies, groups and individuals. Reviewers of a Draft EIR are requested to focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated.

### *2.1.1 Decision to Prepare a Program EIR*

This EIR is being prepared as a Program EIR in accordance with Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, which states the following:

> *(a) General. A Program EIR is an EIR, which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:*
>
> *(1) Geographically,*
>
> *(2) As logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,*
>
> *(3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or*
>
> *(4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.*
>
> *(b) Advantages. Use of a Program EIR can provide the following advantages. The Program EIR can:*
>
> *(1) Provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than*

*would be practical in an EIR on an individual action,*

*(2) Ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis,*

*(3) Avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations,*

*(4) Allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts, and*

*(5) Allow reduction in paperwork.*

*(c) Use with Later Activities. Subsequent activities in the program must be examined in the light of the Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared.*

*(1) If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, a new Initial Study would need to be prepared leading to either an EIR or a Negative Declaration.*

*(2) If the agency finds that pursuant to Section 15162, no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, the agency can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.*

*(3) An agency shall incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the program EIR into subsequent actions in the program.*

*(4) Where the subsequent activities involve site-specific operations, the agency should use a written checklist or similar device to document the evaluation of the site and the activity to determine whether the environmental effects of the operation were covered in the program EIR.*

*(5) A program EIR will be most helpful in dealing with subsequent activities if it deals with the effects of the program as specifically and comprehensively as possible. With a good and detailed analysis of the program, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the scope of the project described in the program EIR, and no further environmental documents would be required.*

Therefore, this Program EIR is intended to serve as the primary environmental document for all entitlements associated with the project, including all discretionary approvals requested or required to implement the project. The City of Indio, as Lead Agency, can approve subsequent actions without additional environmental documentation unless otherwise required by Section 21166 of the CEQA Statutes and Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 21166 of the CEQA Statutes states that:

*When an environmental impact report has been prepared for a project pursuant to this division, no subsequent or supplemental environmental impact report shall be required by the lead agency or by any responsible agency, unless one or more of the following events occurs:*

*(a) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the environmental impact report.*

*(b) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken which will require major revisions in the environmental impact report.*

*(c) New information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time the environmental impact report was certified as complete, becomes available.*

## 2.2 Scope of the Program Environmental Impact Report

CEQA requires lead agencies to solicit and consider input from other interested agencies, citizen groups, and individual members of the public. CEQA also requires a project to be monitored after it has been approved to ensure that mitigation measures are carried out. CEQA requires the lead agency to provide the public with a full disclosure of the expected environmental consequences of a proposed project and with an opportunity to provide comments.

In accordance with CEQA, the following is the process for public participation in the decision-making process.

### *2.2.1 Notice or Preparation (NOP)*

Pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, as amended, the City of Indio prepared and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to the State of California Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, and to responsible, trustee, and local agencies, special districts, and members of the public for review and comment on March 18, 2015 and ending April 17, 2015. The purpose of the NOP is to formally convey that the City, as the lead agency, is soliciting input regarding the scope and proposed content of the EIR. No specific environmental concerns were raised in written comments during the NOP public review period. The NOP and all comment letters are provided in Appendix A of this Program EIR.

### *2.2.2 Scoping Meeting*

Pursuant to Section 15206 of the CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency is required to conduct at least one scoping meeting for all projects of statewide, regional, or area-wide significance. The scoping meeting is for jurisdictional agencies and interested persons or groups to provide comments regarding, but not limited to, the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and environmental effects to be analyzed. The City hosted a scoping meeting on April 2, 2015, at the City of Indio Council Chambers, 100 Civic Center Mall, Indio, California. Two individuals attended the April 2, 2015 scoping meeting. No specific environmental concerns were raised at the scoping meeting. The concerns voiced were with respect to crime and loitering issues.

### 2.2.3 Issues to be Resolved

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123(b)(3) requires that an EIR contain issues to be resolved, which includes the choices among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate significant impacts. The major issues to be resolved regarding the project include decisions by the lead agency as to whether:

- The Program EIR adequately describes the environmental impacts of the project,
- The recommended mitigation measures should be adopted or modified, or
- Additional mitigation measures need to be applied.

## 2.3 Program EIR Analysis

The project has the potential to have significant impacts on a number of environmental factors. Using Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines as a guide, at least one impact area of those below, which are addressed in the Program EIR, has been identified as having a "Potential Significant Impact". The environmental issues identified by the City for assessment in the Program EIR are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

## 2.4 EIR Review Process

The PEIR review process occurs in two basic stages. The first stage is the Draft PEIR, which offers the public the opportunity to comment on the document, while the second stage is the Final PEIR. The environmental impact review process, as required under CEQA, is summarized below and illustrated in Figure 2-1.

### 2.4.1 Draft Program EIR

The Draft Program EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding jurisdictions, interested parties, and other parties who requested a copy in accordance with Section 21092 of the CEQA Statutes. The Notice of Completion for the Draft Program EIR is required by CEQA. Reviewers of the Draft Program EIR were given a 45-day review period (December 27, 2019 to February 11, 2020) to prepare written comments on the draft document. During the public review period, the Draft Program EIR (including the technical appendices) was available for review during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, at the City of Indio Development Services Department located at 100 Civic Center Mall, Indio, CA 92201. The Draft Program EIR and technical appendices can also be accessed at the City's website accessible from https://www.indio.org/.

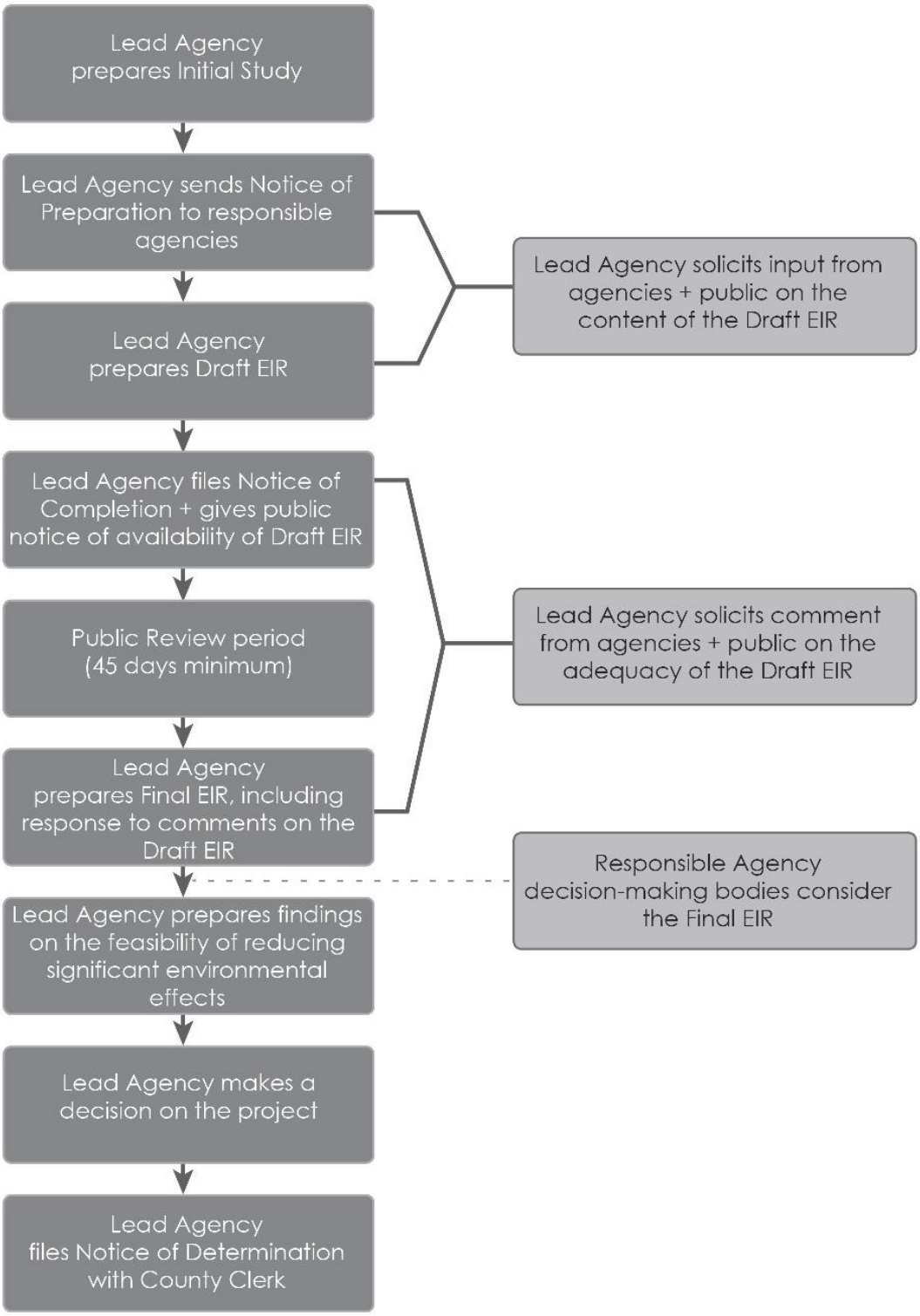
Written comments regarding the Draft Program EIR were addressed to Leila Namvar, Senior Planner, at the address or email address provided below.

City of Indio
Community Development Department
100 Civic Center Mall
Indio, California 92201
Contact: Leila Namvar
(760) 541-4258
lnamvar@indio.org

### *2.4.2 Final Program EIR*

Following the end of the public review period, the City must provide written responses to comments received on the Draft PEIR per CEQA Guidelines Section 15088 and consider all comments in making its decision. Detailed responses to the comments received during public review, an MMRP, Findings of Fact, and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC) for impacts identified in the Draft PEIR as significant and unavoidable must be prepared as part of the PEIR certification process. The responses to comments received on the Draft EIR and the MMRP are included as Appendix H and Appendix I of this EIR, respectively. The culmination of this process is a public hearing where the City Council will determine whether to certify the Final PEIR as being complete and in accordance with CEQA. The Final PEIR must be available to public agencies that provided comments at least 10 days before the public hearing to certify the EIR in order to provide commenters an opportunity to review written responses to their comment letters.

**Figure 2-1 Environmental Review Process**



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# 3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## 3.1 Specific Plan Project Location and Setting

### *3.1.1 Specific Plan Project Location*

The City of Indio (City) is located within the Coachella Valley, west of the San Bernardino Mountains in Riverside County, California. Regionally, the City is approximately 10 miles west of Joshua Tree National Park, 17 miles northwest of the Salton Sea, and 15 miles east of the City of Palm Springs. Interstate 10 (I-10) runs east-west through the City. State Route 111 (SR-111) is the main north-south highway and retail corridor through the City. The Coachella Valley communities of Palm Desert, Cathedral City, and Palm Springs are located north of Indio along SR-111. Indio is bordered to the west by the City of La Quinta; to the south and north by unincorporated areas of Riverside County; and to the east by City of Coachella.

The Indio Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area covers approximately 140 acres in the southeast part of the City and includes the historic Downtown area and Civic Center. The Specific Plan area is generally bordered by Indio Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the north; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; Jackson Street and Grace Street to the east; and Deglet Noor and King Street to the west. Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2 depict the Specific Plan area in a regional and local context, respectively.

### *3.1.2 Project Setting (Existing Conditions)*

Existing land uses in the 140-acre Specific Plan area include commercial, residential, manufacturing, open space, and public uses. Table 3-1 identifies the existing residential and non-residential uses within the boundaries of the Specific Plan area.

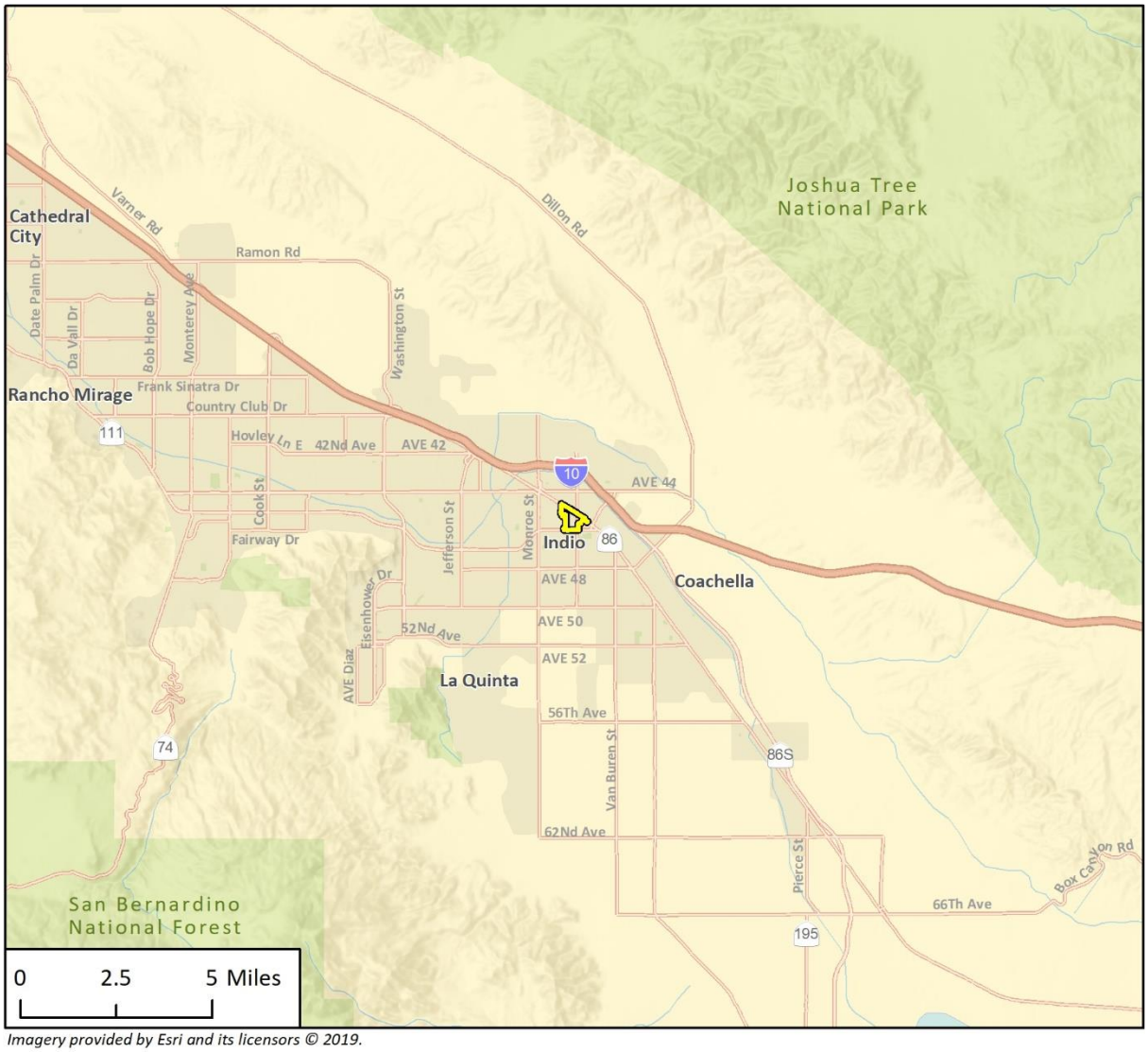
**Table 3-1 Existing Conditions/Development**

| Uses | Dwelling Units | Gross Square Feet[1] | Parking |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Non- Residential** | | | |
| Retail | -- | 211,595 | 529 |
| Commercial/Office | -- | 217,507 | 755 |
| Civic[2] | -- | 165,500 | 331 |
| **Residential** | | | |
| Small/2-Bedroom Apartment | 32 | 21,200 | 44 |
| Single Family Detached | 50 | 60,000 | 99 |
| **TOTAL** | **82** | **709,802** | **1,615** |

1 Residential square footages are based on an average size calculation
2 Civic uses include City Hall/Library, Museum/Indio Performing Arts Center, College of the Desert/Loma Linda, and a Rail Station

Existing non-residential uses in the Specific Plan area total approximately 628,602 gross square feet (gsf). Storefront retail is located primarily along Fargo Street with numerous small-scale retail centers along Indio Boulevard and SR-111. Auto-related commercial uses are located along Jackson Street. Business and medical offices are located primarily along Oasis Street.

## Figure 3-1 Regional Location

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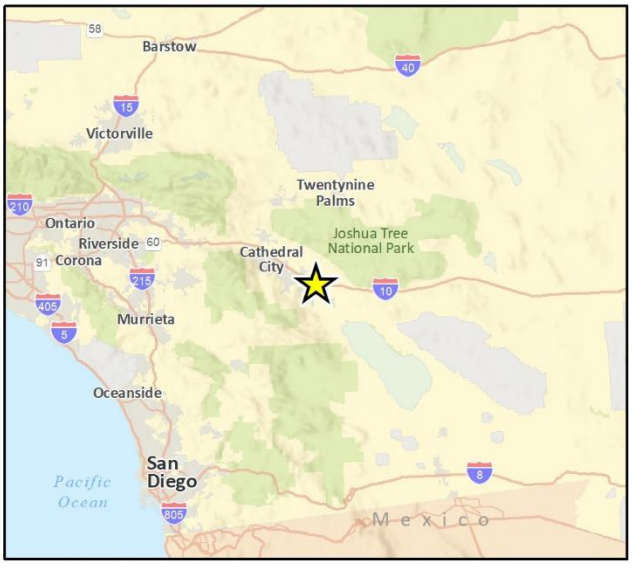
Project Location

N



## Figure 3-2 Downtown Specific Plan Area

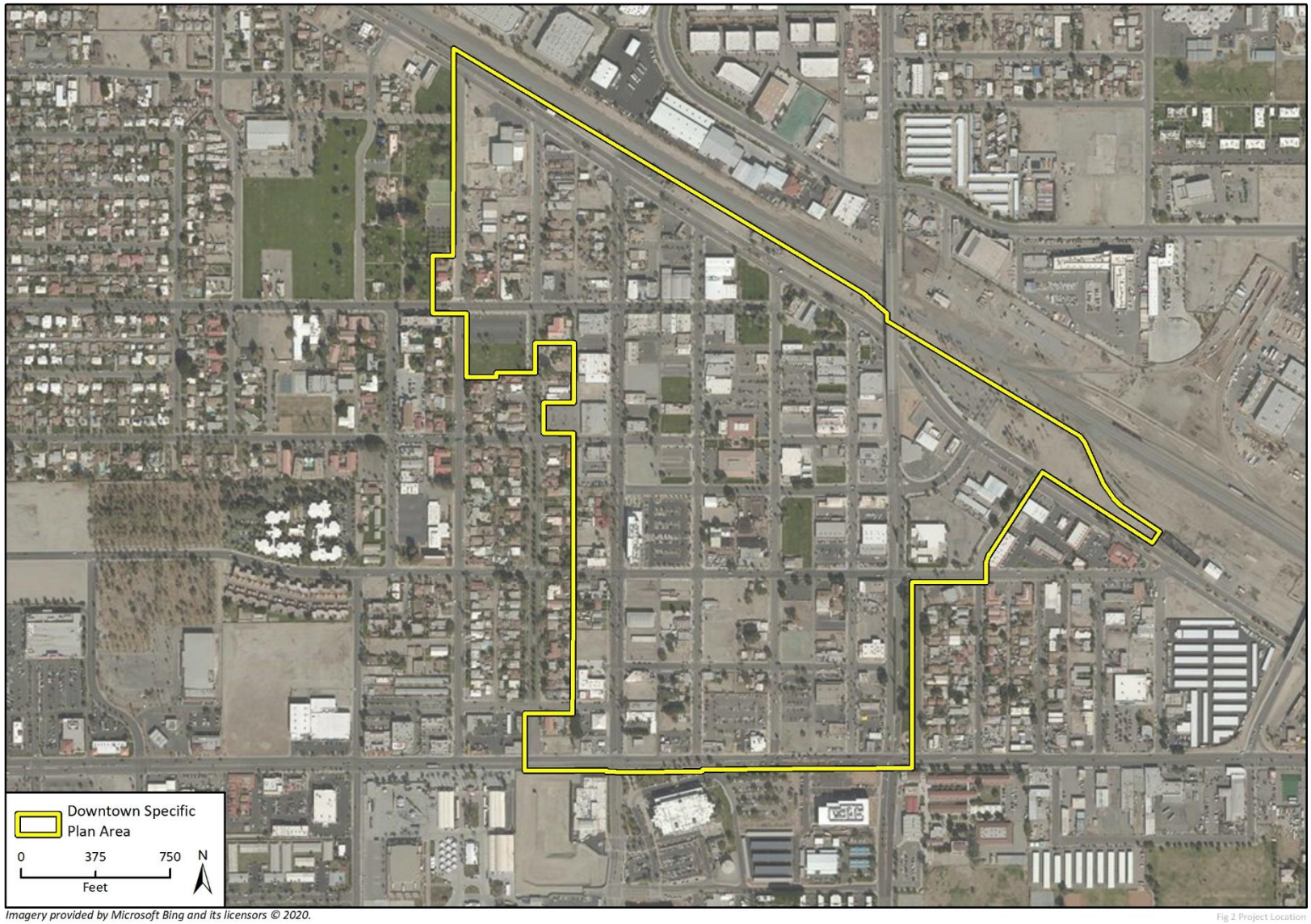



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Fig 2 Project Location

The Specific Plan area includes approximately 165,500 gsf of civic and institutional uses. The Civic Center and the College of the Desert are in the central part of the Specific Plan area. Other public and institutional uses are predominately located on the west side of the Specific Plan area and include the Palm Academy Student Center (kindergarten through eighth grade [K–8]), Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and School (K-8), and several other churches. Existing open space uses include York Plaza located on Indio Boulevard at Fargo Street. The majority of vacant land in the Specific Plan area is east of Towne Street, many of which are City-owned and are currently irrigated green spaces.

Single-family residences are concentrated between Deglet Noor Street and Oasis Street, south of Bliss Avenue, and north of Saidy Avenue, however many are scattered through the Specific Plan area. There are a total of 50 single-family homes and 32 apartments.

## 3.2 Background and History

### *3.2.1 Project History*

The Old Town Indio Specific Plan was prepared and adopted by the City in July 1997. To reflect current trends and the desires of the City's decision-makers and stakeholders, the City Council directed staff to evaluate and update the existing Specific Plan. On June 12, 2019, the City held a joint study session for City Council and Planning Commission members to introduce the Specific Plan update process; identify the current challenges and opportunities in the Specific Plan area; and explore the Council members' visions for the Specific Plan.

On June 13, 2019 and July 9, 2019, the City held two community workshops/public open houses for Indio residents, business owners, and other stakeholder groups. Workshop participants were provided with an overall introduction of the Specific Plan and participated in hands-on group exercises. The objective of the group exercises was to determine the opportunities and challenges, and overall vision for the Specific Plan area. Participants identified opportunities for improving and enhancing the Specific Plan area; the biggest challenges facing the area; and what they would see as ideal features, changes, and vision for Specific Plan that would represent the Indio community.

### *3.2.2 Relationship of the City of Indio General Plan and the Proposed Specific Plan*

The City of Indio General Plan was adopted on September 18, 2019. The proposed Specific Plan reflects current land use assumptions and other development policies, as described within the General Plan. The Specific Plan's standards and provisions would comply with the directives of General Plan's policies and action programs.

The proposed Specific Plan is a regulatory plan consisting of the development concept and zoning for properties within the boundaries of the Specific Plan area. Subsequent Site or Master Development Plans, tract or parcel maps, development agreements, local public work projects, and any action requiring ministerial or discretionary approval related to the Specific Plan Project must be consistent with the final adopted Indio Downtown Specific Plan.

## 3.3 Specific Plan Project Characteristics

The proposed Project evaluated in this Program EIR is the Indio Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The proposed Specific Plan would supersede the 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan with a plan that

emphasizes a walkable, mixed-use environment that complements the City's Old Town characteristics while allowing new development opportunities. The goal of the proposed Specific Plan is to encourage and promote economic development and revitalization to enhance the City's attractiveness in the local and regional marketplace. The proposed Specific Plan seeks to facilitate the adaptive reuse of existing structures and promote infill development on vacant and underutilized properties. The Specific Plan project would also facilitate and encourage residential mixed-use, commercial/retail, and transit-supportive development.

The Specific Plan describes the goals and policies, development standards, design guidelines, infrastructure improvements, and implementation strategies for the Specific Plan area. The City's General Plan describes the City's vision to reestablish the Specific Plan area as a special place within the City and the Coachella Valley with enhanced commercial opportunities, public spaces, a pedestrian friendly environment (constructing features such as pedestrian paseos), and a multimodal transportation hub (nearby Amtrak facilities, bicycle lanes, public transit stops, etc.). Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan may generate the need for offsite utility infrastructure improvements (such as, but not limited to, new/upgraded electrical infrastructure). The size, nature, and locations of needed improvements are not known at this time.

The standards and provisions of the proposed Specific Plan constitute the primary land use and development guidance for the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan's standards and provisions would be applied in addition to the regulations set forth in the City of Indio Municipal Code.

The Specific Plan's estimated growth forecast, which includes existing development, is 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential development and 1,188 dwelling units totaling 1,113,074 gsf. Table 3-2 provides a complete summary of the proposed uses and growth forecasts for the Specific Plan area.

**Table 3-2 Indio Downtown Specific Plan Growth Forecast**

| Uses | Dwelling Units | Gross Square Feet[1] | Parking |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Non- Residential** | | | |
| Retail | -- | 456,250 | 1,141 |
| Office | -- | 500,000 | 1,500 |
| Hotel[2] | -- | 205,000 | 323 |
| Civic[3] | -- | 214,000 | 428 |
| **Residential** | | | |
| Studios | 312 | 202,800 | 312 |
| Small Apartments | 304 | 258,400 | 380 |
| Medium Two-bedroom Apartments | 278 | 278,000 | 417 |
| Condominiums | 139 | 166,800 | 243 |
| Townhouses | 105 | 147,000 | 210 |
| Single Family Detached | 50 | 60,000 | 100 |
| **TOTAL[4]** | **1,188** | **2,488,324** | **5,053** |

[1] Residential square footages are based on an average size calculation
[2] Hotel calculations based off 30,000 square feet of retail space and 350 rooms at average size of 500 sf (175,000 gsf)
[3] Civic uses include City Hall/Library, Museum/Indio Performing Arts Center, College of the Desert/Loma Linda, and a Rail Station
[4] Totals do not add up due to rounding in residential average size square foot calculations

## 3.4 Specific Plan Project Objectives

The proposed Specific Plan provides a framework for future development and public improvements within the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan is proposed to serve as a tool for the City to encourage revitalization and create a vibrant, mixed-use core for the City. The proposed Specific Plan outlines a strategic vision for the future of the Downtown area and establishes a policy and regulatory framework with a set of recommendations to achieve this vision. The proposed Specific Plan was developed to be an extension of the 2040 General Plan, accomplishing the same goals and objectives but tailored to the Downtown area. These objectives and key outcomes are outlined below:

- Quality of Life: A high quality of life for all residents.
    - One of the main missing pieces in Indio's generally high quality of life offerings is a lack of places for family outings, evenings with friends, weekends with out-of-town guests, and living environments within a comfortable walk of commercial amenities, jobs and transit. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to increase these types of uses.
- Night Life, Entertainment, and Recreation: A lively Downtown Indio, exceptional city-wide events, and regional parks and trails that will attract visitors and residents alike.
    - The Downtown is envisioned to fill a void of community gathering places suitable for public events that are not best accommodated in regional parks. As passenger rail service is reestablished to Downtown Indio, the Downtown has an opportunity to create a fun, activity-rich destination for visitors, as a place to stay and spend time and money, and not just a pass through place.
- Multi-Modal Transportation Network: An interconnected transportation network that serves all users and modes in a healthy, equitable manner.
    - With a strong focus on pedestrian safety and comfort, the Downtown is envisioned as the most complete multi-modal, human scale environment in Indio.
- Sustainable Community: An efficient community that can persist for generations.
    - Envisioned as the most walkable (least auto-dependent), mixed-use, urban environment of the City, Downtown is expected to set the standard for this goal, not only citywide, but regionally, and the Specific Plan is provides the vision, development standards, and implementation processes to accomplish this goal.
- Range of Housing Options: A wide variety of housing types to serve a broad and diverse community of new and existing residents, providing housing opportunities for households of all ages, types, incomes, and lifestyles.
    - The Downtown is an ideal place to diversify Indio's housing stock, which is currently skewed heavily to households seeking single-family detached suburban homes or garden apartments, to include housing types in an amenity-rich urban environment, targeting students, young professionals, families, and older residents seeking active, healthy outdoor lifestyles.
- Exceptional Educational Opportunities: Extensive educational and vocational training opportunities that help develop a diverse and well-trained workforce.

- With the expanding College of the Desert campus and Loma Linda Health campus, the Downtown is ideally positioned to link education, culture and employment.

- Expanded Employment: A strong, resilient economy that offers opportunities for entry level, service, technology, and entrepreneurial employment to meet the needs of Indio's residents and to attract future residents to the region.
  - Located between a significant employment district to the north and the growing Riverside County Justice Center to the south, Downtown is ideally positioned as a prime location for new offices and housing.
- City of Festivals: Indio's internationally-known festivals will continue to attract and support entertainment and hospitality that enhance Indio as the City of Festivals.
  - The large music festivals with national and international patronage bring large amounts of visitors to Indio annually. The high-quality streetscapes, plazas and parks envisioned in Downtown will provide additional venues for festivals, the arts, entertainment and special community events related to the large festivals and also throughout the year.
- Compelling Retail and Commercial Uses: A retail sector that fully serves the needs of all Indio residents, offering both quality every-day and specialty retail uses at locations throughout the City.
  - While Indio's numerous shopping centers offer a wide range of retail and commercial businesses typical of most California cities, the Downtown offers a distinctive setting for unique retail shops, restaurants, art galleries and entertainment venues that define the culture and character of Indio for local and regional shoppers and international visitors. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to accommodate and grow these uses.
- Efficient Use of Infrastructure: A well-planned and smartly-developed City that grows in concert with its ability to provide services.
  - Downtown is where Indio was established, as a small rural town centered on a railroad depot. With its original block structure and most of its street network still intact, and in need of refreshing/landscaping, it represents a unique opportunity to restore and update Indio's oldest and most elegant core of sustainable infrastructure.

### Phasing

It is anticipated that the implementation of the Specific Plan would occur over a period of several years based upon market conditions. While the Specific Plan does not specify a horizon year, this EIR utilizes a Plan horizon year of 2035 for cumulative impact analyses (air quality, greenhouse gases, noise).

## 3.5 Agreements, Permits, and Approvals

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15121, an EIR is primarily an informational document intended to inform the public agency decision makers and the public of the potentially significant environmental effects of a project.

The lead agency is the public agency with the primary responsibility for approving a project. Responsible Agencies (public agencies that have a level of discretionary approval over some component of a project) may rely upon the EIR prepared by the lead agency (14 CCR §15096). As set forth in Section 15124(d) of

the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Indio is the lead agency, and the responsible and trustee agencies listed below are expected to use the information in this Program EIR for consideration of approvals related to and involved in implementing the Specific Plan. Permits and other approvals required to implement the Project are identified. As noted above, it is the intent that this Program EIR will be used by agencies in their consideration of approval of required subsequent permits and approvals.

The Indio City Council is responsible for certification of the Final EIR as set forth in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15090 based on the standards for adequacy for an EIR (CEQA Guidelines § 15151). Certification of the Final EIR precede consideration of the following discretionary actions by the City:

- ***Indio Downtown Specific Plan*.** Adoption of the Specific Plan by the City Council by Ordinance; adoption of the Specific Plan Design Guidelines by Resolution.
- ***General Plan Amendment*.** Amendment to the General Plan by the City Council to change the boundaries of the Specific Plan; amendment by Resolution.
- ***Zone Change*.** Approval by the City Council to change the Specific Plan area boundaries on the Indio Zoning Map; approval by Ordinance.
- ***Interim Design Standards.*** Approval by the City Council to adopt interim design standards for the regulation of existing and future development within the boundaries of the Specific Plan; approval by Ordinance.

Subsequent activities would be examined in light of the Final Program EIR to determine whether additional CEQA documentation would be required pursuant to the requirements of Section 21166 of CEQA (i.e., *Public Resources Code* § 21166) and Sections 15162 and 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines (i.e., 14 CCR) for subsequent approvals including but not limited to the following:

- Site Plans
- Conditional Use Permits
- Tentative Parcel or Tract Maps and Master Plans
- Grading Permits
- Building Permits
- Water Quality Plans
- Particulate Matter 10 ($PM_{10}$) Plans
- Encroachment Permits

The Program EIR also provides environmental information to responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other public agencies that may be required to grant approvals and permits or coordinate with the City of Indio as a part of Specific Plan implementation.

# 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The City of Indio determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The environmental issues identified by the City for assessment in the Program EIR are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Each environmental issue is addressed in a separate section of the Program EIR, and is organized into the sections, as follows:

- **Introduction**: Provides an introduction of the resource with respect to the Downtown Specific Plan Project.
- **Existing Conditions:** Describes the physical conditions that exist at the time of the completion of the Notice of Preparation, and that may influence or affect the environmental topic being evaluated.
- **Regulatory Setting:** Provides local, State and federal laws and regulations, the City of Indio General Plan (General Plan) goals and policies that apply to the topic being analyzed.
- **Significance Threshold:** Provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance, which are the criteria in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Environmental Checklist. Sources used include the CEQA Guidelines; local, State, federal, or other standards applicable to an impact category; and officially established significance thresholds. "*…An ironclad definition of significant effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting."* (CEQA Guidelines § 15064[b]). Principally, *"…a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance"* constitutes a significant impact (CEQA Guidelines § 15382).
- **Impacts and Mitigation Program:** Discusses the impacts of the project in each category, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts; presents the determination of the level of significance; and provides a discussion of the mitigation program to reduce any identified impacts.

  The *Level of Significance* identifies the impacts that will remain after the application of mitigation measures, if applicable, and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When these impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant, they are identified as "significant and unavoidable impacts."
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impacts:** Describes impacts that would be significant, but cannot be feasibly mitigated to less than significant, so would be unavoidable. To approve a project with unavoidable significant impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the lead agency is required to balance the benefits of

a project against its unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of a project are found to outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered "acceptable" and the project approved (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093[a]).

To assist reviewers in understanding this Program EIR, the following terms are defined:

- *Project* means the whole of an action that has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.
- *Environment* means the physical conditions that exist in the area and which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved is where significant direct or indirect impacts would occur as a result of the project. The environment includes both natural and man-made (artificial) conditions.
- *Impacts* analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change. Impacts are:
  - Direct or primary impacts that would be caused by a proposed project and would occur at the same time and place; or
  - Indirect or secondary impacts that would be caused by a proposed project and would be later in time or farther removed in distance but would still be reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary impacts may include growth-inducing impacts and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use; population density or growth rate; and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.
- *Significant impact on the environment* means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions in the area affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself is not considered a significant impact on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.
- *Mitigation* consists of measures that avoid or substantially reduce a proposed project's significant environmental impacts by:
  - Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
  - Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or
  - Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.
- *Cumulative impacts* are two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts. The following statements also apply when considering cumulative impacts:
  - The individual impacts may be changes resulting from a single project or separate projects.

- The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over time.

This EIR uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows:

- *Less than Significant*. An impact that is adverse but that does not exceed the defined thresholds of significance. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- *Less than Significant with Mitigation*. An impact that exceeds the defined thresholds of significance and would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Mitigation measures are required to eliminate the impact or reduce it to a less than significant level.
- *Significant and Unavoidable*. An impact that exceeds the defined thresholds of significance and cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures.

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# 4.1 AESTHETICS

### *4.1.1 Introduction*

This section of the EIR evaluates the potential for the proposed project to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Specific Plan area and its surroundings through changes in the existing landscape. Potential effects are evaluated relative to important visual features (e.g., scenic features, scenic resources, and historic structures) and the existing visual landscape and its users.

Degradation of the visual character of a site is usually addressed through a qualitative evaluation of the changes to the aesthetic characteristics of the existing environment and any project-related modifications that would alter the visual setting. Because a person's reaction and attachment to a given viewshed are often subjective, visual changes inherently affect viewers differently. Accordingly, aesthetics analysis or visual resource analysis is a systematic process to logically assess visible change in the physical environment and the anticipated viewer response to that change.

### *4.1.2 Existing Conditions*

#### Regional Conditions

The Specific Plan area is within an established urbanized part of Indio in the eastern Coachella Valley. The Coachella Valley is defined as a low and relatively flat desert basin bordered by mountainous terrain. The mountain ranges include the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains to the southwest and west and the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast. Mountain elevations range from 3,000 to 9,000 feet above mean sea level (msl), with peaks such as San Gorgonio peak reaching elevations of more than 11,000 feet above msl. The overall valley gradient is from northwest to southeast, gently sloping from the San Gorgonio Pass (approximately 2,600 feet above msl) on the northwest to the Salton Sea with a surface elevation of approximately 220 feet below msl.

#### Specific Plan Area Conditions

The Specific Plan area includes a mix of older and newer commercial, residential, institutional, and industrial development. Located on the Coachella Valley floor, the Specific Plan area has flat terrain. Mountainous areas are several miles from the Specific Plan area. Depending on the location within the Specific Plan area, background views are available of the Little San Bernardino Mountains located approximately 16 miles to the north/northeast within the Joshua Tree National Park, and of the Santa Rosa Mountains located approximately 19 miles to the south/southwest. The Orocopia Mountains and the Chocolate Mountains are located over 25 and 40 miles, respectively, southeast of the Specific Plan area. Views of these mountainous areas from roadways and existing vacant lots are often obscured by existing development.

Commercial uses are generally concentrated east of King Street and along SR-111. Storefront retail is primarily along Fargo Street and numerous small-scale retail centers are located along Indio Boulevard and SR-111. Auto-related commercial uses are located along Jackson Street. Business and medical offices are located primarily along Oasis Street. Manufacturing uses are in the northwest portion of the Specific Plan area. The Civic Center and the College of the Desert are in the central part of the Specific Plan area, with other public and institutional uses predominately on the west side of the Specific Plan area. Multi-family residential uses are concentrated west of Oasis Street. Single-family residences are concentrated between Deglet Noor

Street and Oasis Street, south of Bliss Avenue, and north of Saidy Avenue. There are other single-family homes scattered throughout the Specific Plan area.

Approximately nineteen (19) percent of the Specific Plan area, concentrated east of Towne Street, is vacant land. Most of the vacant parcels are dirt, although some City-owned vacant parcels are currently being used as green spaces or parking. Buildings in the Specific Plan area are primarily single story; however a notable exception is the College of the Desert building, which is four-stories. Parking within the Specific Plan area is provided in surface parking lots and on-street parking.

Existing sources of light and glare in the Specific Plan area are found mostly near the commercial centers and produce light and glare from parking lots, signs, and street lamps. Major roads throughout the area also produce light and glare from street lamps, signalized intersections, and vehicle headlights. The majority of glare impacts emanate from building reflections from windows and parked vehicles.

### *4.1.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

There are no federal programs or regulations applicable to the project.

#### State of California

##### California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

The California Scenic Highway Program preserves and protects scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish their aesthetic value. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) designates scenic highway corridors and establishes those highways that are eligible for the program. The program was created in 1963 with the enactment of the State Scenic Highways Law. The Street and Highway Code includes a list of those highways that are either eligible for designation or are designated (California Scenic Highway Mapping System 2012). No state-designated scenic highways exist within or near the Specific Plan area (Caltrans 2011). The closest scenic route eligible under the state scenic highway program is Highway 111 north of the Salton Sea, approximately 15 miles southeast of the Planning Area.

#### Local

##### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The City's plans for future residential development in the Specific Plan area have been established in the General Plan and the Specific Plan, and provide for an intensification of multi-story mixed-use urban development that would allow high intensity development, with up to 50 dwelling units per acre and floor acre ratios (FAR) of up to 2.0.

**Chapter 3 - Land Use Element**

**Policies**

**LU-1.4 Connecting New and Old.** Connect new growth areas with existing Indio neighborhoods through transportation investments, open space connectivity, wayfinding, and urban design strategies.

**LU-3.1 Streetscape Design.** Create pedestrian-oriented streetscapes by establishing a unified approach to street tree planting, sidewalk dimensions and maintenance, pedestrian amenities, and high-quality building frontages.

**LU-4.1 Quality Design.** Use simple, urban building forms made with permanent materials with high-quality detailing that stands the test of time.

**LU-4.2 Scale and Articulation.** Use building organization and construction to derive scale and articulation rather than surface ornamentation.

**LU-4.3 Building Materials.** Convey façade articulation through the strength, depth, and permanence of building materials. Thinner cladding materials, such as stucco, stone and masonry veneers, and wood or simulated wood, may be used when finished to appear as durable and authentic of the materials they simulate.

**LU-4.4 Building Entrances.** Use visual and physical design cues within a building's design and entries to emphasize the building entrance and connections to public spaces.

**LU-4.5 Iconic Design.** Allow iconic and memorable building designs, particularly on larger non-residential properties.

**LU-4.6 Climate-Appropriate Design.** Encourage the use of building techniques and materials that relate to Indio's warm and dry desert climate. Promote solar control and use of shade in building design and associated pedestrian amenities.

**LU-4.7 Protect Visual Characteristics.** Protect Indio's unique visual characteristics and views.

**LU-6.7 Compatible Scale.** Maintain high-quality existing residential neighborhoods by ensuring new development projects and infill construction are of a compatible scale and provide adequate transitions to adjacent residential properties.

**LU-8.3 Resort Connectivity and Streetscape.** Require streetscape design and street connectivity be consistent with the character and standards identified by the General Plan placetype in which the resort parcel or project is located. Pedestrian access to perimeter streets or adjoining neighborhoods or districts should be provided approximately every 600 feet to encourage walking, biking, or equestrian activity.

**Chapter 8 – Conservation Element**

**Policies**

**CE-4.2 Heritage Trees.** Support the conservation of heritage trees, or trees that are recognized as unique due to their age, rarity, and large size as well as their aesthetic, botanical, ecological, and historic value.

**CE-7.6 Native Plants.** Incorporate native desert plant materials into new development projects to the extent possible and feasible.

**CE-8.1 Site Plan Review.** Ensure adequate site plan review and mitigation measures are implemented for the development of sites with the potential to contain historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources.

**CE-8.2 Avoidance of Impacts to Historic Resources.** For projects that could affect historic resources, ensure adequate study to identify eligible resources and project-level review to avoid or lessen negative impacts through conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

**Chapter 9 – Infrastructure and Public Facilities Element**

**Policies**

**IE-5.4** **Visual Impacts.** Power and other transmission towers, cellular communication towers, and other viewshed intrusions shall be designed and sited to minimize environmental hazards and visual impacts.

### City of Indio Municipal Code

Zoning regulations are provided in Chapter 159 of the City Municipal Code. The regulations provide general development standards for each of the zoning classifications including architecture and outdoor lighting requirements. The City's zoning regulations were adopted to achieve certain objectives. With respect to aesthetics, one of the objectives is to "Ensure adequate consideration for urban design in the development process so that new development enhances the city as it matures".

Chapter 98.09 of the Municipal Code designates heritage trees as any trees within the City's easements or on City-owned property, which have been found to be of significance to the community or of notable historic interest and are so designated by action of the Community Services Commission. The tree ordinance protects heritage trees, and allows for their removal only when the public interest served by removal outweighs the value of preservation and heritage status. Additionally, Chapter 98.09 prohibits the cutting, damaging, carving, transplanting, pruning, or root pruning of any public tree, unless a permit has been issued. Tree topping, heading back, stubbing, or pollarding of public trees is also prohibited.

Chapter 159.665 of the Municipal Code sets requirements for the distribution, installation irrigation, and maintenance of landscaping. Basic requirements include, but are not limited to, development restrictions on the amount of landscaping space, type and location of plant materials, frequency of maintenance activities, and adherence to water efficiency standards.

### County of Riverside Ordinance 655

County of Riverside Ordinance 655 "Regulating Light Pollution" is intended to restrict the permitted use of certain light fixtures emitting into the night sky undesirable light rays which have a detrimental effect on astronomical observation and research. Ordinance 655 defines the zones where light pollution could impact Palomar Observatory: Zone A is within 15 miles; Zone B is between 15 and 45 miles of the observatory. The Specific Plan area is located approximately 45 miles from the Palomar Observatory and is within the County-recognized limit of concern and regulation.

## *4.1.4 Significance Threshold Criteria*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

c) Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime

views in the area?

As previously discussed in Section 1.6.1, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the project would not have a significant impact pertaining to thresholds a and b since there are no designated scenic vistas or scenic highways in or adjacent to the Specific Plan. All other thresholds are discussed in detail in this section.

### *4.1.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

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| **Threshold c** | Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? |

**Impact AES-1** **ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS THAT INTEND TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE SCENIC QUALITY OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA. THROUGH REQUIRED ADHERENCE TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND CITY'S GENERAL PLAN AND CITY MUNICIPAL CODE, IMPACTS TO SCENIC QUALITY WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The proposed Downtown Specific Plan would allow for the reuse of existing structures and development of vacant parcels with residential, commercial, manufacturing, and public land uses. These land uses currently exist within the Specific Plan area. The proposed Specific Plan would also facilitate and encourage residential mixed- use development, commercial/retail areas, and transit-oriented development proximate to the Indio Transportation Center. The proposed Downtown Specific Plan encourages the preservation of the City's historic core and allows creativity in new infill development that is compatible with the character of the area which the overall community would like to preserve and perpetuate. The proposed Interim Development Standards are intended to promote high quality design and to promote the implementation of new development and the rehabilitation of existing structures.

Future development projects could result in short-term visual impacts during construction activities. Views of a site during construction would include heavy equipment and machinery preparing the land (i.e., grading) and eventually the construction of new buildings. Dust may temporarily diminish views of the area during grading and other construction activities. Any construction impacts associated with individual development projects in the Specific Plan area would be temporary in nature and would be typical of projects located in an urban environment with surrounding development. Construction activities would be required to comply with the proposed Specific Plan and associated Interim Development Standards, the City's General Plan, and the City's Municipal Code requirements, as applicable. Therefore, these impacts would be expected to be less than significant.

Ongoing development in the Specific Plan area would alter the existing visual character and quality of the area. While the aesthetics of a project can be subjective, future development projects in the Specific Plan area would be required to comply with the proposed Development Code. All projects would be required to adhere to applicable development standards and requirements established by the Specific Plan, which include building heights, setbacks, massing, and densities. In addition, the development regulations will establish restrictions and standards for parking, street design, open spaces, signage, and architecture. Individual projects would also be subject to design review by the City as well as consistency review to ensure individual projects adhere to the development restrictions set for the by applicable development regulations. Development projects would also be required to comply with the City of Indio General Plan. Therefore, future development in the Specific Plan area would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations regarding impacting scenic resources, historical resources, or reducing scenic quality. By

complying with the proposed Specific Plan and its associated development standards, the General Plan, and the City's Municipal Code, implementation of the Specific Plan Project would maintain or improve the visual character and quality of the area.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

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| **Threshold d** | Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? |

**Impact AES-2** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT AND GLARE COMPARED TO EXISTING CONDITIONS. ALL DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, AS WELL AS CITY MUNICIPAL CODE REGULATIONS THAT GOVERN LIGHT AND GLARE. WITH INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AES-1 THROUGH AES-3, ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD BE REVIEWED FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The Specific Plan area and surrounding area are characterized as a long established and diverse urban environment with a mix of commercial, office, industrial, institutional, and residential uses. Sources of lighting include streetlights, signage, and on-building and freestanding security lighting. Future development projects within the Specific Plan area would have the potential to create new sources of light and glare from interior and exterior lighting sources, and glare from reflection of sunlight off windows and other reflective building surfaces, and street lighting. Although the Specific Plan area currently includes buildings, parking areas, green spaces and street lighting, the implementation of the Specific Plan is intended to facilitate new development, including the conversion of parcels to create a more cohesive downtown urban setting to new development. The addition of buildings in areas that are undeveloped would result in new sources of light and glare consistent with that found in an urban area.

Building and site plans for future development projects within the Specific Plan area would be subject to City review to determine the potential for light and glare. New sources of light would include additional outdoor lighting, such as building signage and interior building light sources. Outdoor lighting would be needed for safety and security but can be limited in location and intensity.

All development projects in the proposed Specific Plan area would also be required to comply with policies of the City's General Plan and City Municipal Code standards, as applicable. These include the City's outdoor lighting regulations (Title XV, Land Usage, Chapter Section 159, Zoning Regulations), which address the placement of outdoor lighting, the application of shielding, and other regulations to protect against excess lighting levels and glare. The proposed Specific Plan development regulations provide guidance for new lighting, such as using low-level decorative lighting to provide appropriate nighttime visibility for safety and pedestrian movement, using down-directed, exterior lighting as part of the overall architectural style of the building, discouraging lighting of full facades or roofs, and ensuring that lighting would not produce glare or spill over onto adjacent properties. Other new sources of glare are typically related to the use of highly reflective surfaces including mirrored and tinted glass materials, and broad, flat surfaces that are painted with highly reflective colors. The potential for reflective glare would be limited with the use of sunscreens in the facades to shade windows from direct sunlight to the degree practicable. To ensure light and glare impacts from new development projects are minimized, Mitigation Measures

AES-1 through AES-3 have been incorporated. These measures would ensure that proposals undergo review of site lighting and that new development projects utilize low reflective materials and surfaces.

Light pollution, also known as “sky glow”, is an adverse effect of man-made light. The term is often used to denote urban sky glow (brightening of the night sky due to man-made lighting) but also includes glare (intense and blinding light) and light trespass (light falling where it is not wanted or needed; spill light). In many cases, sky glow is visible from great distances, particularly in evenings when there is moisture in the air. Minute water droplets in the evening air reflect and scatter light into the atmosphere.

The County of Riverside Ordinance 655 “Regulating Light Pollution” defines zones where light pollution could impact the Mount Palomar Observatory. Zone A is within a 15-mile radius of the observatory and Zone B is defined as the circular ring area forty-five (45) miles in radius centered on Palomar Observatory between 15 and 45 miles of the observatory. The western portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area lies within 45-mile radius. Development in the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area would be required to adhere to Riverside County regulations pertaining to the shielding and direction of light to minimize night sky impacts. Through adherence to the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy, as well as Chapter 159.107 of the Municipal Code, exterior lamination devices, and exterior lighting would be shielded or partially shielded in order to minimize undesirable light into the night sky.

### Mitigation Measures

In order to reduce the amount of light and glare from new development projects, Mitigation Measures AES-1 through AES-3 have been incorporated which ensure that new development proposals undergo review of site lighting and that new development projects utilize low reflective materials and surfaces.

**AES-1** Project applicants shall submit plans as part of the design review submittal to the City of Indio identifying all potentially reflective building materials and surfaces and demonstrate how these materials and surfaces shall be painted or otherwise treated to minimize reflectivity, except as necessary to achieve desired green building objectives. All glass used on external building walls shall be low-reflectivity.

**AES-2** Development plans shall be reviewed to assure their substantial compliance with the basic design parameters set forth in the Indio Downtown/Old Town Specific Plan and individual project architectural plans package.

**AES-3** Prior to the issuance of grading and building permits, the landscaping palette and design, as well as lighting elements for the development project, shall be reviewed for conformance with the Indio Downtown Specific Plan architectural design and the specific project’s responsiveness to design issues raised during individual project review.

### Significance after Mitigation

With incorporation of mitigation measures AES-1 through AES-3, all development proposals in the Specific Plan area would be reviewed for consistency with the Development Code regulations, ensuring that light and glare is minimized. Impacts would be less than significant.

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| **Cumulative** | Would the project contribute to cumulative aesthetics related impacts? |

**Impact AES-3** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SINCE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT AND GLARE IN THE AREA. ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO ZONING REQUIREMENTS, AS WELL AS ADHERE TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROTECTING VISUAL QUALITY AND REDUCING LIGHT AND GLARE. THE PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO AESTHETIC IMPACTS WOULD NOT BE CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE.**

Future development projects in the cumulative scenario would steadily increase the amount of light and glare in the City. In addition, the development proposals in the vicinity of the area would continue to contribute to the urbanized and built out character of the City. As with the Specific Plan, development would primarily consist of infill on vacant and underutilized parcels. Infill development of this nature would primarily be consistent with the visual character of surrounding structures and may improve the existing visual character by introducing improvements such as landscaping and streetscape that may not present.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would not alter the character of the Specific Plan area, but all future development projects in and outside of the Specific Plan area would be required to adhere to applicable development regulations. Future development projects would increase the amount of light and glare in the Specific Plan area; however with the implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 through AES-3, all projects would be substantially reviewed by the City in conformance with the Development Code regulations for reducing light and glare. Each development project in the Specific Plan area would be required to comply with policies and regulations set out by the proposed Specific Plan and associated development standards, the City's General Plan, the City's Municipal Code, and the County of Riverside's Ordinance 655 regulating light pollution. Compliance with the existing policies, plans, and regulations would ensure that proposed future development in the surrounding areas would be compatible with the urban development of the City. Therefore, even though the Specific Plan Project would contribute to cumulative impacts related to new development and increased light and glare, the Specific Plan's cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

### Mitigation Measures

To minimize the project's contribution to cumulative light and glare impacts, Mitigation Measures AES-1 through AES-3 would be required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

# 4.2 AIR QUALITY

## 4.2.1 Introduction

This section evaluates short and long-term air quality impacts associated with the implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan and describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for air quality. Mitigation measures are also included to avoid or lessen the Downtown Specific Plan's impacts.

## 4.2.2 Existing Conditions

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has divided California into regional air basins according to geographical and meteorological features. The Specific Plan area is in the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB) and is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD is responsible for air quality management in the Riverside County portion of the SSAB, including establishment of air quality measurement criteria and management policies. New development in the SSAB is subject to SCAQMD's Air Quality Management Plan and the 2003 Coachella Valley $PM_{10}$ State Implementation Plan (2003 CVPM$_{10}$ SIP), as amended.

Regional air quality, particularly for ozone ($O_3$) and particulate matter (PM), is measured at monitoring stations in Indio and at the Palm Springs International Airport. Historically, the Coachella Valley has been classified as "non-attainment" for both $O_3$ and particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter ($PM_{10}$). Ozone attainment is a regional concern and is dependent on improving air quality in the SSAB. To reach "attainment" for $PM_{10}$, the 2003 Coachella Valley $PM_{10}$ Management Plan (Management Plan) was adopted, which established strict standards for dust management for development projects. Individual projects are required to comply with the Management Plan, including the implementing dust management plans during construction.

Temperatures in the Specific Plan area regularly exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) during the summer and can drop below 20°F during the winter. During fall and winter months, climatic conditions associated with high pressure systems from the north can conflict with low pressure systems to the south to create a condition known as the Santa Ana winds, which can blow for multiple days at high speeds. These strong winds sweep up, suspend and transport large quantities of sand and dust, reducing visibility, damaging property and constituting a significant health threat. During spring and summer, strong onshore breezes blow through the San Gorgonio Pass and kick up strong winds throughout the Coachella Valley, especially along the I-10 corridor.

The SSAB, inclusive of the Specific Plan area, is susceptible to air inversions which trap a layer of stagnant air near the ground where it can be further loaded with pollutants. Due to local climactic conditions, inversions generally occur 6,000 to 8,000 feet above the desert surface. These occasional inversions create conditions of haziness caused by moisture, suspended dust, and a variety of chemical aerosols emitted by trucks and automobiles, furnaces and other sources. During the past few decades, the region has experienced a decline in air quality resulting from increased development and population growth, traffic, construction activities, and various site disturbances. Increasing air emissions from nearby air basins, particularly the South Coast Air Basin, have also led to poorer air quality in the Coachella Valley.

### Pollutants

Pollutants that affect air quality are generally classified as either primary or secondary pollutants. Primary pollutants are a direct consequence of energy production and utilization, typically affect only local areas,

and do not undergo chemical modification or further dispersion. Primary sources and their pollutants are mostly a direct consequence of the combustion of petroleum and other fuels resulting in the production of oxides of carbon, sulphur, nitrogen and a number of reactive hydrocarbons and suspended particulates.

Secondary pollutants are those that undergo chemical changes after emission. Secondary pollutants disperse and undergo chemical changes under conditions of high ambient temperatures and high rates of solar insulation. Principal secondary pollutants are termed oxidants and include $O_3$, peroxynitrates, nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$), and chemical aerosols.

*Ozone*

Ozone ($O_3$), commonly known as smog, is formed primarily when byproducts of combustion react in the presence of ultraviolet sunlight. This process takes place in the atmosphere where oxides of nitrogen combine with reactive organic gases (ROG), such as hydrocarbons, in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is a pungent, colorless, toxic gas, and a common component of photochemical smog. Most ozone pollutants are transported inland by coastal winds from the Los Angeles and Riverside/San Bernardino portions of the South Coast Air Basin, thereby contributing to occasionally high ozone concentrations in the area.

Exposure to ozone can result in diminished breathing capacity, increased sensitivity to infections, and inflammation of the lung tissue. Children and people with pre-existing lung disease are most susceptible to the effects of ozone. Ozone can also cause extensive damage to vegetation. Studies have indicated that leaf drop, stunted growth, burnt tissues, and fewer seeds produced are defects directly resulting from elevated ozone levels.

*Carbon monoxide*

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas and a byproduct from the partial combustion of fossil fuels, most notably from automobiles and other motor vehicles. Carbon monoxide passes through the lungs directly into the blood stream, reducing the amount of oxygen reaching the vital organs, such as the heart, brain and tissues. In high concentrations, carbon monoxide can contribute to the development of heart disease, anemia, and impaired psychological behavior. Individuals that have heart and blood diseases, smokers, babies in utero, and people with chronic hypoxemia are most susceptible to the effects of CO.

*Nitrogen dioxide*

Nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$) is formed as a byproduct of combustion, thermal power stations, and pulp mills. Nitrogen dioxide acts as the primary receptor of ultraviolet light initiating the photochemical reactions to produce smog. Exposure to nitrogen dioxide can result in airway constriction and diminish lung capacity in healthy individuals.

*Sulfur dioxide*

Sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$) results from the combustion of high-sulfur content fuels, such as coal and petroleum. Sources include motor vehicle fuel combustion, chemical manufacturing plants, and sulfur recovery plants. Sulfur dioxide is a colorless, pungent, extremely irritating gas that can result in airway constriction and severe breathing difficulties in asthmatics. High levels of exposure can cause fluid accumulation in the lungs, damage to lung tissue, and sloughing off cells lining the respiratory tract.

*Particulate matter*

Particulate matter ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$) consists of fine suspended particles of ten microns or smaller in

diameter, which are byproducts of road dust, sand, diesel soot, windstorms, and the abrasion of tires and brakes. Fine particulate matter poses a substantial threat to public health. The elderly, children and adults with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease are most susceptible to the effects of particulate matter. More than half the smallest suspended particles can be inhaled and deposited in the lungs, resulting in permanent lung damage. Elevated $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$ levels are also associated with an increase in mortality rates, respiratory infections, occurrences and severity of asthma attacks and hospital admissions.

*Lead*

Lead (Pb) occurs in the atmosphere as particulate matter resulting from the manufacturing of batteries, paint, ink, and ammunition. In recent years, the elimination of leaded gasoline has reduced hazards associated with airborne lead. Exposure to lead can result in anemia, kidney disease, gastrointestinal dysfunction, and neuromuscular and neurological disorders. Babies in utero, infants, and children have increased health risks from exposure to lead and can impact the central nervous system and cause learning disorders.

*Sulfate*

Sulfate ($SO_4$) related health impacts are similar to those described under particulate matter and sulfur dioxide above.

*Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)/Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)*

ROG are also known as Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). This class of pollutants has no State or federal ambient air quality standards and is not classified as criteria pollutants. However, they are regulated because they are responsible for contributing to the formation of ozone. They also contribute to higher $PM_{10}$ levels because they transform into organic aerosols when released into the atmosphere. ROG pose a health threat when people are exposed to high concentrations. Benzene, for example, is a hydrogen component of ROG emissions known to be a carcinogen.

### Air Quality Standards

State and federal ambient air quality standards for primary and secondary pollutants are shown in Table 4.2-1. State standards are generally more restrictive than federal standards.

The Coachella Valley and the city of Indio are classified as “serious” non-attainment for ozone and have historically been classified as “serious” non-attainment for the federal 24-hour average $PM_{10}$. The Coachella Valley is currently designated attainment/unclassified for $PM_{2.5}$, and does not exceed State or federal standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxides, sulfur dioxide, or other criteria pollutants.

## Table 4.2-1 National and California Ambient Air Quality Standards

| Pollutant | Averaging Time | California Standards[1] | | Federal Standards[2] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Concentration[3] | Method[4] | Primary[3,5] | Secondary[3,6] | Method[7] |
| Ozone ($O_3$) | 1 Hour | 0.09 ppm (180 µg/m$^3$) | Ultraviolet Photometry | -- | Same as Primary Standard | Ultraviolet Photometry |
| | 8 Hour | 0.070 ppm (137 µg/m$^3$) | | 0.075 ppm (147 µg/m$^3$) | | |
| Respirable Particulate Matter ($PM_{10}$)[8] | 24 Hour | 50 µg/m$^3$ | Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation | 150 µg/m3 | Same as Primary Standard | Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis |
| | Annual Arithmetic Mean | 20 µg/m$^3$ | | -- | | |
| Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)[8] | 24 Hour | -- | -- | 35 µg/m3 | Same as Primary Standard | Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis |
| | Annual Arithmetic Mean | 12 µg/m3 | Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation | 12.0 µg/m3 | | |
| Carbon Monoxide (CO) | 1 Hour | 20 ppm (23 mg/m3) | Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR) | 35 ppm (40 mg/m3) | -- | Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR) |
| | 8 Hour | 9.0 ppm (10 mg/m3) | | 9 ppm (10 mg/m3) | -- | |
| | 8 Hour (Lake Tahoe) | 6 ppm (7 mg/m3) | | -- | -- | |
| Nitrogen Dioxide ($NO_2$)[9] | 1 Hour | 0.18 ppm (339 µg/m3) | Gas Phase Chemiluminescen ce | 100 ppb (188µg/m3) | -- | Gas Phase Chemiluminescence |
| | Annual Arithmetic Mean | 0.030 ppm (57 µg/m3) | | 53 ppb (100 µg/m3) | Same as Primary Standard | |
| Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[10] | 1 Hour | 0.25 ppm (655 µg/m3) | Ultraviolet Fluorescence | 75 ppb (196 µg/m3) | -- | Ultraviolet Flourescence; Spectrophotometry (ParaosaniSline Method) |
| | 3 Hour | -- | | -- | 0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m3) | |
| | 24 Hour | 0.04 ppm (105 µg/m3) | | 0.14 ppm (for certain areas)[10] | -- | |
| | Annual Arithmetic Mean | -- | | 0.30 ppm (for certain areas)[10] | -- | |
| Lead[11, 12] (Pb) | 30 Day Average | 1.5 µg/m3 | Atomic Absorption | -- | -- | High Volume Sampler and Atomic Absorption |
| | Calendar Quarter | -- | | 1.5 µg/m3 (for certain areas)[12] | Same as Primary Standard | |
| | Rolling 3- Month Average10 | -- | | 0.15 µg/m3 | | |
| Visibility Reducing Particles[13] | 8 Hour | See footnote 13 | Beta Attenuation and Transmittance through Filter Tape | No National **Standards** | | |
| Sulfates | 24 Hour | 25 µg/m3 | Ion Chromatography | | | |
| Hydrogen Sulfide | 1 Hour | 0.03 ppm (42 µg/m3) | Ultraviolet Fluorescence | | | |
| Vinyl Chloride[11] | 24 Hour | 0.01 ppm (26 µg/m3) | Gas Chromatography | | | |

Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the nation standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulate matter ($PM_{10}$, $PM_{2.5}$, and visibility reducing particles), are values that are not to be exceeded. All other are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

2 National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than

once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration measured at each site in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For $PM_{10}$, the 24-hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 µg/m$^3$ is equal to or less than one. For $PM_{2.5}$, the 24-hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the U.S. EPA for further clarification and current national policies.

[3] Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parentheses are based upon a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr; ppm in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.

[4] Any equivalent measurement method which can be shown to the satisfaction of the ARB to give equivalent results at or near the level of the air quality standard may be used.

[5] National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.

[6] National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.

[7] Reference method as described by the U.S. EPA. An "equivalent method" of measurement may be used but must have a "consistent relationship to the reference method" and must be approved by the U.S. EPA.

[8] On December 14, 2012, the national annual $PM_{2.5}$ primary standard was lowered from 15 µg/m$^3$ to 12.0 µg/m$^3$. The existing national 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ standards (primary and secondary) were retained at 35 µg/m$^3$, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 µg/m$^3$. The existing 24-hour $PM_{10}$ standards (primary and secondary) of 150 µg/m$^3$ also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over three years.

[9] To attain the 1-hour natilan standard, the three-year average of the annual 98$^{th}$ percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.

[10] On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour $SO_2$ standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1- hour national standard, the three-year average of the annual 99$^{th}$ percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971 $SO_2$ national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved.

[11] The ARB has identified lead and vinyl chloride as 'toxic air contaminants' with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.

[12] The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008 to a rolling three-month average. The 1978 lead standard (1.5 µg/m$^3$ as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.

[13] In 1989, the ARB converted both the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard and the Lake Tahoe 30-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which are "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" and "extinction of 0.07 per kilometer" for the statewide and Lake Tahoe Air Basin standards, respectively.

Source: California Air Resources Board, Ambient Air Quality Standards, 2013.

### Regional Pollutants of Concern

Air pollution in the Downtown Specific Plan area generally results from a mixture of regional activities, which may include grading, construction and vehicular traffic, as well as heating, cooling, and ventilation (HVAC) equipment. In addition, a considerable amount of pollution in the vicinity is attributable to local geographic and climatic conditions.

Suspended particulates, including $PM_{10}$ and ozone, present the major threat to local air quality and are the primary pollutants of concern in the Coachella Valley. As previously mentioned, the City of Indio is in non-attainment for ozone and particulate matter. The SCAQMD has established attainment plans for $PM_{10}$ and ozone.

### $PM_{10}$ Emissions

Natural sand migration, a process referred to as "blowsand," generates two types of $PM_{10}$ emissions: (1) natural $PM_{10}$, which is produced by direct particle erosion and fragmentation, and (2) secondary $PM_{10}$, whereby sand deposited on roadways is further pulverized by motor vehicles, then re-suspended in the air by those vehicles. The Specific Plan area is in a $PM_{10}$ non-attainment area for both federal and State standards.

Historically, $PM_{10}$ levels in the Coachella Valley are elevated due to fugitive dust emissions from grading

and construction activities, agricultural practices, and strong wind. SCAQMD employs effective measures to reduce particulate matter in the SCAQMD, sets forth new measures that could further reduce particulate matter, and lists those new measures that need further evaluation prior to implementation. In addition, applicable State code and SCAQMD Rules, including Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust), enforce fugitive dust compliance.

Because of SCAQMD's measures, $PM_{10}$ emissions continue to show decreasing levels. New regulations, including U.S. EPA's Treatment of Data Influenced by Exceptional Events Rule, have also allowed exclusion of $PM_{10}$ exceedances during "exceptional event" periods. Exceptional events include high wind or storm events. As a result of declining $PM_{10}$ levels, the CARB approved the Coachella Valley $PM_{10}$ Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan on February 25, 2010 to redesignate $PM_{10}$ from serious non-attainment to attainment based on federal standards. However, the U.S. EPA has not approved the redesignation.

#### $PM_{2.5}$ Emissions

Federal and State standards have been developed to regulate fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter. To achieve federal attainment, a jurisdiction must provide the U.S. EPA with air quality monitoring data that does not violate the fine particle standards over a three-year period. In March 2007, the U.S. EPA issued the Clean Air Fine Particle Implementation Rule, which describes the framework and requirements that State and local governments must achieve in developing their $PM_{2.5}$ implementation plans. The Rule requires that states meet the $PM_{2.5}$ standards by 2010, but may grant attainment extensions of up to 5 years. Therefore, the 2007 Rule requires that all states meet federal standards for attainment no later than 2015. The Coachella Valley is defined as attainment for $PM_{2.5}$, based on the 2013 State Area Designations (CARB 2017) and does not require a SIP to demonstrate attainment.

#### Ozone Emissions

Although the SSAB has a history of exceeding regulatory ozone standards, the number of days and months that exceed the federal one-hour standard has dropped steadily over the past three decades. Ozone concentrations have declined over the past 30 years from a maximum of 0.45 ppm in 1979 down to 0.094 ppm in 2007. Under the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the SSAB is classified as a "serious" ozone non-attainment area for the 8-hour State standard. SCAQMD recognizes that due to the SCAB's contribution of ozone, the SSAB has asked for a reclassification of "severe-15" that must achieve attainment by June 15, 2019. Due to higher levels of ozone experienced in 2017 and 2018, SCAQMD has recommended the Coachella Valley be reclassified as "extreme" non-attainment, with a new attainment date of June 15, 2024 (SCAQMD 2019).

As previously mentioned, SCAQMD studies indicate that most ozone is transported to the SSAB from the upwind South Coast Air Basin, which contains large metropolitan areas. It is difficult to quantify the amount of ozone contributed from other air basins; however, improved air quality in the area depends upon reduced ozone emissions in the South Coast Air Basin.

### *4.2.3 Regional Air Quality*

The SCAQMD operates and maintains regional air quality monitoring stations at numerous locations throughout its jurisdiction. The Specific Plan area is located within Source Receptor Area (SRA) 30, which includes monitoring stations in Palm Springs and Indio.

The following table shows the maximum concentration and number of days the State and federal standards for ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and $PM_{10}$) were exceeded annually

between 2016 and 2018. All data was obtained from the Indio – Jackson Street monitoring station (approximately 0.5 mile south of the Planning Area), with the exception of nitrogen dioxide data, which was obtained from the Palm Springs – Fire Station monitoring station (approximately 20 miles northwest of the Planning Area).

**Table 4.2-2 Ambient Air Quality at the Indio – Jackson Street Station**

| Pollutant | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 Hour Ozone (ppm), 8-Hr Maximum | 0.089 | 0.093 | 0.091 |
| Number of days of State exceedances (>0.070)[1] | 29 | 47 | 52 |
| Number of days of federal exceedances (>0.070)[1, 2] | 27 | 44 | 49 |
| Ozone (ppm), Worst Hour[1] | 0.099 | 0.107 | 0.106 |
| Number of days of state exceedances (>0.09 ppm) | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| Number of days of federal exceedances (>0.112 ppm)[1] | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nitrogen Dioxide (ppm) - Worst Hour[3] | 0.043 | 0.043 | 0.043 |
| Number of days of state exceedances (>0.18 ppm) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of days of federal exceedances (0.10 ppm) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Particulate Matter 10 microns, µg/m$^3$, Worst 24 Hours[3] | 393.2 | 198.6 | 336.0 |
| Number of days above state standard (>50 µg/m$^3$) | 21 | 10 | 14 |
| Number of days above federal standard (>150 µg/m$^3$) | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Particulate Matter <2.5 microns, µg/m$^3$, Worst 24 Hours[2] | 25.8 | 18.8 | 28.7 |
| Number of days above federal standard (>35 µg/m$^3$) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1] Federal and state exceedances may not match reported pollutant values, as state and national statistics may be based on different sampling methodology.
[2] Federal exceedances based on 2015 8-hour ozone standard.
[3] Nitrogen dioxide is not measured at the Indio – Jackson Street Station. Therefore, data on this pollutant was obtained from the Palm Springs – Fire Station reporting station, located approximately 20 miles northwest of the Planning Area.
Source: CARB, 2016, 2017, and 2018 Annual Air Quality Data Summaries available at:
https://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/topfour/topfour1.php

### *4.2.4 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The 1977 Federal CAA and 1990 revisions require U.S. EPA to identify National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect the public health and welfare (see Table 4.2-1). In June 1997, the U.S. EPA adopted new $PM_{10}$ National standards and an additional standard for suspended particulate matter at or below $PM_{10}$ to $PM_{2.5}$. On March 12, 2008, U.S. EPA implemented an 8-hour standard for ozone. The primary 8-hour standard is 0.075 ppm, and the secondary standard is set at a form and level identical to the primary standard. The previous primary and secondary standards were an identical 8-hour standard, set at 0.08 ppm. On April 12, 2010, U.S. EPA implemented a 1-hour standard for $NO_2$ of 100 parts per billion (ppb).

Pursuant to the 1990 CAA Amendments, the U.S. EPA classified air basins (or portions thereof) as either attainment or nonattainment areas for each criteria air pollutant based on whether the NAAQS have been

achieved. The CAA also required each state to prepare an air quality control plan (SIP). The 1990 amendments additionally required states containing areas that violate NAAQS to revise their SIPs to incorporate additional control measures to reduce air pollution. EPA has the responsibility to review all SIPs to determine if they conform to the mandates of the CAA and will achieve air quality goals when implemented.

Regulation of toxic air contaminants (TACs, Hazardous Air Pollutants [HAPs] under federal regulations) is achieved through federal and state controls on individual sources. Federal law defines HAPs as non-criteria air pollutants with short-term (acute) and/or long-term (chronic or carcinogenic) adverse human health effects. The 1977 CAA required U.S. EPA to identify National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPs) to protect public health and welfare.

## State of California

### California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act (CCAA) became effective on January 1, 1989 and mandated health-based air quality standards at the state level. The CARB developed these standards which are generally more stringent than federal standards. SIPs also regulate regional air quality by requiring management districts to develop strategic plans to meet the federal and State ambient air quality standards by the deadlines specified in the federal CAA and emission targets of the CCAA.

Amendments to the CCAA established the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and a legal mandate to achieve these standards by the earliest practical date. These standards apply to the same criteria pollutants as the federal CAA; they also include sulfate, visibility-reducing particles (VRPs), hydrogen sulfide ($H_2S$), and vinyl chloride. They are also more stringent than the federal standards. The SSAB is designated as a nonattainment area for the state ozone and $PM_{10}$ standards. Concentrations of all other pollutants meet State standards.

### California Air Resources Board

CARB, a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), oversees air quality planning and control throughout California by administering the SIP. Its primary responsibility lies in ensuring implementation of the CCAA as well as responding to the federal CAA requirements and regulating emissions from motor vehicles sold in California. It also sets fuel specifications to reduce vehicular emissions further. Additionally, CARB is responsible for regulations pertaining to TACs in California.

## Regional

As previously noted, the City is located within the SSAB. The SCAQMD is responsible for establishing air quality measurement criteria and relevant management policies for the SSAB.

The SSAB is subject to the provisions of the SCAQMD Rule Book, which sets forth policies and other measures designed to help the District achieve federal and State ambient air quality standards. These rules, along with the SCAQMD's 2012 Air Quality Management Plan are intended to satisfy the planning requirements of both the federal and State Clean Air Acts. The SCAQMD also monitors daily pollutant levels and meteorological conditions throughout the SCAQMD.

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and its member cities have taken an active

role in the control and reduction of suspended particulate matter, $PM_{10}$, through the implementation of the SIP for $PM_{10}$ in the Coachella Valley. This has included assistance in the monitoring of air quality and meteorological conditions, testing a variety of mitigation strategies, coordinating programs and funding, and reporting on progress being made in reducing $PM_{10}$ levels.

### Local

#### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The City of Indio General Plan's Land Use, Mobility, Health and Equity, and Conservation Elements contain policies which are intended to identify and minimize adverse effects from air quality pollutants. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 3 – Land Use Element**

**LU-10.4** **Non-polluting Industries.** Promote development of non-polluting industries that are not major sources of air and water pollution or other negative externalities.

**LU-10.5** **Industrial Compatibility.** Where industrial uses are near existing and planned residential development, require that industrial projects be designed to limit the impact of truck traffic, air and noise pollution on sensitive receptors.

**Chapter 3 – Mobility Element**

**ME-1.3** **Projects and Phases.** Design, plan, maintain, and operate streets using complete streets principles for all types of transportation projects including design, planning, construction, maintenance, and operations of new and existing streets and facilities. This includes repurposing unneeded roadway pavement to implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements (e.g. road diets) when Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes are less than 20,000 vehicles.

**ME-8.1** **Off-Street Parking.** Require new developments to provide sufficient off-street parking (or payment in-lieu fees) to reduce on-street parking congestion and increase both auto and pedestrian safety. New development shall provide electric vehicle charging stations and preferential parking for carpools, vanpools, and alternative fuel vehicles.

**Chapter 6 - Health and Equity Element**

**HE-3.1** **Regional Air Quality Planning Efforts.** Participate in air quality planning efforts with local, regional, and State agencies that improve local air quality to protect human health and minimize the disproportionate impacts on sensitive population groups.

**HE-2.1** **Neighborhood Design.** Design neighborhoods to promote pedestrian and bicycle activity as alternatives to driving. This policy is implemented through the Land Use and Community Design Element.

**HE-3.3** **Construction Pollution.** Reduce particulate emissions from paved and unpaved roads, construction activities, and agricultural operations.

**HE-3.4** **Sensitive-Receptor Uses.** Discourage development of sensitive land uses – defined as schools, hospitals, residences, and elder and childcare facilities – near air pollution sources that pose health risks – including freeways and polluting industrial sites.

**HE-3.5** **Truck Routes.** Designate truck routes to avoid sensitive land uses, where feasible.

**HE-3.6** **Smoke-Free.** Encourage smoke-free and Vape-free workplaces, multi-family housing,

parks, and other outdoor gathering places to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.

**HE-3.7** **Public Education.** Provide educational information about air quality issues and their health effects, including best practices for reducing and/or eliminating sources of indoor air pollution.

**HE-3.10** **Lower Emission Fuel Technologies.** Support collaboration between State, regional, and local agencies to continue transitioning goods movement and transit vehicles to lower-emission fuel technologies in order to reduce vehicle air pollution.

**Chapter 8 - Conservation Element**

**CE-2.5** **Municipal Emissions.** Prioritize municipal policies and programs that reduce the City's carbon footprint, such as purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, pursuing solar installation, implementing green purchasing, and retrofitting existing buildings.

**CE-3.8** **Building Energy Use.** Encourage the use of building placement, design, and construction techniques to limit energy consumption, reduce the heat island effect, increase renewable energy use, and maintain solar access.

### South Coast Air Quality Management District

Under state law, the SCAQMD is required to prepare a plan for air quality improvement for pollutants for which the District is in non-compliance. The SCAQMD updates the plan every three years. Each iteration of the SCAQMD's Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) is an update of the previous plan and has a 20-year horizon. SCAQMD released the final 2016 AQMP in March 2017, which is a comprehensive and integrated plan primarily focused on addressing ozone standards. The plan is a regional and multi-agency effort (SCAQMD, CARB, Southern California Association of Governments [SCAG], and USEPA). State and federal planning requirements include developing control strategies, attainment demonstrations, reasonable further progress, and maintenance plans. The 2016 AQMP incorporates the latest scientific and technical information and planning assumptions, including the latest applicable growth assumptions, Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), and updated emission inventory methodologies for various source categories.

The Coachella Valley is under the SCAQMD's jurisdiction; however it is located in another air basin where the air quality challenges differ. Chapter 7 of the 2016 AQMP "Current and Future Air Quality – Desert Nonattainment Areas," describes the air quality status of the Coachella Valley, including emissions inventories, designations, and current and future air quality.

### Southern California Association of Governments

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the regional planning agency for Riverside, Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, and Imperial Counties, and serves as a forum for regional issues relating to transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. SCAG serves as the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization for the Southern California region and is the largest metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in the United States. The AQMP is prepared by SCAQMD and SCAG.

### Coachella Valley Association of Governments

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is the regional planning agency for the coordination of government services in the Coachella Valley for the cities of Indio, Blythe, Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage, the

County of Riverside, and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. It serves as a forum for regional issues and provides solutions to the common issues of the local governments and tribes that are its members, focusing on community resources, energy and environmental resources, and transportation. With respect to air quality planning, CVAG provides growth projections and transportation plans that rely on member general plans. These projections are then used when modeling for future air projections. These projections are also used by SCAG when reviewing the MPO.

### *4.2.5 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

### *4.2.6 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| **Threshold a** | Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? |
|---|---|

**Impact AQ-1** **GROWTH FORECAST UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD GENERATE INCREASES IN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN INDIO. SUCH INCREASES WOULD NOT EXCEED GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR THE CITY THAT FORM THE BASIS FOR THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION CONTROL PORTIONS OF THE 2016 AQMP. THEREFORE, THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH OR OBSTRUCT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPLICABLE AIR QUALITY PLAN, AND THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The SCAQMD has an approved AQMP to meet both State and federal Clean Air Act requirements for all areas under SCAQMD jurisdiction. The AQMP ensures continues progress toward clean air by employing the most up-to-date science and analytical tools for measuring air pollution and incorporates a comprehensive strategy aims at controlling pollution from all sources, including stationary sources, on-road and off-road mobile sources and area sources. The AQMP relies upon growth projections provided SCAG. The City of Indio, as a participating member of CVAG, has provided growth projections.

A project may be inconsistent with the AQMP if it would generate population, housing, or employment growth exceeding forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The 2016 AQMP, the most recent AQMP adopted by the SCAQMD, incorporates local city general plans and the SCAG's 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing, and employment growth.

SCAG is the regional planning agency for Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial Counties, and addresses regional issues relating to transportation, economy, community development, and environment. With regard to air quality planning, SCAG has prepared the RTP/SCS, a long-range transportation plan that uses growth forecasts to project trends for regional population, housing and employment growth out to 2040 to identify regional transportation strategies to address

mobility needs. These growth forecasts form the basis for the land use and transportation control portions of the 2016 AQMP. The updated growth forecasts in SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS estimate that the population of Indio would be 123,300 in 2040, up 44,500 people from a population of 78,800 in 2012. The updated growth forecasts in SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS also anticipate an increase of approximately 20,800 jobs in Indio between 2012 and 2040.

Growth forecast under the Specific Plan includes an estimated net increase of 1,106 residential units, 244,655 square feet of retail development, 248,493 square feet of office space, 205,000 square feet of hotel space, and 48,500 square feet of civic uses. Based on an average household size of 3.41 persons per household in Indio in 2019 (California Department of Finance 2019), the net increase in residences developed under the Downtown Specific Plan would result in a population increase of approximately 3,772 people. Table 4.2-3 summarizes anticipated employee generation of retail, office, hotel, and civic development forecast under the Downtown Specific Plan based on employment density factors published by SCAG (SCAG 2001).

**Table 4.2-3 Downtown Specific Plan Employee Generation**

| Land Use | Net Increase | Employment Density (Square feet per employee) | Employees Generated |
|---|---|---|---|
| Retail[1] | 244,655 | 268 | 913 |
| Office[2] | 248,493 | 481 | 517 |
| Hotel[3] | 205,000 | 3,476 | 59 |
| Civic[4] | 48,500 | 208 | 233 |
| **Total** | -- | -- | **1,722** |

[1]Based on employment density factor for Regional Retail in Riverside County.
[2]Based on employment density factor for Low-Rise office in Riverside County.
[3]Based on employment density for Hotels/Motels in Riverside County. Square footage includes 30,000 square feet of retail.
[4]Based on employment density for Government Offices in Riverside County.
Source: SCAG 2001, Table II-B.

Growth forecast under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate approximately 1,722 employees and 3,772 residents. Conservatively assuming that new employees generated by development under the Specific Plan would be new Indio residents, the Downtown Specific Plan would result in a net increase of approximately 5,494 people. When considering Indio's 2019 population of 89,406 people, anticipated population growth would remain within SCAG's projected 2040 population increase and the Specific Plan would not cause Indio to exceed official regional population projections. Similarly, the estimated 1,722 employees generated by forecast growth under the Downtown Specific Plan would remain within SCAG's projected 2040 employment projections for the city.

As discussed in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, the Downtown Specific Plan would replace the 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan with a flexible plan that emphasizes a walkable and mixed-use environment that complements the City's Old Town characteristics while embracing newer development. The implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would include individual development projects that would be consistent with the City's General Plan. The land use designations proposed by the Specific Plan are within the growth forecasts for the City's General Plan.

Given the aforementioned, the proposed Specific Plan would be consistent with the AQMP and would have a less than significant impact.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold b** | Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? |

**Impact AQ-2** **DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD GENERATE CONSTRUCTION-RELATED AND OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS OF CRITERIA POLLUTANTS. WHILE MITIGATION MEASURES AQ-1 AND AQ-2 WOULD REDUCE EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS, INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS WOULD HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO EXCEED SCAQMD SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS. AS SUCH, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE.**

Federal and state air quality standards have been established for several pollutants. As previously shown (Table 4.2-2), the monitoring station closest to the proposed project have exceeded ozone and $PM_{10}$ air quality standards between 2016 and 2018; $PM_{2.5}$ air quality standards were not exceeded during this time frame. While Table 4.2-4, shows that federal and State standards were exceeded more often at the Indio – Jackson Street site than the Palm Springs – Fire Station site, there is a general reduction in $PM_{10}$ concentrations over a 15-year period. However, with the dry conditions of the Coachella Valley due to the California drought, there has been a slight rise in $PM_{10}$ resulting from dry conditions, wildfires, and wind.

Ozone and $PM_{10}$ are monitored and managed by SCAQMD. SCAQMD has established attainment plans for both ozone and $PM_{10}$, in addition to other programs designed to limit the formation of ozone and the generation of particulate matter, $PM_{10}$. The City requires best management practices (BMPs), adherence to building codes and standards, and the adoption of dust control plans for all new development.

## Table 4.2-4 $PM_{10}$ Monitoring Data for the Coachella Valley 2000 – 2018

| Year | Max Concentration ($\mu g/m^3$/24-hours) | | Days Exceeding 24-hour Standard | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Federal | State | Federal | State |
| **Palm Springs – Fire Station** | | | | |
| 2000 | 44 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
| 2001 | 432 | 432 | 1 | 2 |
| 2002 | 75 | 73 | 0 | 3 |
| 2003 | 108 | 106 | 0 | 4 |
| 2004 | 79 | 78 | 0 | 2 |
| 2005 | 66 | 64 | 0 | 2 |
| 2006 | 226 | 222 | 1 | 3 |
| 2007 | 83 | 81 | 0 | 5 |
| 2008 | 75 | 73 | 0 | 4 |
| 2009 | 140 | 133 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 144.8 | 37 | 0 | 0 |
| 2011 | 396.9 | 41 | 2 | 0 |
| 2012 | 143.4 | 37 | 0 | 0 |
| 2013 | 185.8 | 127.0 | 1 | 2 |
| 2014 | 313.8 | 56.0 | 1 | 2 |
| 2015 | 199.0 | 183.0 | 1 | 2 |
| 2016 | 447.2 | 113.1 | 1 | 3 |
| 2017 | 105.6 | 60.5 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 422.3 | 37.4 | 2 | 0 |
| **Indio – Jackson Street** | | | | |
| 2000 | 201 | 201 | 3 | 55 |
| 2001 | 604 | 604 | 5 | 55 |
| 2002 | 276 | 276 | 2 | 53 |
| 2003 | 309 | 302 | 3 | 51 |
| 2004 | 161 | 161 | 1 | 24 |
| 2005 | 106 | 106 | 0 | 38 |
| 2006 | 97 | 97 | 0 | 25 |
| 2007 | 210 | 211 | 2 | 53 |
| 2008 | 128 | 129 | 0 | 23 |
| 2009 | 132 | 131 | 0 | 4 |
| 2010 | 107 | 108 | 0 | 4 |
| 2011 | 175.9 | 324 | 2 | 3 |
| 2012 | 270.6 | 125.0 | 2 | 7 |
| 2013 | 255.2 | 159.0 | 3 | 14 |
| 2014 | 322.3 | 299.0 | 6 | 15 |
| 2015 | 381.0 | 382.0 | 3 | 13 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 393.2 | 261.2 | 2 | 21 |
| 2017 | 198.6 | 143.1 | 1 | 10 |
| 2018 | 336.0 | 149.6 | 2 | 14 |
| Source: CARB 2019 | | | | |

### Construction Emissions

Construction-generated emissions are short-term and of temporary duration. Construction activities that typically result in short-term emissions may include but are not limited to demolition, site grading and excavation, road paving, motor vehicle exhaust associated with construction equipment and worker trips, and the movement of construction equipment, especially on unpaved surfaces. Emissions of airborne particulate matter are largely dependent on the amount of ground disturbance associated with site preparation activities.

No specific development projects have been identified for the Downtown Specific Plan and, therefore, neither the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix C; Ambient 2016) nor the updated modeling prepared for this recirculated Draft EIR modeled potential construction emissions. However, future developments in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be anticipated to result in short-term construction-generated emissions. Emissions associated with individual projects may exceed SCAQMD's significance thresholds and would be analyzed on a project-by-project basis. Compliance with SCAQMD's regulations for the control of construction-generated emissions would help to reduce this impact, but not necessarily to a less than significant level. Mitigation Measure (MM) AQ-1 would be required to reduce construction emissions. However, even with mitigation, individual development projects could potentially generate construction emissions exceeding SCAQMD-recommended significance thresholds. Therefore, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

### Operational Emissions

The Downtown Specific Plan's estimated growth is summarized in Chapter 3.0, *Project Description*. Future development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would result in a mix of land uses that would promote infill and multi-modal transportation use.

Long-term operational emissions associated with existing land uses and future development were quantified using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod, version 2016.3.2) and are summarized in Table 4.2-5 and Table 4.2-6, respectively. Modeling was conducted for both summer and winter operational conditions under future horizon year (2035) conditions (CalEEMod output included in Appendix D.

**Table 4.2-5 Operational Emissions at Horizon Year (2035): Existing Land Uses**

| Source | Emissions (lbs/day)[1] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ROG | $NO_X$ | CO | $SO_X$ | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| **Summer Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 22.6 | 1.3 | 19.2 | <0.1 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Energy | 0.1 | 1.3 | 0.9 | <0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Mobile | 15.4 | 135.4 | 97.4 | 0.6 | 42.8 | 11.6 |
| **Total** | **38.1** | **138.1** | **117.5** | **0.6** | **44.8** | **13.6** |
| **Winter Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 22.6 | 1.3 | 19.2 | <0.1 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Energy | 0.1 | 1.3 | 0.9 | <0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Mobile | 12.4 | 132.2 | 93.3 | 0.5 | 42.8 | 11.6 |
| **Total** | **35.1** | **134.8** | **113.3** | **0.6** | **44.8** | **13.6** |

[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Source: CalEEMod outputs (Appendix D)

As shown in Table 4.2-6, forecast growth under the Downtown Specific Plan would result in overall increases of ROG, $NO_x$, CO, $SO_x$, $PM_{10}$, and $PM_{2.5}$ as compared to existing development. Projected increases in emissions are largely a result of increased development and associated increases in energy use and development-related traffic. Seasonal variations of operational emissions are largely due to varying emission rates for on-road vehicles. It is important to note that SCAQMD's recommended thresholds of significance were established for individual development projects. The thresholds do not apply to cumulative development or multiple projects. Furthermore, actual emissions associated with future development would vary, depending future project-specific designs, site conditions, and building techniques. Nonetheless, increased emissions of ROG and $NO_x$ associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan would exceed SCAQMD's significance thresholds.

**Table 4.2-6 Operational Emissions at Horizon Year (2035): Proposed Specific Plan without Mitigation**

| Source | Emissions (lbs/day)[a] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ROG | $NO_X$ | CO | $SO_X$ | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| **Summer Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 74.9 | 20.3 | 197.6 | 0.4 | 16.9 | 16.9 |
| Energy | 2.0 | 18.2 | 13.2 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Mobile | 44.1 | 392.7 | 260.6 | 1.6 | 108.3 | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **121.1** | **431.2** | **471.5** | **2.1** | **126.6** | **47.7** |
| ***Change Compared to Existing Land Uses*** | ***83.0*** | ***293.1*** | ***354.0*** | ***1.5*** | ***81.8*** | ***34.1*** |
| **Winter Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 74.9 | 20.3 | 197.6 | 0.4 | 16.9 | 16.9 |
| Energy | 2.0 | 18.2 | 13.2 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Mobile | 35.6 | 383.0 | 253.2 | 1.4 | 108.3 | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **112.5** | **421.5** | **464.1** | **1.9** | **126.6** | **47.7** |
| ***Change Compared to Existing Land Uses*** | ***77.4*** | ***286.7*** | ***350.8*** | ***1.3*** | ***81.8*** | ***34.1*** |
| SCAQMD Significance Thresholds[2] | 55 | 55 | 550 | 150 | 150 | 55 |

[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding. Emissions were quantified based on projected future development potential within the Specific Plan area.
[2] SCAQMD Significance Thresholds apply to individual projects and are presented for informational purposes only.
Source: Appendix D

Any individual development project proposed in the Downtown Specific Plan area would not only be required to adhere to the Downtown Specific Plan policies and development regulations, but also the City's General Plan, applicable standards and requirements from the City of Indio Municipal Code, and any current or future air quality protection programs and policies set forth by SCAQMD and the City.

Implementation of the recommended mitigation measures would help to reduce overall long-term air quality impacts. Future development would be subject to newer building standards, which would result in additional emissions reductions associated with energy use, water use, and waste generation. Future development would also be anticipated to incorporate improvements that would promote increased pedestrian access within the area, use of alternative modes of transportation, and increased access to nearby transit services. As identified in Table 4.2-7, energy efficiency, water conservation, and solid waste reduction measures implemented pursuant to applicable regulations and measures contained in MM AQ-2 would result in additional reductions in operational emissions of all pollutants. However, even with mitigation, individual development projects could potentially exceed SCAQMD-recommended significance thresholds. Therefore, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

**Table 4.2-7 Operational Emissions at Horizon Year (2035): Proposed Specific Plan with Mitigation**

| Source | Emissions (lbs/day)[1] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ROG | $NO_X$ | CO | $SO_X$ | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| **Summer Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 65.5 | 18.9 | 112.6 | 0.1 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| Energy | 2.0 | 18.2 | 13.2 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Mobile | 44.1 | 392.7 | 260.6 | 1.6 | 108.3 | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **111.7** | **429.8** | **386.4** | **1.8** | **112.7** | **33.8** |
| ***Change Compared to Existing Land Uses*** | ***73.6*** | ***291.7*** | ***268.9*** | ***1.2*** | ***67.9*** | ***20.2*** |
| **Winter Conditions** | | | | | | |
| Area | 65.5 | 18.9 | 112.6 | 0.1 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| Energy | 2.0 | 18.2 | 13.2 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Mobile | 35.6 | 383.0 | 253.2 | 1.4 | 108.3 | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **103.1** | **420.1** | **379.0** | **1.7** | **112.7** | **33.8** |
| ***Change Compared to Existing Land Uses*** | ***68.0*** | ***285.3*** | ***265.7*** | ***1.1*** | ***67.9*** | ***20.2*** |
| SCAQMD Significance Thresholds[2] | 55 | 55 | 550 | 150 | 150 | 55 |

[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding. Emissions were quantified based on projected future development potential within the Project area. Includes mitigation measures to provide increased energy and water conservation, use of low VOC paints, prohibited use of wood-burning hearths, increased recycling/diversion of solid waste, and vehicle trip-reductions.
[2] SCAQMD Significance Thresholds apply to individual projects and are presented for informational purposes only.
Source: Appendix D

### Carbon Monoxide

Mobile sources produce the largest amount of CO emissions in the SSAB. The on-road motor vehicle control strategy is primarily based on adopted regulations, such as the 1990 CARB Low-Emission Vehicles and Clean Fuels regulations, Phase 2 Reformulated Gasoline Program, oxygenated fuel regulation, and enhancements to the Smog Check program. The emission reductions resulting from these already adopted regulations have helped to reduce CO emissions from mobile sources. However, under specific meteorological and operational conditions (e.g., near areas of heavily congested vehicle traffic), CO concentrations may reach unhealthy levels.

Mobile-source emissions of CO are a direct function of traffic volume, speed, and delay. Transport of CO is extremely limited because it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. For this reason, modeling of mobile-source CO concentrations is typically recommended for sensitive land uses located near signalized roadway intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service (i.e., LOS E or F). Based on the traffic analysis prepared for this project, the intersection of Jackson Street/SR-111 is projected to operate at LOS E during horizon year 2035 PM peak-hour conditions.

The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix C; Ambient 2016) for an earlier iteration of the Downtown Specific Plan quantified mobile-source CO concentrations for the intersection of Jackson Street/SR-111 using the Caline4 computer program based on peak-hour traffic data derived from an earlier traffic analysis prepared for the Downtown Specific Plan. Since that modeling was performed, the

Downtown Specific Plan and associated traffic impact analysis have been updated. However, the updated traffic impact analysis indicates the Downtown Specific Plan would result in an approximately twenty-five (25) percent reduction in trips as compared to the previous iteration of the project. Therefore, the original CO modeling performed for the Downtown Specific Plan provides a conservative analysis.

The Caline4 modeling methodology conservatively placed 1-hour and 8-hour receptor locations at three and seven meters from the roadway edge, respectively. Background 1-hour and 8-hour CO concentrations were conservatively based on the last year of monitored ambient concentrations obtained from the Palm Springs-Fire Station monitoring station (i.e., 2.0 and 0.7, respectively). Based on the modeling, predicted 1-hour and 8-hour CO concentrations at this intersection would be approximately 2.6 ppm and 1.1 ppm, respectively. Predicted CO concentrations at other intersections are anticipated to be less. Predicted 1-hour and 8-hour CO concentrations at roadway intersections are not projected to exceed applicable CAAQS or NAAQS. This impact would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts associated with construction and operational air quality emissions from future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan.

**AQ-1** The City shall require future development projects that are subject to discretionary review to incorporate the following measures:

a. Contractors shall use high-pressure-low-volume (HPLV) paint applicators with a minimum transfer efficiency of at least 50 percent;

b. Use required coatings and solvents with a VOC content lower than required under SCAQMD Rule 1113. To the extent locally available, use zero VOC content paints.

c. Diesel-powered off-road construction equipment (50 hp, or greater) shall meet U.S. EPA Tier 4 emissions standards, to the extent locally available.

d. Idling of all on- and off-road diesel-fueled vehicles shall not be permitted when not in use. Signs shall be posted in the designated queuing areas and or job site to remind drivers and operators of the no idling limitation.

e. Fuel all off-road and portable diesel powered equipment with the Air Resources Board (ARB) certified motor vehicle diesel fuel (non-taxed version suitable for use off-road);

f. Construction equipment engines shall be maintained in good conditions and properly tuned, in accordance with manufacturer's specifications;

g. Building materials that do not require painting shall be used during construction to the extent available.

h. Use alternatively-fueled (e.g., compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, propane, biodiesel) or electrically powered equipment, to the extent locally available.

i. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to

California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles:

j. Prohibit idling of a vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and,

k. Prohibit the operation of a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation.

l. All demolition and construction activities that can generate fugitive dust shall be required to implement dust control measures in accordance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403, Fugitive Dust, and Rule 403.1, Supplemental Fugitive Dust Control Requirements for Coachella Valley Sources. In accordance with SCAQMD requirements, larger construction projects (e.g., activities with a disturbed area of more than 5,000 square feet) may also be required to prepare a fugitive dust control plan. Fugitive dust control measures to be implemented are identified in Rule 403 and Rule 403.1

**AQ-2** The City shall require future development projects that are subject to discretionary review to incorporate emission-reduction measures to address significant long-term regional air quality impacts. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Increase building envelope energy efficiency standards in excess of applicable building standards and encourage new development to achieve zero net energy use.

b. Install energy-efficient appliances, interior lighting, and building mechanical systems. Encourage installation of solar panels for new residential and commercial development.

c. Incorporate renewable energy sources in the project design (e.g., solar photovoltaic panels).

d. Install higher efficacy public street and exterior lighting.

e. Use daylight as an integral part of lighting systems in buildings.

f. Use trees, landscaping and sun screens on west and south exterior building walls to reduce energy use.

g. Install light colored "cool" roofs, cool pavements.

h. Install solar and tankless hot water heaters.

i. Encourage energy audits to be performed on residences prior to sale or other transfer of title. Provide prospective owners with recommendations for retrofit measures to be given to the buyer prior to transfer of title.

j. Include mixed-use, infill, and higher density in development projects to support the reduction of vehicle trips, promote alternatives to individual vehicle travel, and promote efficient delivery of services and goods.

k. Limit idling time for commercial vehicles, including delivery and construction vehicles.

l. Prohibit the installation of wood-burning fireplaces and stoves.

m. Incorporate design measures and infrastructure that promotes safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation (e.g., neighborhood electric vehicles, bicycles) pedestrian access, and public transportation use. Such measures may include incorporation of electric vehicle charging stations, bike lanes, bicycle-friendly intersections, and bicycle parking and storage facilities.

n. Incorporate design measures that promote ride sharing programs (e.g., by designating a certain percentage of parking spaces for ride sharing vehicles, designating adequate passenger loading and unloading and waiting areas for ride sharing vehicles, and providing a web site or message board for coordinating rides).

o. Incorporate measures that reduce water use (e.g., installation of low-flow fixtures, water-efficient irrigation systems and landscaping)

p. Incorporate measures that reduce waste generation.

q. Encourage new residential development to be constructed to allow for easy implementation of gray water systems that redirect water from washbasins, showers, and tubs for use in toilet flushing, irrigation, and other non-potable uses.

### Level of Significance after Mitigation

While Mitigation Measure AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce impacts associated with construction and operational air quality emissions, respectively, individual projects constructed under the Downtown Specific Plan would potentially exceed SCAQMD regional and localized significance thresholds, even with mitigation. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

| **Threshold c** | Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? |
|---|---|

**Impact AQ-3** **CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH GROWTH UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD EMIT TOXIC AIR CONTAMINANTS (TACS), SUCH AS DIESEL-EXHAUST PARTICULATE MATTER. FUTURE PROJECTS IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE LARGE ENOUGH THAT THE PROJECT-LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS WOULD BE EXCEEDED DURING CONSTRUCTION. DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS OF TACS AND FORECAST GROWTH UNDER THE PLAN WOULD NOT GENERATE MOBILE SOURCE EMISSIONS ALONG AREA ROADWAYS IN EXCESS OF APPLICABLE HEALTH RISK SCREENING CRITERIA. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

### Toxic Air Contaminants: Construction Emissions

Construction activities can result in short-term increases of TACs, as well as, emissions of airborne fugitive dust. Emissions of diesel-exhaust particulate matter (DPM) emitted from construction vehicles is of concern. Exposure to DPM results in a greater incidence of both carcinogenic and chronic non-cancer health effects, such as cough, labored breathing, chest tightness, wheezing, and bronchitis. However, various other TACs from diesel exhaust also contribute to both cancer and non-cancer health risks.

Construction-generated emissions of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) can also contribute to significant health impacts, particularly among the more sensitive population groups.

The amount of TACs generated during construction of individual projects would vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the development, the type, age and number of pieces of equipment required, and hours of use. It is anticipated that multiple construction projects could occur simultaneously within a given year and within a given area.

In accordance with SCAQMD thresholds, TAC-related impacts would be significant if they would result in an incremental excess cancer risk of 10 in one million or greater, a cancer burden of greater than 0.5 in areas experiencing an incremental excess cancer risk of one in one million or greater, or a chronic and/or acute hazard index of 1.0 or greater. SCAQMD has developed a localized significance threshold (LST) methodology to determine localized air quality impacts for project-specific analysis. The applicability of LSTs is generally limited to emissions of CO, $NO_x$, $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$ for one-, two- and five-acre construction sites. However, the LST methodology can provide guidance to indicate when more detailed project-specific analysis of localized air quality impacts, such as those occurring as a result of construction-related TAC emissions, may be warranted. For example, the LST Methodology (SCAQMD 2008) recommends projects exceeding five acres conduct project-specific dispersion modeling to determine localized air quality impacts.

Future projects in the Specific Plan area have the potential to be large enough that the project-level significance thresholds would be exceeded. As discussed above, each individual project would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis and would be required to implement mitigation measures, as appropriate, to reduce project-related impacts. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant. MM AQ-3 is required for the implementation of the Specific Plan to reduce project- specific impacts. Impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### Toxic Air Contaminants: Operational Emissions

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would involve construction of residential, retail, hotel, and civic land uses. While such land uses are not typically associated with emissions of TACs, certain land uses may include stationary sources of TACs, such as diesel-powered emergency-use power generators. The type and level of TAC emissions emitted would depend upon the nature of the land use and the specific methods and operations that involve toxic air emissions. Pursuant to SCAQMD rules and regulations, including SCAQMD Rule 1401 (New Source Review of Toxic Air Contaminants), major stationary sources having the potential to emit TACs would be required to obtain permits from the SCAQMD. Permits may be issued provided the source is constructed and operated in accordance with applicable SCAQMD rules and regulations. Given that compliance with applicable standards and regulations would be required, TAC emissions from new stationary sources would not be anticipated to result in an increased risk to nearby sensitive receptors that would exceed applicable significance thresholds.

In addition to long-term exposure to stationary emission sources, development under the Downtown Specific Plan would increase emissions from mobile sources. Major roadways of potential concern with respect to mobile-source TACs typically include roadways with average-daily traffic (ADT) volumes of 100,000 or more (CARB 2005). Within the Planning Area, SR-111 and Indio Boulevard are considered the primary sources of mobile-source TAC emissions. Existing traffic volumes along these roadways average approximately 25,000 ADT or less. Under future horizon (2035) conditions, projected future traffic volumes

along these same roadway segments would be approximately 30,000 ADT or less (Kimley-Horn, 2016). No roadways located in or adjacent to the Downtown Specific Plan area are projected to approach or exceed 100,000 ADT. Therefore, because land uses proposed under the Downtown Specific Plan are not associated with emissions of TACs and forecast growth would not result in the generation of mobile source TACs along area roadways in excess of applicable health risk screening criteria, operational impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure would be required to reduce impacts associated with construction-related emissions of TACs for future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan.

**AQ-3** To reduce the potential for short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs emitted during demolition and construction-related activities, the following measures shall be implemented:

a. Implement MM AQ-1.

b. Demolition of onsite structures shall comply with SCAQMD Rule 1403, Asbestos Emissions from Demolition/Renovation.

c. If during demolition of existing structures, paint is separated from the construction materials (e.g. chemically or physically), the paint waste shall be evaluated independently from the building material by a qualified hazardous materials inspector to determine its proper management. All hazardous materials shall be handled and disposed in accordance with local, State and federal regulations. According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control, if paint is not removed from the building material during demolition (and is not chipping or peeling), the material can be disposed of as construction debris (a non-hazardous waste). The landfill operator shall be contacted prior to disposal of building material debris to determine any specific requirements the landfill may have regarding the disposal of lead-based paint materials. The disposal of demolition debris shall comply with any such requirements.

d. Projects exceeding five acres of disturbance area shall prepare a construction Health Risk Assessment (HRA) consistent with SCAQMD methodology and modeling guidelines for HRAs. The HRA shall use project-specific dispersion modeling to analyze potential health risks at nearby receptors. If health risks from construction activities are determined to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds of maximum incremental cancer risk of 10 in one million or greater, a cancer burden of greater than 0.5, or a chronic and/or acute hazard index of 1.0 or greater, measures such as phasing of ground disturbance, shall be implemented to reduce construction-related health risks below such thresholds.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure AQ-3 would require projects with the potential to result in health risks in excess of SCAQMD thresholds to prepare project-specific HRAs and implement measures, such as phasing of ground disturbance, to reduce potential health risks. Furthermore, land uses anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan are not associated with operational emissions of TACs. Therefore, impacts would be less than

significant with mitigation incorporated.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold d** | Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? |

**Impact AQ-4** **LAND USES PROPOSED IN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE THAT ALREADY EXIST IN THE PLANNING AREA AND ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ODOR GENERATION DURING OPERATION. CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD RESULT IN TEMPORARY EMISSIONS OF ODORS RELATED TO OPERATION OF DIESEL-POWERED EQUIPMENT AND PAVING AND ARCHITECTURAL COATING ACTIVITIES. SUCH ODORS WOULD BE TEMPORARY IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE LOCAL AND REGIONAL REGULATIONS. THEREFORE, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Land uses typically considered associated odors during operation include wastewater treatment facilities, waste- disposal facilities, or agricultural operations. The Downtown Specific Plan would help to guide development in an existing urban area, promoting commercial, retail, civic, hotel, and residential land uses. The Specific Plan currently contains many of these proposed land uses. Therefore, the implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not create objectionable odors beyond those associated with the existing urban environment. Furthermore, SCAQMD has adopted a nuisance rule (Rule 402) that prohibits the discharge of air contaminants that cause "injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance" to any "considerable number of persons." The rule does not establish a quantitative threshold for odors nor does the rule define "considerable number of persons". Continued enforcement of SCAQMD Rule 402 would help to reduce this impact.

The predominant sources of construction-generated odors would be the operation of diesel-powered equipment, as well as the application of architectural coatings and asphalt paving. However, because odors associated with such sources would be temporary and would disperse rapidly with distance from the source, construction-generated odors would be considered less than significant. Each individual development project proposed in the Specific Plan area would be subject to City review prior to approval for construction. In addition, projects would be required to comply with the City of Indio General Plan and City of Indio Municipal Code, as applicable. Finally, construction odor emissions would be subject to SCAQMD Rule 402, *Nuisance*, as described above, under which odor emissions may reported and controlled.

Given that construction-related odors would be temporary in nature and land uses proposed under the Downtown Specific Plan are not associated with odor generation, this impact would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| **Cumulative** | Would the project contribute to cumulative air quality impacts? |
|---|---|

**Impact AQ-5** **MITIGATION MEASURES AQ-1 AND AQ-2 WOULD REDUCE POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONAL AIR QUALITY EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FUTURE PROJECTS ANTICIPATED UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN. HOWEVER, INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS WOULD STILL HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO EXCEED APPLICABLE SCAQMD THRESHOLDS, AND THEREFORE, CUMULATIVE IMPACTS RELATED TO INCREASED EMISSIONS OF CRITERIA POLLUTANTS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE.**

### Construction Emissions

Construction of multiple projects could result in cumulative air quality impacts due to disturbance of multiple project sites, operation of additional construction equipment fleets, and increased vehicle trips associated with workers, vendors, and haul trucks accessing various project sites. The SSAB is designated as non-attainment for ozone and particulate matter and, therefore, such emissions would have the potential to exacerbate existing air quality impairments in Indio. Consequently, the proposed Specific Plan, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable could result in a potentially significant cumulative air quality impact.

Future development associated with the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would be anticipated to result in an increase in short-term construction-generated emissions. Emissions associated with individual projects may exceed the SCAQMD's significance thresholds. Compliance with SCAQMD's rules, regulations, and mitigation measures for the control of construction-generated emissions would help to reduce this impact, but not necessarily to a less than significant level. At the project level, projects that are determined to have a potentially significant air quality impact to regional air quality would generally be considered to result in a potentially significant cumulative contribution to regional air quality impacts. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts would be cumulatively considerable.

Implementation of MM AQ-1 would help to reduce short-term air quality impacts. However, emissions associated with some future development projects could potentially exceed SCAQMD-recommended significance thresholds. This impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

### Operational Emissions

Similar to construction emissions, operation of multiple projects in Indio could result in cumulative air quality impacts due to increased mobile source (i.e., traffic), area, and energy-related emissions of criteria pollutants. Given the existing air quality impairments in the SSAB, such cumulative impacts would be potentially significant.

Increased emissions of criteria air pollutants associated with future development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan could potentially exceed SCAQMD's significance thresholds. Emissions associated with future development may conflict with regional air quality planning efforts for the attainment and maintenance of ambient air quality standards. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2 would help to reduce long-term operational air quality impacts associated with implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan. However, emissions associated with some future development projects could potentially exceed SCAQMD-recommended significance thresholds. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts would be cumulatively considerable. While mitigation would apply, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

### Localized Emissions

Land uses anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan are not associated with emissions of TACs or odors. Future development in the Downtown Specific Plan area could result in the installation of new stationary sources of TACs, such as emergency diesel-powered generators. Continued compliance with SCAQMD rules and regulations would help to ensure that emissions from individual stationary sources associated with future development would not exceed applicable air quality standards or result in significant impacts to nearby receptors. In addition, implementation of the MM AQ-3 would help to reduce localized air quality impacts associated with future development projects. Future development associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would not be anticipated to result in an increased cumulative exposure of sensitive land uses to localized pollutant concentrations. For these reasons, this impact would be considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

#### Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3.

#### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce potential construction and operational air quality emissions associated with future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, individual projects would still have the potential to exceed applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and therefore, cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable. All other impacts would be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

# 4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### *4.3.1 Introduction*

This section of the EIR describes potential effects on biological resources that would result from implementation of the Specific Plan. The following discussion addresses existing environmental conditions in the area, identifies and analyzes environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Specific Plan, and recommends measures to reduce or avoid significant impacts anticipated from Specific Plan implementation. In addition, existing laws and regulations relevant to biological resources are described. In some cases, compliance with these existing laws and regulations would serve to reduce or avoid certain impacts that might otherwise occur with the implementation of the Specific Plan.

### *4.3.2 Existing Conditions*

The Specific Plan area is characterized by long-established urbanized land uses, including commercial and office development, civic and other institutional uses, low- and medium-density residential, surface parking lots, and urban infrastructure improvements. A California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) record search was conducted for the Downtown Specific Plan area; 19 species were identified within the Indio USGS Quadrangle. A species list for the County was obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); 41 species were identified for Riverside County. Appendix E contains the results of the CNDDB species record search by USGS Quadrangle and the USFWS species record search by County.

The Specific Plan area is bordered by urban development. Limited native vegetation currently exists in the area. The Specific Plan area has been developed for several decades and does not contain any federal or State protected wetlands, marshes or vernal pools. The Specific Plan area is isolated from open space and land containing sensitive biological resources. Native vegetation is predominantly north of I-10 outside the Specific Plan area within designated conservation areas that are part of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Coachella Valley MSHCP). The nearest Coachella Valley MSHCP-designated conservation area to the Specific Plan area is the East Indio Hills Conservation Area, located approximately 2.5 miles to the northeast of the Specific Plan area.

### *4.3.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### Federal Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 through 1543)

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and subsequent amendments provide guidance for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The FESA defines species as “threatened” or “endangered” and provides regulatory protection for listed species. The FESA provides a program for conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species, and conservation of designated critical habitat that the USFWS has determined is required for the survival and recovery of these listed species.

##### Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703 through 711)

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) is the domestic law that affirms, or implements, the United States’ commitment to four international conventions (with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia) for the protection of a shared migratory bird resource. The MBTA makes it unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, or kill migratory birds. The law also applies to the removal of nests

occupied by migratory birds during the breeding season. The MBTA makes it unlawful to take, pursue, molest, or disturb these species, their nests, or their eggs anywhere in the United States.

### State of California

#### California Environmental Quality Act (PRC 2100 et seq.)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15380(b) identifies that a species not listed on the federal or State list of protected species may be considered rare or endangered if the species can be shown to meet certain specified criteria. These criteria have been modeled after the definition in the FESA and the section of the California Fish and Game Code dealing with rare or endangered plants or animals. This section was included in CEQA primarily to deal with situations in which a public agency is reviewing a project that may have a significant effect on, for example, a candidate species that has not been listed by either USFWS or CDFW. CEQA provides an agency with the ability to protect a species from the potential impacts of a project until the respective government agencies have an opportunity to designate the species as protected, if warranted. CEQA also calls for the protection of other locally or regionally significant resources, including natural communities. Although natural communities do not at present have legal protection of any kind, CEQA calls for an assessment of whether any such resources would be affected, and requires findings of significance if there would be substantial losses. Natural communities listed by CNDDB as sensitive are considered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to be significant resources and fall under the CEQA Guidelines for addressing impacts. Local planning documents such as general plans often identify these resources as well.

#### California Fish and Game Code

**California Fish and Game Code 1600 through 1616.** Under these sections of the California State Fish and Game Code, a project proponent is required to notify the CDFW prior to any project that would divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow, bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. Pursuant to the California State Fish and Game Code, a "stream" is defined as a body of water that flows at least periodically, or intermittently, through a bed or channel having banks and supporting fish or other aquatic life. Based on this definition, a watercourse with surface or subsurface flows that supports or has supported riparian vegetation is a stream and is subject to CDFW jurisdiction. Altered or artificial valuable to fish and wildlife are subject to CDFW jurisdiction. The CDFW also has jurisdiction over dry washes that carry water ephemerally during storm events.

Preliminary notification and project review generally occur during the environmental process. When an existing fish or wildlife resource may be substantially adversely affected, CDFW is required to propose reasonable project changes to protect the resource. These modifications are formalized in a Streambed Alteration Agreement that becomes part of the plans, specifications, and bid documents for a project.

**Native Plant Protection Act (Fish and Game Code 1900 through 1913).** California's Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) requires all State agencies to use their authority to carry out programs to conserve endangered and rare native plants. Provisions of the NPPA prohibit the taking of listed plants from the wild and require notification of the CDFW at least ten days in advance of any change in land use. This notification allows CDFW to salvage listed plant species that would otherwise be destroyed. A project proponent is required to conduct botanical inventories and consult with CDFW during project planning to comply with the provisions of the NPPA and sections of CEQA that apply to rare or endangered plants.

**California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code 2050 et seq.).** The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) establishes the policy of the State to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance threatened or endangered species and their habitats. The CESA mandates that State agencies should not approve projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species if reasonable and prudent alternatives are available that would avoid jeopardy. There are no State agency consultation procedures under the CESA. For projects that affect both a State and Federal listed species, compliance with FESA will satisfy the CESA if the CDFW determines that the Federal incidental take authorization is "consistent" with the CESA under California State Fish and Game Code Section 2080.1. For projects that will result in a take of a State-only listed species, the project proponent must apply for a take permit under Section 2081(b).

**California Fish and Game Code 3503 and 3503.5.** Under these sections of the California State Fish and Game Code, a project proponent is not allowed to conduct activities that would result in the taking, possessing, or destroying of any birds-of-prey, taking or possessing of any migratory non-game bird as designated in the MBTA or the taking, possessing, or needlessly destroying of the nest or eggs of any raptors or non-game birds protected by the MBTA, or the taking of any non-game bird pursuant to California State Fish and Game Code Section 3800.

## Local

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The 2019 City of Indio General Plan's Conservation Element contains policies which are intended to identify and minimize adverse effects towards biological resources. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 8 – Conservation Element**

**Policies**

**CE-4.2 Heritage Trees.** Support the conservation of heritage trees, or trees that are recognized as unique due to their age, rarity, and large size as well as their aesthetic, botanical, ecological, and historic value.

**CE-7.1 CVMSHCP and Other Regulations:** Implement the CVMSHCP. Ensure development is consistent with federal, State, and regional regulations for habitat and species protection.

**CE-7.4 Volunteerism.** Encourage community volunteerism and stewardship to help protect and rehabilitate natural resources.

**CE-7.5 Public and Private Partnerships.** Encourage public and private partnerships to acquire and protect habitat areas containing sensitive resources for preservation as permanent open space.

**CE-7.8 Preserve Night Sky.** Ensure that outdoor lighting is shielded and directed away from natural open space areas.

**CE-7.10 Agency Coordination.** Communicate with neighboring jurisdictions (including the cities of La Quinta, Indian Wells, Palm Desert, Coachella, and the County of Riverside), regional agencies (including the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)), Caltrans, and the SunLine Transit Agency to

seek opportunities to improve and expand upon the regional open space/biological preserve system.

### *4.3.4 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

As discussed in Section 1.6.1, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the Specific Plan would not have a significant impact pertaining to thresholds b, c, d and f, as the Specific Plan area does not contain critical habitat, waterways or riparian habitat, wetlands, marshes or vernal pools, migratory wildlife species or migratory wildlife corridors in or adjacent to the Specific Plan area. In addition, the Specific Plan area is not within an HCP, NCCP, or other local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. All other thresholds (a and e) are discussed in detail in this section.

### *4.3.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

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| **Threshold a** | Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? |

**Impact BIO-1** **ALTHOUGH THE LIKELIHOOD OF ENCOUNTERING SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES IN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IS LOW, MITIGATION MEASURES BIO-1 THROUGH BIO-3 WOULD ENSURE THAT PRE-CONSTRUCTION SURVEYS ARE CONDUCTED IN AREAS WHERE VEGETATION AND POTENTIAL HABITAT MAY BE PRESENT. WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED, AND WITH ADHERENCE TO EXISTING LOCAL REGULATIONS, IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

There is limited potential for special status species to occur in the undeveloped/vacant parcels as these vacant parcels are highly disturbed, lack vegetation, and many have undergone previous grading. The

CNDDB record search indicates that the most recent special status species sighting, a ferruginous hawk, was in 2016 approximately three miles northeast of the Specific Plan area, about 0.2 mile northwest of the Coachella Canal at the Dillon Road Crossing. All other sightings listed in the CNDDB record search occurred prior to 2008; the majority were outside of the Specific Plan boundaries. The CNDDB record search also identifies approximately ten special status species where the last sighting location is unknown; however, it is listed in the Indio Quadrant. These results do not preclude the potential for special status species in the Specific Plan area. While most trees in the Specific Plan area are non-native species, they can provide roosting for special status species as well as migratory birds, and vacant parcels could contain ground dwelling species.

Any development in the proposed Specific Plan area would be defined as a "covered activity" under the Coachella Valley MSHCP for areas outside designated conservation areas. The Specific Plan area is not adjacent to or within any Coachella Valley MSHCP designated conservation area. Therefore, the Specific Plan Project would not have edge effects/indirect impacts on the conservation areas.

To ensure that special status species and migratory birds are not directly or indirectly impacted as a result of any development project, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 are required. These Mitigation Measures are designed to ensure that pre-construction surveys are conducted as determined by the City when potential biological species and habitat may be present. With adherence to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and existing City plans, policies, regulations, and ordinances as well as the Coachella Valley MSHCP policies, regulations, and requirements, impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

To ensure that special status species and migratory birds are not directly or indirectly impacted as a result of any development project, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 are required which would require surveys and other avoidance procedures.

**BIO-1** As determined appropriate by the City of Indio Community Development Department, prior to issuance of any development project permits, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted focusing the survey on vegetation and unpaved property. Preconstruction surveys shall be conducted prior to the start of construction activities and within the typical blooming season or spring and early summer (generally March/April to August) for easy identification. If special-status species are identified, the area shall be flagged for avoidance. If a special-status species is identified and cannot be fully avoided, a mitigation plan shall be prepared and approved by both the City of Indio and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Activities shall comply with any other development permits, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems Permit, as well as regulatory agency standards, including, but not limited to, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission.

**BIO-2** For all construction-related activities that take place during the nesting season, accepted as February 15 through August 31, a preconstruction nesting-bird survey for migratory birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than two

weeks prior to project initiation within the project development site and a 300-foot buffer. If active nests are found, a no- disturbance buffer zone shall be established, the size of which will be determined in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Within this buffer zone, no construction shall take place until August 31 or the project biologist determines that the nest is no longer active.

**BIO-3** Individual project developers shall continuously comply with the following during construction activities for any development in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area:

- Prior to any earth disturbing activities for any development project on undeveloped and unpaved parcels, all construction personnel shall be trained in sensitive species identification and avoidance techniques. Proof of training shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department. Any evidence, such as ground squirrel/burrowing owl burrows, observed at any time during construction, shall be promptly reported to the project's biologist, the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and any other applicable reviewing agency to determine the appropriate course of action.
- During construction activities, if an injured or dead State or federally listed species (or candidate species) is encountered, the project proponent shall stop work within the immediate vicinity. The project proponent and or their lead biologist shall notify the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and the appropriate resources agency (e.g., United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] or California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW]) to determine the appropriate course of action, such as the need for an Incidental Take Permit, if not covered by the Coachella Valley MSHCP.
- At the end of each work day, the project contractor shall ensure that all potential wildlife pitfalls (trenches, bores, and other excavations) have been backfilled. If backfilling is not feasible, all trenches, bores, and other excavations shall be sloped at a 3:1 ratio at the ends to provide wildlife escape ramps, or covered completely to prevent wildlife access, or fully enclosed with exclusion fencing. If any wildlife species become entrapped within the immediate vicinity, construction shall not occur until the animal has left the trench or has been removed by a qualified biological monitor as feasible. Employees and contractors shall look under vehicles and equipment for the presence of wildlife before moving vehicles and equipment. If wildlife is observed, no vehicles or equipment would be moved until the animal has left voluntarily or is removed by the project biologist. No listed species will be handled without appropriate permits.
- If an entrapped special-status species is encountered, the project biologist (or their designee) shall stop work within the immediate vicinity. Prior to the recommencement of construction, the project proponent shall notify the City of Indio Community Development Department, the Coachella Valley

Conservation Commission, and the appropriate resources agency (e.g., USFWS or CDFW) and shall consult with the appropriate resource agencies to determine the appropriate course of action. Any entrapped species that is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) or California Endangered Species Act (CESA) shall not be disturbed unless the appropriate authorization is obtained from the appropriate resource agency.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, any potential nesting birds or special status species would be identified and avoided. Impacts would be less than significant.

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| **Threshold e** | Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? |

**Impact BIO-2** **DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO THE CITY ORDINANCE PROTECTING HERITAGE TREES, WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT HERITAGE TREES ARE NOT DAMAGED OR REMOVED UNLESS PROPERLY PERMITTED. BECAUSE THERE ARE NO OTHER ADOPTED POLICIES OR ORDINANCES PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES, THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN CONFLICTS AND IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Individual development projects under the Specific Plan would be constructed in compliance with the requirements of the City's General Plan, Specific Plan development and code standards, and the City's Municipal Code. The only City ordinance protecting biological resources is the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance. The City's General Plan Policy CE-4.2 directly supports the ordinance, stating that the City shall support the conservation of heritage trees, or trees that are recognized as unique due to their age, rarity, and large size as well as their aesthetic, botanical, ecological, and historic value. The Indio City Tree Preservation Ordinance, Title IX Chapter 98 of the Municipal Code, protects City trees and requires a permit to plant, remove, cut, prune, root prune, apply pesticides, or otherwise disturb City trees or shrubs.

The Specific Plan is intended to facilitate and allow for individual development in the Specific Plan area. Each individual development project under the Specific Plan would be required to abide by the provisions of the ordinance, which include measures such as obtaining a tree removal permit if the development results in the removal of City trees or shrubs. Individual development projects would also be required to adhere to the City ordinance protecting heritage trees, which would ensure that heritage trees are not damaged or removed unless properly permitted.

There are no other adopted policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Because all development would be required to adhere to City General Plan Policies and the Municipal Code, impacts related to conflict with these sources would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| **Cumulative** | Would the project contribute to cumulative biological resource impacts? |
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**Impact BIO-3** **FUTURE PROJECT PROPOSALS AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH POLICIES AND REGULATIONS SET OUT BY THE PROPOSED SPECIFIC PLAN, THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN, THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL CODE, AND THE COACHELLA VALLEY MSHCP. WITH THE INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES BIO-1 THROUGH BIO-3, AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES, THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO CUMULATIVE IMPACTS RELATED TO BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.**

Future development projects in other areas of the City would have the potential to impact biological resources. Future development in the City could have a cumulative impact on biological resources through loss of habitat and land use adjacency impacts if development is proposed near conservation areas. The City supports a number of sensitive resources. The adverse effects to biological resources would be reduced through the implementation of federal, state, and regional programs including compliance with CVMSHCP, the City Municipal Code, and adherence to General Plan policies.

The majority of development in the City and Specific Plan area would occur in a built urban environment. The Specific Plan area has been developed for several decades and has limited native vegetation. Future project proposals and individual development projects would be required to comply with policies and regulations set out by the proposed Specific Plan and associated development regulations, the City's General Plan, the City's Municipal Code, and the Coachella Valley MSHCP (if located within). Compliance with the existing policies, plans, and regulations would ensure that proposed future development in the surrounding areas would also not significantly affect biological resources. Therefore, with incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and compliance with the applicable plans and policies, the Specific Plan would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to biological resources. The project's contribution to cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, any potential nesting birds or special status species would be identified and avoided, and the potential cumulative impacts of the Downtown Specific Plan would not be cumulatively considerable.

# 4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

## *4.4.1 Introduction*

This section of the EIR provides contextual background information on historical and prehistoric resources in the Specific Plan area. This section also summarizes the known cultural resources in the Specific Plan area, analyzes the project's potential impacts on cultural resources, and identifies mitigation measures to address adverse impacts, where applicable.

For the purposes of CEQA, "historical resources" generally refer to cultural resources that have been determined to be significant, either by eligibility for listing in state of local registers of historical resources, or by determination of a lead agency (see definitions below). Historical resources can also include areas determined to be important to Native Americans such as "sacred sites." Sacred sites are most often important to Native American groups because of the role of the location in traditional ceremonies or activities. "Cultural resources" generally refer to prehistoric and historical period archaeological sites and the built environment. Cultural resources can also include areas determined to be important to Native Americans.

## *4.4.2 Existing Conditions*

### Prehistoric Context

The Coachella Valley region can be generally divided into four prehistoric periods as follows:

- Early Hunting Stage (ca. 10,000-6000 B.C.). Evidence of large, archaic-style projectile points and lack of plant processing artifacts suggests humans relied on big game animals.
- Millingstone Horizon (ca. 6000 B.C.-A.D. 1000). A large number of milling stones were found, especially heavily used, deep-basin metates, suggesting plant foods and small game animals became the primary subsistence strategy.
- Late Prehistoric Period (ca. A.D. 1000-1500). Diverse subsistence base, evidence of smaller projectile points, expedient milling stones and pottery, regional cultures and tribal territories began to develop, and more complex social organizations.
- Protohistoric Period (ca. A.D. 1500-1700s). Long-distance contact with Europeans, lead to historic period.

Human occupation of the Southern California region began 8,000-12,000 years ago. The Cahuilla are the most recently identifiable native culture to evolve in the Coachella Valley, believed by archaeologists to have migrated to the valley from the north approximately 2,000 to 3,000 years ago. The Coachella Valley was an historical center for Indian villages, Native American settlements and Rancherias occupied by the Cahuilla people in the mid-19$^{th}$ Century. Based upon their geographic setting, early ethnographers and linguists divided the Cahuilla people into three groups: Pass Cahuilla of the San Gorgonio Pass-Palm Springs area; Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and the Cahuilla Valley; and Desert Cahuilla of the eastern Coachella Valley.

Membership of the tribe was in terms of lineages or clans, each belonging to one of the main two divisions of the people, known as moieties. Each individual clan had territories and villages for purposes of hunting game, gathering food, and use of other resources. Clans interacted through trade, intermarriage and ceremonies. The Desert Cahuilla established settlements throughout the Coachella Valley. Settlement and

hunting and gathering lands were associated with sources of water, as well as permanent and seasonal sources of food and fiber. Ancient Lake Cahuilla was the center of many of these villages and went through several high stands and several drying periods; however, with the natural redirection of the Colorado River to the Sea of Cortez, Lake Cahuilla is believed to have evaporated around 1580 A.D.

Present-day Native Americans of the Pass or Desert Cahuilla heritage are mostly affiliated with one or more of the Coachella Valley Indian reservations, including Agua Caliente, Morongo, Torres Martinez, Augustine, and Cabazon.

The Present-day Specific Plan area was once a Cahuilla village in the mid-1850s. Approximately 0.25-mile south of the Specific Plan area is the potential site of a branch of the Cocomaricopa-Bradshaw Trail.

### Historical Context

The first noted European explorers to travel through the Coachella Valley were Jose Romero, Jose Maria Estudillo and Romualdo Pacheco in 1823-1825. They led a series of expeditions in search of a route to Yuma traveling along the established trails. The most important of these trails was an ancient Indian trading route known as the Cocomaricopa Trail, which was renamed the Bradshaw Trail in 1862 after it was "discovered" by William David Bradshaw. During the 1860s-1870s, the Bradshaw Trail was the main thoroughfare between coastal Southern California and the Colorado River until completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1876-1877.

The Indio region was settled with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad. When surveyed in 1872, Indio was the ideal location for a railroad depot; halfway between Yuma and Los Angeles and a nearby Native American reservation to provide a labor force. The railroad began running trains between Los Angeles and Indio in 1876; the route to Yuma was completed the following year. The City was originally named Indian Wells but was renamed Indio (Spanish for "Indian") to avoid confusion with another station on the same line.

A formal Indio town site was surveyed and the plat map was filed in 1888 with the San Diego Recorder. In 1893, Indio became one of the 12 judicial townships in the newly designated Riverside County. By 1896, the City had 50 residents.

A school that was also used as a church was established and housed in an adobe constructed on the northeast corner of Fargo Street and Bliss Avenue, which was also the site of the former Elk Lodge. Indio grew slowly until the 20$^{th}$ Century. Indio developed rapidly during the 20$^{th}$ Century. A lot map of the town from 1900 indicates most of the town's planned development existed in an area bounded by Indio Avenue on the north, Jackson Street on the east, Requa Avenue on the south, and Park Street on the west. Artesian wells and other available water sources probably influenced the placement of these first homesteads. Early cultivated crops in the area included melons, vegetables, and date palms. Date Palms from Algeria were sent to the region in 1890; various types of offshoots were experimented with to find a variety that best suited the Coachella Valley climate and soils.

Indio became the first incorporated city in the Coachella Valley in 1930. The first mayor was LeRoy Pawley, owner of the Desert Theater on Fargo Street. Indio's agricultural economic base proved somewhat resistant to the depression of the 1930s. By the 1940s, the establishment of General George S. Patton's Desert Training Center brought some prosperity to the area, with some soldiers settling in the area permanently.

### Archaeological Resources

Ethnographically, the Indio area falls within the traditional Desert Cahuilla territory. Permanent Cahuilla villages were located in places that provided convenient access to water and subsistence, and would have to be moved from time to time because of changes in water availability, flash floods, or intergroup strife.

Several types of prehistoric archaeological resource sites occur in the Indio area, including habitation sites, temporary camps, lithic and ceramic scatters, quarries, and trails. Archaeological sites in arid areas such as the Coachella Valley are more frequent in areas of permanent or seasonal water sources. Examples of this are the various shorelines of the previous lake stands of ancient Lake Cahuilla, and the desert fan palm oasis on the north side of the Coachella Valley outside the proposed project boundaries. Historic archaeological sites consist predominately of trash dumps/scatters, but may also include structure remains. As discussed in the City's General Plan, within the City, the areas of highest potential for archaeological resources are in the western and eastern areas along the ancient Lake Cahuilla shoreline. However, there is potential for archaeological resources to be encountered in any location of the City.

### Historical Resources

The City's adopted General Plan and associated Historic Resources Survey identify potential historic buildings and areas that were identified by previous surveys and during the research for the General Plan Update. The original Indio Old Town Specific Plan was prepared in 1997 and identifies two potential historic districts in the area. The first is the early commercial district of Indio, from the 82-900 block of Miles Avenue to the 45-200 block of Fargo Street. In 1997, structures contributing to the district included the Hotel Indio and several facades and buildings along Fargo Street. Within this area, the Desert Theater and the Elks Club were both considered eligible for the National Register; however, the National Register of Historic Places does not contain any listings within the City of Indio (NPS 2017).

The area from Indio Boulevard on the north, Oasis Street on the east, Requa Street on the south, and Deglet Noor Street on the west is another area of historic interest. This neighborhood includes structures constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. The buildings in this area reflect the Bungalow and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. This area includes the Coachella Valley Museum and Cultural Center building, formerly the Dr. Harry Smiley residence. The Smiley Place is considered a California Point of Interest (P760) (CSP OHP 2019). A building of local historical significance is the FitzHenry Funeral Home, formerly the Methodist Church. The Specific Plan also includes examples of unique building types, referred to as a "submarine", a one- room building designed by lay-over railroad crews, with a metal roof or covering so that water could be piped over it.

The *City of Indio General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report* (January 2015), identifies 281 historic and prehistoric sites and structures recorded in Indio. Of these, 77 structures are considered Potential Historic Buildings. The area with the most potential for historic resources is bordered by Monroe Street on the west, SR-111 on the south, Flower Street on the east, and the railroad to the north. A part of this area is within of the boundaries of the Specific Plan area. The College of the Desert was built near the former Greyhound bus depot, which was considered to have potential for historical significance. The bus depot was built in 1961 and demolished in June 2011. The Greyhound bus building was recorded into the California Historical Resources Inventory during the College of the Desert EIR process but does not qualify as a "historical resource" (College of the Desert Indio Educational Center EIR 2011).

The adopted City of Indio General Plan and associated Historic Resources Survey identifies a number of preliminary, potential themes of significance that could be explored in a subsequent Historic Context

Statement (a framework used for identifying and evaluating the City's historic resources). As a result of the research carried out in the Survey, a number of individual properties and groupings of properties were identified that warrant additional intensive-level study to ascertain their status as historical resources. In addition to the properties included on the City's Historic Resource List (included as Appendix A of the Survey, and on file with the City of Indio), the Historic Resources Survey identifies a total of 29 potential individually eligible properties, four potential historic districts, and two groupings of properties that could qualify as local conservation zones. Potential Historic Districts and Local Conservation Zones in the Downtown Specific Plan Area include the Oasis Avenue Residential Historic District, the Gillette Park Residential Historic District, and the Miles Avenue Commercial Historic District.

### *4.4.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Archaeological resources are protected through the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (16 USC 47 (f)); and its implementing regulation, Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR Part 800), the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. The NHPA authorized the expansion and maintenance of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), established the position of State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and provided for the of State Review Boards, set up a mechanism to certify local governments to carry out the purposes of the NHPA, assisted Native American tribes to preserve their cultural heritage, and created the

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Prior to implementing an "undertaking" (e.g., issuing a federal permit), Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of the undertaking on historic properties and to afford the ACHP and the SHPO a reasonable opportunity to comment on any undertaking that would adversely affect properties eligible for listing in the NRHP. As indicated in Section 101(d)(6)(A) of the NHPA, properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to a tribe are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Under the NHPA, a resource is considered significant if it meets the NRHP listing criteria at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 60.4.

##### National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The NRHP was established by the NHPA of 1966, as "an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment" (CFR 36 Section 60.2). The NRHP recognizes both historic-period and prehistoric archaeological properties that are significant at the national, State, and local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. A property (districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance) is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following four established criteria:

Criterion A: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B: It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past.

Criterion C: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;

represents the work of a master; possesses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D: It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historic figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; and properties that are primarily commemorative in nature are not considered eligible for the NRHP unless they satisfy certain conditions. In general, a resource must be at least 50 years of age to be considered for the NRHP, unless it satisfies a standard of exceptional importance.

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have *integrity*. Integrity is defined as "the ability of a property to convey its significance." The NRHP recognizes seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

## State of California

### California Register of Historic Resources

Similar to the NRHP, the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) program encourages public recognition and protection of resources of architectural, historical, archaeological, and cultural significance; identifies resources for planning purposes; determines eligibility of state historic grant funding; and provides certain protections under CEQA. State criteria are those listed in CEQA and used to determine whether an historic resource qualifies for the CRHR. A resource may be listed in the CRHR if it:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history and cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important to the nation or to California's past.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history of the state or nation.

### California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA was amended in 1992 to define "historical resources" as a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing on the California Register, a resource included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a historical resource survey that meets certain requirements, and any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be significant. Some resources that do not meet these criteria may still be historically significant for the purposes of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g) define the criteria for determining the significance of historical resources. Since resources that are not listed or determined eligible for the state or local registers may still be historically significant, their significance is to be determined if they are affected by a development proposal.

### California Historical Landmarks (CHLs)

California Historical Landmarks (CHLs) are buildings, structures, sites, or places that have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental, or other value and that have been determined to have statewide historical significance by meeting at least one of the criteria listed below. The resource also must be approved for designation by the County Board of Supervisors (or the city or town council in whose jurisdiction it is located); be recommended by the SHRC; and be officially designated by the Director of California State Parks. The specific standards now in use were first applied in the designation of CHL #770. CHLs #770 and above are automatically listed in the CRHR.

To be eligible for designation as a landmark, a resource must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- It is the first, last, only, or most significant of its type in the State or within a large geographic region (Northern, Central, or Southern California);
- It is associated with an individual or group having a profound influence on the history of California; or
- It is a prototype of, or an outstanding example of, a period, style, architectural movement or construction or is one of the more notable works or the best surviving work in a region of a pioneer architect, designer, or master builder.

### Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)

PRC Section 5097.91 established the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the duties of which include inventorying of places of religious or social significance to Native Americans and identifying known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans on private lands. PRC Section 5097.98 specifies a protocol to be followed when the NAHC receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from a county coroner.

### Senate Bill (SB) 18

Senate Bill (SB) 18 (*California Government Code* §65352.3) incorporates the protection of or mitigation of impacts to California traditional tribal cultural places into land use planning for cities, counties, and agencies. It establishes responsibilities for local governments to contact, refer plans to, and consult with California Native American tribes as part of the adoption or amendment of any general or specific plan proposed on or after March 1, 2005. SB 18 requires public notice to be sent to tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC's) SB 18 Tribal Consultation List within the geographical areas affected by the proposed changes. Tribes must respond to a local government notice within 90 days (unless a shorter time frame has been agreed upon by the tribe), indicating whether or not they want to consult with the local government. Consultations are for the purpose of preserving or mitigating impacts to places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the *California Public Resources Code* that may be affected by the proposed adoption of or amendment to a general or specific plan.

### Assembly Bill (AB) 52

AB 52, which went into effect July 1, 2015, requires local governments to engage in early consultation with California Native American Tribes on all projects. AB 52 creates a new CEQA resource: Tribal Cultural Resources. It requires local governments to consider whether a project may cause a substantial adverse

change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource and to consider a tribe's cultural values when determining document type, impacts and mitigation. AB 52 can draw upon SB 18's guidelines and can be completed in tandem.

AB 52 applies to projects with a Notice of Preparation (NOP) or notice of a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration issued on or after July 1, 2015. The OPR must propose and CNRA must adopt revisions to the CEQA Guidelines by July 1, 2016 to: (1) separate the consideration of paleontological resources from Tribal Cultural Resources and update the relevant sample questions and (2) add consideration of Tribal Cultural Resources with relevant sample questions. The NOP for this project was issued on April 1, 2014. AB 52 would apply to future development projects in the Specific Plan area that requires environmental review under CEQA.

### California Health and Safety Code

The California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 regulates the treatment of human remains. According to the Code, in the event of discovery of recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined that the remains are not subject to further investigation. If the coroner recognizes, or has reason to believe that the human remains are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact the NAHC to determine the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). Consultation with the designated MLD will determine the final disposition of the remains.

### Local

#### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

**Chapter 8 – Conservation Element**

**Policies**

**CE-8.1 Site Plan Review.** Ensure adequate site plan review and mitigation measures are implemented for the development of sites with the potential to contain historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources.

**CE-8.2 Avoidance of Impacts to Historic Resources.** For projects that could affect historic resources, ensure adequate study to identify eligible resources and project-level review to avoid or lessen negative impacts through conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

**CE-8.3 Incentivize Retention of Historic Landmarks.** Explore opportunities to provide economic and regulatory incentives for the retention and sensitive upgrades and changes to historic landmarks and contributors to designated historic districts.

**CE-8.4 Monitoring.** Require monitoring on sites where grading has the potential to impact subsurface cultural and paleontological resources during excavation and construction activities.

**CE-8.6 Coordination with Local Tribes.** Periodically meet with representatives from local tribes to:

- Obtain input prior to making decisions, taking actions, or implementing programs/projects that may impact cultural resources;
- Discuss methods to preserve and protect highly sensitive cultural resources; and

- Ensure that there is agreement regarding the protocol to be followed when cultural resources are discovered.

### *4.4.4 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

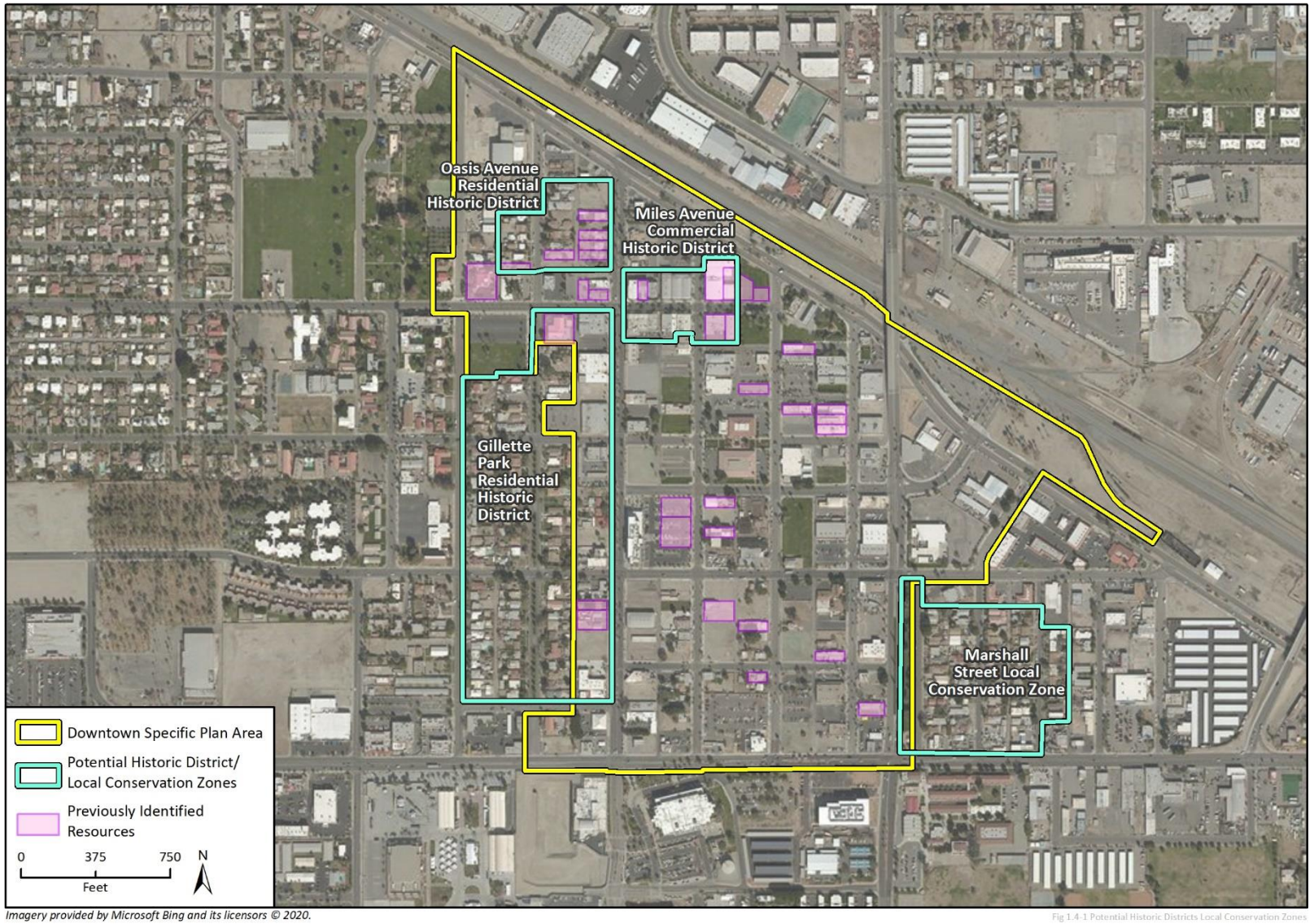
### *4.4.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold a** | Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5? |

**Impact CUL-1** **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA, THROUGH EITHER DEMOLITION OR ALTERATION ACTIVITIES, MAY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DAMAGE/CHANGE EXISTING OR CURRENTLY UNDESIGNATED HISTORICAL RESOURCES. ALTHOUGH MITIGATION MEASURE CR-1 WOULD REQUIRE FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, THE POTENTIAL PERMANENT LOSS OR ALTERATION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES WOULD RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACT.**

As discussed above, 281 historic and prehistoric sites and structures have been identified in the City. Of these, 77 structures are considered Potential Historic Buildings; however, most are not in the Specific Plan area. Structures in the Specific Plan area that may qualify as Potential Historic Buildings include, but are not limited to, the Coachella Valley Museum and Cultural Center, the 1909 Indio School House, and the Date Museum. Previously identified potential historic resources (properties) in the Specific Plan area are shown in Figure 4.4-1. Neighborhoods in the northwestern portion of the Specific Plan area include structures dating to the 1920s and 1930s that reflect the Bungalow and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Other streets, such as Fargo Street, contain buildings that represent the City's history, such as the Desert Theater and the Elks Club, which were both considered eligible for the National Register. As discussed in the Historic Resources Survey prepared for the City's General Plan, Potential Historic Districts, which, to date, have not been finalized, overlap areas of the Specific Plan. Potential Historic Districts and Local Conservation Zones in the Downtown Specific Plan Area include the Oasis Avenue Residential Historic District, the Gillette Park Residential Historic District, Marshall Street Local Conservation Zone, and the Miles Avenue Commercial Historic District. These areas are located generally in the western portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area, as shown in Figure 4.4-1.

## Figure 4.4-1 Potential Historic Resource Sites in the Specific Plan Area




*Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2020.*

Fig 1.4-1 Potential Historic Districts Local Conservation Zones

### Indio Downtown Specific Plan Final EIR

Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan could directly or indirectly impact known or currently undesignated historic resources, by changing the context of a historic resource. The proposed Specific Plan encourages the preservation of the City's historic core, and allowing creativity in new infill development that is compatible with the character of the area that the overall community would like to preserve and perpetuate. The proposed development standards associated with the Specific Plan state that new development recognize the architectural styles, mass, scale, height, façade rhythm, colors and materials of existing structures. While adherence to the development standards would be required, the potential remains that individual sites may undergo demolitions or alterations that could devalue a building or site's historic significance.

Policies CE-8.1 and CE-8.2 of the Indio General Plan would ensure that adequate site plan review and mitigation measures are implemented for the development of sites with the potential to contain historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources and that eligible historic resources are identified through project-level review to avoid or lessen negative impacts through conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. In addition, the Final EIR for the Indio General Plan Update (June 2019) includes the following mitigation measures aimed at avoiding significant impacts to historic resources citywide.

**MM-CR-1:** The City shall prepare an intensive-level historic resource study, to determine the status and significance of the resources identified and discussed in the Historic Resources Survey Report developed by Rincon Consultants, Inc. dated January 2018. Once prepared, the City shall formally recognize individual properties and potential historic areas in the City, which may include, but are not limited to the areas identified in the Historic Resources Survey Report as the: Palo Verde Drive Local Conservation Zone, Sun Gold Park Residential Historic District, Oasis Avenue Residential District, Gillette Park Residential District, Miles Avenue Commercial Historic District, and the Marshall Street Local Conservation Zone. Once identified, and formally recognized, the City shall complete the requirements listed in MM-CR-2.

**MM-CR-2:** The City shall develop and implement standards that guide new development and alterations to existing structures in historic districts and local conservation zones. Such guidelines shall be developed by a qualified historian, and shall address architecture, landscaping, streets, and hardscape elements within these districts. Standards shall be developed such that they address the particular character of individual districts.

Implementation of these measures would reduce, but not eliminate the potential for adverse effects to historic resources in the Specific Plan Area. Because permanent alterations or demolitions to both identified and potential historic resources could occur, impacts would remain potentially significant.

#### Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires evaluation of individual development projects with the potential to adversely affect historic resources and development of feasible mitigation plans for any identified significant impacts.

**CR-1** The applicant for individual development proposals in the Downtown Specific Plan Area with the potential to disturb historic resources identified as part of Mitigation

Measure MM-CR-1 of the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR (June 2019) shall commission a historic evaluation of the proposal. The historic evaluation shall be conducted by a qualified historian approved by the City and shall be subject to City review and approval. If the evaluation concludes that the proposal would significantly affect a historic resource, feasible methods to avoid or minimize the historic resource impact shall be implemented. Such methods include, but are not limited to the standards that guide new development and alterations to existing structures in historic districts and local conservation zones to be developed in accordance with MM-CR-2 of the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR (June 2019).

### Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR, in combination with Mitigation Measure CR-1, would reduce the potential for impacts to historic resources to the degree feasible through identification of historic resources and, as feasible, avoidance of adverse effects to such resources. Nevertheless, because future Specific Plan Area development could still involve permanent alterations to or demolition of historic resources, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold b** | Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5? |

**Impact CUL-2** **THERE ARE NO KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES KNOWN IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WHICH COULD HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT PREVIOUSLY UNDISCOVERED RESOURCES. HOWEVER, WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND GENERAL PLAN FINAL EIR MITIGATION, IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

In Indio, archaeological resources have the highest potential to be found on undeveloped properties. The likelihood of encountering archaeological resources in the Downtown Specific Plan area is considered low because properties have been extensively altered by prior ground disturbance and development. Construction activities associated with future development projects could include excavation and grading. Therefore, while the potential to uncover such resources is low, there is the potential for ground disturbing activities to affect a previously unidentified archaeological resource. This is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation measures have been identified in Impact CUL-1 to reduce this potential impact to archaeological resources (General Plan Final EIR Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2). Compliance with these measures would mitigate potential impacts to archaeological resources to a less than significant level.

Because the proposed project is a Specific Plan Amendment, it is subject to the statutory requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 18 Tribal Consultation Guidelines (*California Government Code* Section 65352.3), which requires the offering of government-to-government consultation with California Native American tribal representatives. Native American groups may have knowledge about cultural resources in the area and may have concerns about adverse effects from development on cultural resources. These resources may be sacred lands, traditional cultural places and resources, and archaeological sites. On May 5, 2015, letters were sent to representatives of four Native American tribes. One letter response was received on May 29, 2015 from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians requesting government-to-government consultation. The City has been in consultation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

pertaining to this project, including a conference call on September 23, 2015, to identify additional concerns of the tribe regarding the Specific Plan Project. In addition, another comment letter from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians was received June 7, 2017, with editorial comments based on the previously circulated Draft EIR (Appendix A). These comments have been incorporated into this Draft EIR.

In addition to Policy CE-8.1 (which requires site plan review for all development proposals in the City, General Plan policies CE-8.4 and CE-8.6 require monitoring on sites where grading has the potential to impact subsurface cultural and paleontological resources during excavation and construction activities and coordination with local tribes to ensure the preservation and protection of highly sensitive resources and that there is agreement regarding the protocol to be followed when cultural resources are discovered.

The Final EIR for the Indio General Plan Update (June 2019) also includes the following mitigation measure aimed at avoiding significant impacts to archaeological resources citywide.

**MM-CR-3:** In areas of moderate, moderate-high, and high sensitivity for cultural resources, as well as areas not current mapped for sensitivity, the City shall either require future project applicants to conduct an archaeological field survey or conduct construction monitoring by a qualified professional if ground disturbance is proposed. If surveys are conducted, the surveys shall be sent to the City of Indio for review and approval prior to issuance of project-specific development permits.

Implementation of this measure, in combination with General Plan policies aimed at the preservation of cultural and tribal cultural resources, would ensure that archaeological and tribal cultural resources in the Downtown Specific Plan Area are identified as part of site plan review and that impacts to such resources are mitigated through resource avoidance and/or recovery.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required beyond implementation of applicable General Plan policies and the measure included in the Indio General Plan Final EIR.

**Threshold c** Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

**Impact CUL-3** **ALTHOUGH THE LIKELIHOOD OF DISCOVERING HUMAN REMAINS IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IS LOW, THE POTENTIAL EXISTS DURING GROUND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES. ADHERENCE TO EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS SUCH AS THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE AND PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE WOULD ENSURE THAT PROPER PROCEDURES ARE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT THEY ARE DISCOVERED. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The Specific Plan area is not within a known or suspected cemetery and there are no human remains known to be in this area. Although there are no areas known to contain human remains in the area, there is the potential that construction activities such as subsurface ground disturbance and excavation could expose or uncover previously undisturbed human remains.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5; CEQA Section 15064.5; and Public Resources Code, Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery. Specifically, California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5 requires that if human remains are discovered on a project site, disturbance of the

site shall remain halted until the coroner has conducted an investigation into the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death, and recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the NAHC.

Compliance with existing regulations in the California Health and Safety and Public Resources Code would ensure that in the event any human remains are uncovered, proper procedures regarding their documentation and preservation occur. As a result, due to required adherence with existing laws and regulation, impacts related to the potential disturbance of human remains would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| **Cumulative** | Would the project contribute to cumulative cultural resource impacts? |
|---|---|

**Impact CUL-4** **DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE SPECIFIC PLAN MAY RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS TO HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA. BECAUSE THESE SITES ARE RESOURCES THAT HOLD HISTORICAL VALUE TO THE CITY AND THE DOWNTOWN AREA, POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE SPECIFIC PLAN ON HISTORICAL RESOURCES WOULD CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS RELATED TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION.**

Future development in the City could have a cumulative impact on cultural resources through the loss of records or artifacts as land is developed (or redeveloped). Cumulative development could adversely affect historic resources through alterations, redevelopment, and/or demolition activities. Future projects in Indio, which are subject to CEQA, would be required to comply with Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) and Senate Bill 18 (SB 18), which requires early consultation with Native American tribes regarding potential impacts to tribal cultural resources.

Potential impacts resulting from future development in the Downtown Specific Plan Area would be site-specific and would require evaluation on a project-by-project basis. All future development projects in Indio and surrounding areas would be required to comply with applicable City, State, and federal regulations concerning the preservation, salvage, or handling of cultural resources. If constraints are found on a subject property, the project proponent would be required to identify and implement proper mitigation measures, prior to developing the land to avoid potential adverse effects. As such, the City is provided with a mechanism for regulating the protection of cultural, archaeological, prehistoric, and tribal resources on affected lands. In consideration of these regulations, potential cumulative impacts on cultural resources caused by future development in the Downtown Specific Plan Area, in combination with future development in Indio and the immediately surrounding area, would be considered less than significant.

As discussed in Impact CR-1, development under the Specific Plan may result in significant and unavoidable impacts to historic resources in the Downtown Area. Because these sites are resources that hold significant value to the City and the Downtown Area, potential impacts from the Specific Plan on historical resources would be cumulatively considerable. Although mitigation from the General Plan

Final EIR and incorporated herein would reduce impacts to these resources to the extent feasible, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative historical resource impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure CR-1.

### Significance after Mitigation

Cumulative archaeological and tribal cultural resource impacts would be less than significant as development projects in the Downtown Specific Plan Area would be adequately screened and surveyed prior to development, and if resources are found, procedures such as halting work, site-specific investigations, and submittal of mitigation plans would be required. Cumulative historic resource impacts would remain significant and unavoidable due to the potential permanent loss or alteration of historic resources.

# 4.5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

## *4.5.1 Introduction*

This section of the EIR describes the geologic and soil characteristics of the Specific Plan area, identifies associated potential geological impacts related to development in accordance with the proposed Specific Plan, and sets forth measures designed to mitigate identified significant adverse impacts. Impacts to potential paleontological resources are also examined and discussed within this section.

## *4.5.2 Existing Conditions*

### Regional Geologic Setting

The Specific Plan area is in the central Coachella Valley in the Colorado Desert geomorphic province. It is in a region that is part of the Salton Trough, a tectonic depression extending from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Gulf of Mexico. This region is geologically unique, being a tectonic spreading center comprised of the North American and Pacific tectonic plates, which are sliding past one another at a rate of about two inches per year in a right-lateral direction. Accordingly, the area is regularly subject to earthquakes. Deposits of Tertiary and Quaternary sediments are commonly found within the Salton Trough. Sand, silt, clay, and conglomerates are found as part of the lacustrine environment typical of the region. Additionally, the region is composed of alluvial fan, deltaic, fluvial, and Aeolian sediments.

### Specific Plan Area Soils

Descriptions of soils below are from the regional soil survey performed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (USDA NRCS 2015a, 2015b).

**Gilman Fine Sandy Loam, 0-2% Slopes (GbA).** Nearly level soil found on alluvial fans, with a water table at a depth of more than six feet below ground surface. Loamy fine sand or sandy loam surface layer, substratum is massive loam or silt loam. Runoff is very slow and the erosion hazard is slight. Soil has a moderate hazard of soil blowing. These soils have a low shrink-swell potential, and pose a high risk of corrosion for uncoated steel and a low risk for concrete.

**Indio Very Fine Sandy Loam, 0-2% Slopes (IS).** Nearly level soil, water table is more than six feet below ground surface. The surface layer is silt loam and the substratum below a depth of 40 inches is stratified with silty clay loam or is silty clay loam. Runoff is slow and erosion hazard is slight. These soils have a low shrink-swell potential, and pose a moderate risk of corrosion for uncoated steel and a low risk for concrete.

**Gilman Silt Loam, 0-2% Slopes (GeA).** Nearly level soil, water table is more than six feet below ground surface. The surface layer is silt loam and the substratum below a depth of eight inches is stratified with loamy sand to silty clay loam. Runoff is slow and erosion hazard is slight. These soils have a low shrink-swell potential, and pose a high risk of corrosion for uncoated steel and a low risk for concrete.

**Coachella Fine Sandy Loam, 0-2% Slopes (CsA).** Nearly level soil, water table is more than six feet below ground surface. The surface layer is fine sandy loam, the substratum between 10 and 40 inches in depth is sand, and the substratum below a depth of 40 inches is loamy sand. Runoff is very slow and erosion hazard is slight. These soils have a low shrink-swell potential, and pose a moderate risk of corrosion for uncoated steel and a moderate risk for concrete.

## Geologic and Soil Hazards

The Specific Plan area is in a region subject to earthquake fault rupture, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic ground failure, debris flows and collapsible soils.

### Active Faults and Seismicity

The tectonics of Southern California can be characterized by the interaction of the North American plate and Pacific plate, which slide past each other in a translational manner. The San Andreas Fault Zone (SAFZ) is considered to represent the major surface expression of the tectonic boundary and is the dominant source of motion between the Pacific plate and the North American plate. The San Andreas Fault system in Southern California is composed of three major segments: 1) Mojave Desert segment, 2) San Bernardino segment, and 3) Coachella Valley segment. The Coachella Valley segment is the active fault nearest to the Specific Plan area, located approximately two miles northeast of the Planning Area. The southern segment of the San Andreas Fault has the potential to produce a large earthquake.

The Specific Plan area does not lie in or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (APZ) (California Geological Survey 2015). The nearest APZ is approximately two miles northeast of the Specific Plan area and is associated with the aforementioned Coachella Valley segment of the San Andreas Fault Zone. This fault segment is considered to have a high potential to generate a major earthquake within the next 50-years.

### Ground Shaking

The Specific Plan area is approximately two miles southwest of the Coachella segment of the San Andreas Fault zone. As depicted in the General Plan Update EIR, high rates of ground acceleration during a major earthquake on the Coachella segment of the SAFZ could occur in the Specific Plan area (City of Indio 2019).

### Liquefaction

Liquefaction is a process in which strong ground shaking causes saturated soils to lose their strength and behave like a fluid, resulting in severe damage to structures. On-site soils are unconsolidated, and there is a potential for high intensity ground shaking due to proximity to major active faults. As depicted in the General Plan Update EIR, the Specific Plan area is located in an area with moderate to high liquefaction potential.

### Lateral Spreading

Lateral spreading is a potential hazard commonly associated with liquefaction where extensional ground cracking and settlement occur as a response to lateral migration of subsurface liquefiable material. These phenomena typically occur adjacent to free faces such as slopes and creek channels. Considering the generally flat topography of the Specific Plan area's terrain and the moderate to high liquefaction hazards, risks related to lateral spreading are be considered moderate.

### Ground Subsidence Risk

Ground subsidence risk is primarily caused by fluid withdrawal (oil, gas, water), soil collapse, and oxidation of organic-rich soil. The County of Riverside identifies the Specific Plan area as within an active subsidence area due to historic declines in groundwater levels (County of Riverside 2019).

#### Expansion Potential

The soils, as discussed above, have a very low expansion potential, and little vulnerability to shrinking and swelling. This is mainly due to a low clay content. However, special provisions would be made on a project by project basis regarding the foundation design and construction to safeguard against damage according to the most current version of the California Building Code (CBC).

### Paleontological Resources

The Coachella Valley was part of the greater Salton Trough, which covers a structural depression south to the Gulf of California. During the late Miocene and early Pliocene eras the Coachella Valley was part of the inland sea, as the Gulf of California extended up to the present day Banning Pass. Later, the lower portion of the valley was occupied by Holocene-age Lake Cahuilla, which at one time had a shoreline of 42 feet above msl, much higher than the present-day Salton Sea which has a water surface level of 220 feet below msl. Sedimentary deposition has been slowly filling the Coachella Valley since the Miocene Epoch (2.03 to 5.332 million years ago).

Geologic formations are ranked (High, Low, and Undetermined) by their potential to contain significant paleontological resources. Sedimentary units that have a High Potential are those that have a high potential for containing significant vertebrate or invertebrate fossils. Sedimentary units with Low Potential are those units that have minimal, but some potential for containing paleontological resources. Sedimentary units with Undetermined Potential are units for which information on their potential for containing significant paleontological resources is not available. The City of Indio has four sedimentary units that have High Potential for sensitivity (Mecca Formation, Palm Springs Formation, Canebrake Conglomerate, and Older Quaternary Lake Sediments) and one sedimentary unit that has an Undetermined Potential for paleontological resources (Ocotillo Conglomerate).

## *4.5.3 Regulatory Setting*

### Federal

#### International Building Code

The International Building Code (IBC) is published by the International Code Council (ICC). The scope of this code covers major aspects of construction and design of structures and buildings. The IBC has replaced the Uniform Building Code (UBC) as the basis for the California Building Code (CBC) and contains provisions for structural engineering design. The 2015 IBC addresses the design and installation of structures and building systems through requirements that emphasize performance. The IBC includes codes governing structural as well as fire- and life-safety provisions covering seismic, wind, accessibility, egress, occupancy, and roofs.

### State of California

#### Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (SHMA) of 1990

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (SHMA) was enacted by the State of California in 1990 to ensure city, county, and State agencies identify and map seismic hazard zones. The purpose of the SHMA is to protect public health and safety from seismically induced ground failure including ground shaking, liquefaction, and slope stability. The California Geological Survey (CGS) is responsible for implementing the Act and providing local governments with hazard susceptibility maps. Cities, counties, and State agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps developed by CGS in their land-use planning and permitting processes. In accordance with the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, site-specific geotechnical investigations

must be performed prior to permitting most urban development projects in seismic hazard zones.

### California Building Code

Geologic instability and erosion problems in the City of Indio are primarily regulated through the California Building Code (CBC) and Chapter 152 of the City's Municipal Code (see below). The CBC requires special foundation engineering and investigation of soils on proposed development sites located in geologic hazard areas. These reports must demonstrate either that the hazard presented by the project will be eliminated or that there is no danger for the intended use. The CBC also contains design and construction regulations pertaining to seismic safety for buildings. These regulations cover issues such as ground motions, soil classifications, redundancy, drift, and deformation compatibility.

The CBC is based on the International Building Code (IBC) published by the International Code Conference. In addition, the CBC contains necessary California amendments that are based on the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Minimum Design Standards 7-05. ASCE 7-05 provides requirements for general structural design and includes means for determining earthquake loads, as well as other loads (e.g., flood, snow, wind) for inclusion in building codes. The provisions of the CBC apply to the construction, alteration, movement, replacement and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings or structures throughout California.

The earthquake design requirements take into account the occupancy category of the structure, site class, soil classifications, and various seismic coefficients, all of which are used to determine a Seismic Design Category (SDC) for a project. The SDC is a classification system that combines the occupancy categories with the level of expected ground motions at a given site, and ranges from SDC A (very small seismic vulnerability) to SDC E/F (very high seismic vulnerability and near a major fault). Design specifications are then determined according to the SDC.

### CEQA

Paleontological resources are nonrenewable scientific and educational resources. The CEQA regulatory framework for impacts on paleontological resources is contained in Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form) of the CEQA Guidelines. Projects subject to CEQA must determine whether the project would "directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource".

An impact to paleontological resources would be considered a significant impact if a project results in the direct or indirect destruction of a unique or important paleontological resource or site. A project site is deemed paleontologically sensitive if (1) it has fossils that have previously been recovered from a particular geologic unit; (2) there are recorded fossil localities within the same geologic units that occur in the Specific Plan area; and (3) the types of fossil materials that have been recovered from the geologic unit are unique or important.

## Local

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The 2019 City of Indio General Plan's Land Use, Conservation, and Safety Elements contain numerous policies which are intended to identify and minimize adverse effects from geological hazards. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 3 – Open Space Element**

**Policies**

**LU-4.1 Quality Design.** Use simple, urban building forms made with permanent materials with high-quality detailing that stands the test of time.

**Chapter 8 – Conservation Element**

**Policies**

**CE-6.1 Grading.** Minimize grading of land to project specific efforts so as to limit the impact of soil erosion from wind, water, and landslides in areas of unstable slopes, and reduce negative aesthetic impacts in areas of significant landforms.

**CE-6.2 Agricultural Soil Erosion.** Continue to work with agricultural property owners and operators to minimize the impacts of tilling and grading on soil erosion.

**Chapter 10 – Safety Element**

**Policies**

**SE-2.4 Hazard Profile.** Work to minimize the frequency, severity, and probability of future hazard events in the City by taking actions that prepare and mitigate those hazards before they occur.

**SE-4.1 Development Plan Review.** Require all new structures to be designed in accordance with the most recent California Building Code adopted by City Council, including the provisions regarding seismic loads, lateral forces and grading and not built across the trace of an active fault.

**SE-4.2 Technical Reports.** Require submittal of applicable geotechnical reports prepared by qualified professionals as part of the development review process.

**SE-4.3 Liquefaction.** Require liquefaction assessment studies be conducted for all projects proposed in areas identified as potentially susceptible to liquefaction. In areas where geotechnical testing shows the sediments are susceptible to liquefaction, require the implementation of mitigation measures as a condition of approval. Liquefaction mitigation measures shall be applied to all habitable structures, bridges, roadways, major utility lines and park improvements to be built in these areas. Work with insurers to require additional insurance coverage in liquefaction areas.

**SE-4.4 Information and Education.** Encourage earthquake preparedness within the community through early and clear information and education so the community avoids and/or is prepared for seismic and geologic hazards. Encourage participation in The Great ShakeOut, an annual earthquake drill that Indio residents are encouraged to participate in.

**SE-4.5 Critical Facilities Planning.** When planning for new fire stations or other critical facilities, review hazard maps to ensure that they are not sited in geologic or flood hazard zones and employ critical infrastructure design and building standards to enable City operations to continue after an earthquake.

**SE-4.6 Inventory of Unreinforced Structures.** Periodically review and update the City's inventory of unreinforced masonry buildings, existing multifamily housing constructed before 1971, and other structures that may result in unsafe conditions during seismic events. Any historic landmarks discovered through the inventory process shall be added to the City's inventory of historic places.

**SE-4.7 Seismic Maps.** Maintain an updated Seismic Hazards Map, periodically consult with the California Geological Survey (CGS) Seismic Hazards Zonation Map and coordinate information with geotechnical reports filed at the City to ensure the latest information is available to the City.

### *4.5.4 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

   i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

   ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

   iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

   iv. Landslides?

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

c) Be located on a geologic unit that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18 1 B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

As discussed in Section 1.6.1, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the project would not have a significant impact pertaining to thresholds a.iv and e since there are no landslide areas in or adjacent to the Specific Plan area and the Specific Plan would not require the use of septic tanks. All other thresholds (a.i, a.ii, a.iii, b, c, d, and f) are discussed in detail in this section.

### *4.5.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

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| **Threshold a.i** | Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? |
| **Threshold c** | Be located on a geologic unit that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? |

**Impact GEO-1** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD NOT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSE SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM FAULT RUPTURE, AS THERE ARE NO ACTIVE FAULTS IN THE PLANNING AREA. ALL NEW SPECIFIC PLAN AREA DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AS WELL AS APPLICABLE STATE AND LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Although the City of Indio is located in a seismically active area, the Specific Plan area is located outside of the California Geological Society seismic hazard zonation program (SHZP). As discussed above, the Specific Plan area is not located in an APZ and no known active faults cross the area. Regardless, all future development would be required to comply with applicable state laws and local regulations pertaining to seismic hazards, including the CBC and Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. As future projects are planned and developed, they will be required to adhere to the GPU policies such as General Plan Safety Element Policy 4.1, which requires all new structures to be designed in accordance with the most recent California Building Code adopted by City Council, including the provisions regarding seismic loads, lateral forces and grading and not built across the trace of an active fault. Because the Specific Plan area is not located on an active fault and all Specific Plan area development would be required to adhere to General Plan policies, applicable state laws and local regulations pertaining to reducing fault rupture hazards, impacts would be less than significant.

#### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

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| **Threshold a.ii** | Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking? |
| **Threshold c** | Be located on a geologic unit that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? |

**Impact GEO-2** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD NOT INCREASE GROUND SHAKING POTENTIAL, BUT WOULD EXPOSE WORKERS AND RESIDENTS TO STRONG SEISMIC GROUND SHAKING. IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURE GEO-1 AND GEO-2 WOULD REQUIRE BUILDING PLAN REVIEW AND SUBMITTAL OF GEOTECHNICAL SURVEYS IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE ENGINEERING DESIGN MEASURES TO REDUCE POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM STRONG SEISMIC GROUND SHAKING TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.**

Due to the Specific Plan area's proximity to the local segment of the San Andreas Fault, there is a substantial probability of moderate to severe ground shaking in association with a major earthquake. The nearest APZ is approximately two miles northeast of the Specific Plan area and is associated with the aforementioned Coachella Valley segment of the San Andreas Fault Zone. This fault segment has a high

potential to generate a major earthquake within the next 50 years. Therefore, the Specific Plan area would be subject to future seismic shaking and strong ground motion in the event of a major earthquake because of regional seismic activity. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the approval of building plans for development project within the Specific Plan area to ensure compliance with seismic safety design criteria specified in the most recent CBC seismic design standards.

While such shaking would be less severe from an earthquake that originates at a greater distance from the Specific Plan area, the effects could potentially be damaging to buildings and supporting infrastructure within the Specific Plan area. It is likely that the Specific Plan area would be subject to at least a moderate or larger earthquake occurring close enough to produce strong ground shaking at the Specific Plan area. Therefore, this impact is considered potentially significant. However, development projects in the Specific Plan area would be required to design all development and associated infrastructure in accordance with applicable CBC seismic design standards. Mitigation Measure GEO-2 requires geotechnical evaluations for any development project in the Specific Plan area to identify appropriate engineering design measures to reduce potential impacts relative to strong seismic ground shaking to a less than significant level. Required implementation of the building codes, as well as Mitigation Measure GEO-1 and GEO-2, would reduce potential impacts related to the proximity of earthquake faults by requiring project facilities to be built to withstand strong seismic ground shaking.

### Mitigation Measures

While implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not exacerbate any geologic hazards, Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 would be required to ensure that development projects are adequately reviewed for building safety, and that geotechnical surveys are prepared which identify and require incorporation of engineering design parameters to minimize exposure to geologic related hazards.

**GEO-1** Prior to any development project permits, building plans shall be prepared and submitted to the Indio Building Department for review and approval. Plans will show that all structures on the development site have been designed, and will be constructed, in accordance with seismic safety design criteria specified in the most recent California Building Code requirements, at a minimum, or as otherwise recommended by a qualified registered structural engineer. This measure shall be implemented on a project-by-project basis by each development applicant at the time of final design of improvements for project development under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan. Plans for improvements shall be subject to approval by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division.

**GEO-2** For any development project proposed under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, a specific geotechnical survey may be necessary in order to refine engineering design parameters regarding site preparation, grading, and foundation design, to assure design criteria responsive to specific project development site soils and the effects of differential settlements resulting from identified ground shaking potential, as well as effects of subsidence, lateral spreading, and collapse potential. Any geotechnical recommendations identified in the geotechnical analysis shall be incorporated into development plans prior to the approval. Development plans shall be approved by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2, impacts related to site specific seismic ground shaking would be less than significant, as development projects would adequately reviewed for building safety, and geotechnical surveys would be prepared to identify and require incorporation of engineering design parameters to minimize exposure to geologic related hazards.

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| **Threshold a.iii** | Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? |
| **Threshold c** | Be located on a geologic unit that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? |

**Impact GEO-3** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD NOT EXACERBATE LIQUEFACTION POTENTIAL, BUT WOULD EXPOSE WORKERS AND RESIDENTS TO LIQUEFACTION HAZARDS; HOWEVER, IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURE GEO-1 AND GEO-2 WOULD REQUIRE DETAILED PROJECT-SPECIFIC GEOTECHNICAL MITIGATION MEASURES BE DEVELOPED BASED ON DESIGN-LEVEL GEOTECHNICAL REPORTS. THIS WOULD REDUCE POTENTIAL IMPACTS RELATIVE TO LIQUEFACTION HAZARDS TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.**

Liquefaction occurs when saturated, loose materials (e.g., sand or silty sand) are weakened and transformed from a solid to a near-liquid state because of increased pore water pressure. The increase in pressure is caused by strong ground motion from an earthquake. A site's susceptibility to liquefaction is a function of depth, density, groundwater level, and magnitude of an earthquake. For liquefaction to occur, the soil must be saturated (i.e., shallow groundwater) and relatively loose. The surface effects of liquefaction can cause structural distress or failure due to ground settlement, lurching, loss of bearing capacity in the foundation soils, and the buoyant rise of buried structures or utilities, and development of lateral spreads.

Liquefaction typically occurs in areas underlain by young alluvium where the groundwater table is higher than 50 feet below ground surface (bgs). The depth to groundwater in the Specific Plan area is historically more than six feet bgs. As depicted in the General Plan Update EIR, the Specific Plan area is located in an area with moderate to high liquefaction potential. With a moderate to high liquefaction potential and the potential for high ground acceleration in the event of a major earthquake, the development in the Specific Plan area could expose workers and residents to liquefaction hazards, triggering a potentially significant impact. Although implementation of the Specific Plan would not exacerbate liquefaction hazards, to mitigate the potential impact of exposure to the hazards, Mitigation Measure GEO-2 as discussed in Impact GEO-2 would require individual development proponents to prepare a geotechnical evaluation to evaluate potential risks. In addition, Mitigation Measure GEO-3, as listed below, requires project-specific mitigation measures to be developed for individual projects in the Specific Plan area.

### Mitigation Measures

Although implementation of the Specific Plan would not exacerbate liquefaction hazards, Mitigation Measure GEO-3 is required to mitigate the impact of exposing future residents and workers to liquefaction hazards.

**GEO-3** Prior to issuance of any project-specific permits, detailed project-specific geotechnical mitigation measures shall be developed based on design-level

geotechnical reports and depicted on plans prepared by the geotechnical engineer of record or on plan sheets included within final grading plans. Proposed mitigation methods shall be subject to approval by the City of Indio Building and Safety Division, the Engineering Services Division, and/or Community Development Department. Mitigation shall be implemented by the individual project proponent, where appropriate, based on cost, and constructability considerations, and project specific requirements, and may include the following:

a. Removal of any liquefiable/collapsible soils, if present, and replacement with engineered fill. Removal and replacement will be feasible above the water table or in dewatered excavations; and

b. Liquefiable/collapsible soils both above and below the water table, if present, can be improved by in situ ground densification using deep dynamic compaction, rapid impact compaction, compaction with vibratory probes (e.g., vibroflotation, terraprobe), stone columns, and/or compaction piles.

c. Increase soil density and shear strength and reduce soil moisture content of soils subject to cyclic softening, ground lurching, and static compression through consolidation under fills. The level of soil improvement will be sufficient to bring estimated prost-construction settlement or seismic ground deformation to acceptable levels. Depending on the proposed fill thickness and site-specific soil conditions, mitigation could be effected either by project fills or by the application of temporary surcharge fills;

d. Support large, heavy, or multi-story structures on deep foundations, such as driven piles, reinforced concrete caissons, or structural mat foundations, if ground improvement by placement of surcharge fills will not be effective;

e. Dewater, if necessary, and remove soft, compressible soils, if present, and replace them with engineered fill; and

f. Design any proposed project to avoid areas underlain by soils subject to cyclic softening, ground lurching, and static compression.

Geotechnical surveys shall be used to determine the appropriate engineering for foundations and support structures as well as building requirements to minimize geotechnical hazard impacts when implementing the Indio Downtown Specific Plan. Copies of all analyses shall be submitted to the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division for review and approval. An approved copy of the evaluation shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-3, impacts related to exposure to liquefaction hazards would be less than significant because engineering design parameters would be incorporated into project design.

| **Threshold b** | Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil? |
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**Impact GEO-4** **ALTHOUGH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD RESULT IN THE EXPOSURE OF TOPSOIL WITH POTENTIAL FOR EROSION, ADHERENCE TO THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL CODE AND MITIGATION MEASURE GEO-4 WOULD ENSURE THAT SITE SPECIFIC BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ARE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE THESE EFFECTS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

Construction activities could temporarily loosen on-site soils or remove stabilizing vegetation and expose areas of loose soil. These areas, if not properly stabilized during construction, could be subject to increased soil loss and erosion by wind and storm water runoff. All future development would be required to comply with applicable state laws and local regulations pertaining to soil erosion, including the CBC, Chapter 152 and 155 of the City's Municipal Code outlining the requirements related to soil erosion and dust control, as well as Chapter 162 outlining the grading requirements for development activities. In compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act, as well as regulations of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or stormwater control plan (SCP), which includes site-specific best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control, would be prepared and implemented for any proposed project during the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan.

Projects in the Specific Plan area would be required to submit grading plans, which would be accompanied by a soils engineering report, engineering geology report, and drainage calculations, to obtain the required grading permits. To further ensure that site specific grading procedures which reduce erosion are conducted, Mitigation Measure GEO-4 would require that grading be limited to the minimum area necessary, and BMPs be implemented to minimize erosion and fugitive dust. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-4 would reduce soil erosion or loss of topsoil impacts to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure GEO-4 is required to reduce the potentially significant impact of exposing soils to erosion.

**GEO-4** For discretionary development projects in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area, individual project developers shall limit grading to the minimum area necessary for construction and operation of a project. Final grading plans shall include best management practices (BMPs) to limit on-site and off-site erosion and a water plan to treat disturbed areas during construction and reduce dust. The plans shall be submitted to the City of Indio Building and Safety Division and/or the Engineering Services Division for review and approval. A copy of the approved plan shall be submitted to the City of Indio Community Development Department.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-4, impacts related to soil erosion and loss of topsoil would be less than significant, as grading would be limited to the minimum area necessary, and BMPs would be implemented to minimize erosion and fugitive dust.

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| **Threshold d** | Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18 1 B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? |

**Impact GEO-5** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD NOT INCREASE RISKS OF EXPOSING BUILDINGS OR PEOPLE TO EXPANSIVE SOIL HAZARDS AS SOILS IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA HAVE LOW EXPANSION POTENTIAL. REGARDLESS, IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES GEO-1 THROUGH GEO-4 WOULD ENSURE THAT SITE SPECIFIC GEOTECHNICAL SURVEYS AND ANY GEOTECHNICAL MITIGATION MEASURES ARE INCORPORATED TO REDUCE ON-SITE SOIL HAZARDS. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

As noted previously, the soils on the Specific Plan area are expected to have a very low expansion potential, and little vulnerability to shrinking and swelling. Impacts associated with expansive soils are expected to be less than significant. However, each individual project would be evaluated separately for site-specific conditions, and with implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, site specific soil hazards would be identified and mitigated through the development of site specific geotechnical surveys. This would reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, site specific expansive soil hazards would be identified and addressed on a project to project basis. Impacts would be less than significant.

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| **Threshold f** | Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? |

**Impact GEO-6** **ALTHOUGH THE LIKELIHOOD OF DISCOVERING PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IS LOW, THE POTENTIAL EXISTS DURING GROUND DISTURBING AND EXCAVATION RELATED ACTIVITIES. MITIGATION MEASURES GEO-5 AND GEO-6 WOULD REQUIRE PROJECT PROPONENTS TO PROVIDE AWARENESS TRAINING ON POTENTIAL PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND PROVIDE APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION IF RESOURCES ARE IDENTIFIED, ENSURING THAT ANY ENCOUNTERED RESOURCES ARE NOT DESTROYED. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

The Specific Plan area has been highly disturbed by several phases of urban development in and around the Specific Plan area. As an urban and built-up area, no unique geologic features occur within the Specific Plan boundaries. No impacts would occur with respect to unique geologic features.

The Specific Plan area is categorized as “sensitive” and has a high potential for sedimentary units containing paleontological resources such as vertebrate or invertebrate fossils. Extensive data and information has already been collected on paleontological resources recorded in the City. Soils identified within the Specific Plan area are mainly comprised of alluvial and Aeolian-deposited silts and sand. Fill has also been placed in areas within the Specific Plan area associated with prior development activities. Below the alluvial soils, silts, sand and fill, the Specific Plan area is generally underlain by young Holocene-age dunes and alluvium.

Based upon these conditions, the potential for discovering new or important paleontological resources within the proposed Specific Plan area is low. However, during any ground disturbing or excavation related construction activities, the potential exists to encounter previously undiscovered paleontological resources as a part of development in the Specific Plan area. Mitigation Measures GEO-5 and GEO-6 would require

project proponents to provide awareness training on potential paleontological resources to construction personnel by a qualified paleontologist and provide appropriate course of action if resources are identified. With implementation of GEO-5 and GEO-6, impacts would be less than significant with respect to paleontological resources.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures GEO-5 and GEO-6 would require individual project developers to provide awareness training on potential paleontological resources and provide appropriate course of action if resources are identified/uncovered.

**GEO-5** Prior to the commencement of construction activities, the project proponent shall provide for a qualified paleontologist to provide construction personnel with orientation and awareness training on potential paleontological resources. Such training shall include familiarization with the stop-work restrictions, noticing, and handling procedures, and ultimate disposition of ratifications. An information package shall be provided for construction personnel not present at the initial preconstruction briefing. The operator shall provide the City of Indio Community Development Department with verification of the employees completing the orientation.

**GEO-6** If paleontological resources are discovered during any development project within the Indio Downtown Specific Plan area, the contractor shall stop all earth-moving activities within and around the immediate discovery area and the project proponent shall retain a qualified paleontologist to evaluate the significance of the finding and appropriate course of action. The person who made the discovery shall contact the City of Indio Community Development Department so that they may coordinate an appropriate plan of action. If the find is determined by paleontologists to require further treatment, the area of discovery will be protected from disturbance while qualified paleontologists and appropriate officials, in consultation with a recognized museum repository (e.g., the San Diego Natural History Museum or the University of California Museum of Paleontology), determine an appropriate treatment plan.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-5 and GEO-6, impacts related to paleontological resources would be less than significant as proper training, identification, and handling procedures would be implemented, ensuring that no paleontological resources are destroyed.

**Cumulative** Would the project contribute to cumulative geologic and soil impacts?

**Impact GEO-7** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO CUMULATIVE IMPACTS, AS GEOLOGIC AND SOILS IMPACTS ARE SITE-SPECIFIC AND DO NOT COMPOUND OR INCREASE IN COMBINATION WITH PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES. ALTHOUGH IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT, BECAUSE MITIGATION IS REQUIRED FOR SITE SPECIFIC IMPACTS, THESE MITIGATION MEASURES WOULD BE INCORPORATED NONETHELESS.**

Potential impacts associated with future development in the City would be continue to be addressed through adherence to seismic standards contained in the California Building Code. In addition,

development consistent with the GPU would be required to adhere to GPU policies, such as Policies SE-4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, which require all structures to be designed in accordance with the most recent California Building Code, as well as require the development of site-specific technical reports in areas with identified seismic hazards.

Impacts related to geotechnical conditions and soils are generally site specific and do not compound or increase in combination with projected development elsewhere in neighboring communities. Impacts from development projects in the Specific Plan area would be cumulatively considerable if they would have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects. Potential impacts associated with development under Specific Plan would be addressed through adherence to seismic standards contained in the California Building Code. In addition, implementation of the Specific Plan would require that future projects in the Specific Plan area be evaluated to identify site-specific geological, paleontological, and soil related impacts, as set forth in Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-6. Therefore, with the incorporation of the project mitigation measures, the project would not contribute to a cumulative impact related to geology and soils. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-6.

### Significance after Mitigation

Cumulative impacts would be less than significant as geologic related hazards in the Specific Plan area would be adequately identified and mitigated, and implementation of the Specific Plan would not exacerbate geologic related hazards in other areas of the City.

# 4.6 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

### *4.6.1 Introduction*

This section evaluates the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions impacts of the implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan and the consistency of the Specific Plan with relevant GHG emissions reductions plans and programs. The GHG emissions information in this section is based, in part, on the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts Analysis ("Air Quality Study") prepared by Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consulting in November 2016 (Appendix C). The impact assessment is based upon a review of relevant literature and technical reports that include, but are not limited to, information and guidelines by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and the applicable provisions of CEQA. In addition to the Air Quality Study prepared for the Specific Plan, revised emissions modeling was conducted in support of the analysis contained below.

### *4.6.2 Background*

The "greenhouse effect" is the natural process that retains heat in the troposphere, the bottom layer of the atmosphere. Without the greenhouse effect, thermal energy would "leak" into space resulting in a much colder and inhospitable planet. With the greenhouse effect, the global average temperature is approximately 61˚F (16˚C). Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are the components of the atmosphere responsible for the greenhouse effect. The amount of heat that is retained is proportional to the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere. As more GHGs are released into the atmosphere, GHG concentrations increase and the atmosphere retains more heat, increasing the effects of climate change. Six gases were identified by the Kyoto Protocol for emission reduction targets: carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), nitrous oxide ($N_2O$), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$). When accounting for GHGs, all types of GHG emissions are expressed in terms of $CO_2$ equivalents ($CO_2e$) and are typically quantified in metric tons (MT) or million metric tons (MMT).

Approximately 80 percent of the total radiative forcing (i.e., the amount of heat stored in the atmosphere) is caused by $CO_2$, $CH_4$ and $N_2O$. These three gases are emitted by human activities as well as natural sources. Each of the GHGs affects climate change at different rates and persist in the atmosphere for varying lengths of time. The relative measure of the potential for a GHG to trap heat in the atmosphere is called global warming potential (GWP). The GWP was developed to allow comparisons of the global warming impacts of different gases. Specifically, it is a measure of how much energy the emissions of one ton of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of one ton of carbon dioxide ($CO_2$). The larger the GWP, the more that a given gas warms the Earth compared to $CO_2$ over that time period. GWPs provide a common unit of measure, which allows analysts to add up emissions estimates of different gases (e.g., to compile a national GHG inventory), and allows policymakers to compare emissions reduction opportunities across sectors and gases.

Greenhouse gases, primarily $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$ are directly emitted as a result of stationary source combustion of natural gas in equipment such as water heaters, boilers, process heaters, and furnaces. GHGs are also emitted from mobile sources such as on-road vehicles and off-road construction equipment burning fuels such as gasoline, diesel, biodiesel, propane, or natural gas (compressed or liquefied). Indirect GHG emissions result from electric power generated elsewhere (i.e., power plants) used to operate process equipment, lighting, and utilities at a facility. Also included in GHG quantification is electric power

used to pump the water supply (e.g., aqueducts, wells, pipelines) and disposal and decomposition of municipal waste in landfills (CARB 2008).

**Carbon Dioxide ($CO_2$).** $CO_2$ is an odorless and colorless gas that is emitted from natural sources such as the decomposition of dead organic matter, respiration of bacteria, plants, animals and fungus, evaporation from oceans, and volcanic out gassing. Manmade sources of $CO_2$ include the combustion of coal, oil, natural gas, and wood. $CO_2$ is naturally removed from the air by photosynthesis, dissolution into ocean water, transfer to soils and ice caps, and chemical weathering of carbonate rocks.

**Methane ($CH_4$).** $CH_4$ is released naturally as part of biological processes such as in low oxygen environments like swamplands, bogs, or in rice production (at the roots of the plants) and in cattle raising. Mining of coal, the combustion of fossil fuels, and biomass also generate methane emissions. Methane is a more efficient absorber of radiation compared to $CO_2$; however, its atmospheric concentration is less than $CO_2$.

**Nitrous Oxide ($N_2O$).** $N_2O$ is more commonly known as laughing gas and is a colorless greenhouse gas that in small doses can cause dizziness, euphoria, and sometimes slight hallucinations. However, prolonged exposure to heavy concentrations of $N_2O$ can cause Olney's Lesions (brain damage). Nitrous oxide is produced by microbial processes in soil and water, including those reactions that occur in fertilizer containing nitrogen. Some industrial processes (fossil fuel fired power plants, nylon production, nitric acid production, and vehicle emissions) also generate $N_2O$ emissions. It is used as an aerosol spray propellant for products, in potato chip bags to keep chips fresh, and in rocket engines and racecars.

$N_2O$ can be transported into the stratosphere, be deposited on the Earth's surface, and be converted to other compounds by chemical reaction. Nitrous oxide combines with oxygen in the presence of reactive hydrocarbons and sunlight to form nitrogen dioxide and ozone. It contributes to other air pollution problems including high levels of fine particulate matter, poor visibility, and acid deposition.

### *4.6.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

In *Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency* et al. ([2007] 549 U.S. 05-1120), the U.S. Supreme Court held that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has the authority to regulate motor-vehicle GHG emissions under the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA). U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule for mandatory reporting of GHG emissions in October 2009. This Final Rule applies to fossil fuel suppliers, industrial gas suppliers, direct GHG emitters, and manufacturers of heavy-duty and off-road vehicles and vehicle engines, and requires annual reporting of emissions. In 2012, U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule that establishes the GHG permitting thresholds that determine when CAA permits under the New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and Title V Operating Permit programs are required for new and existing industrial facilities.

In 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court held that U.S. EPA may not treat GHGs as an air pollutant for purposes of determining whether a source is a major source required to obtain a PSD or Title V permit (Utility Air Regulatory Group v. EPA [134 S. Ct. 2427]). The Court also held that PSD permits that are otherwise required (based on emissions of other pollutants) may continue to require limitations on GHG emissions

based on the application of Best Available Control Technology (BACT).[1]

Specific GHG Regulations that the U.S. EPA has adopted to date are: 40 CFR Part 98. Mandatory Reporting of Greenhouse Gases Rule and 40 CFR Part 52. Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule.

### State of California

Current State of California guidance and goals for reductions in GHG emissions include but are not limited to the following:

#### Executive Order (EO) S-03-05

Signed on June 1, 2005, EO S-03-05 set GHG emissions reduction targets for the State of California and laid out responsibilities among the State agencies for implementing the Executive Order and for reporting on progress toward the targets. The following targets were set: Year 2000 levels by 2010; 1990 levels by 2020; and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

#### Senate Bill (SB) 375

In 2008, SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, was adopted to connect the GHG emissions reductions targets established in the 2008 Scoping Plan for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles (excludes emissions associated with goods movement) by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle trips. Specifically, SB 375 required CARB to establish GHG emissions reduction targets for the 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including SCAG.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, CARB adopted per capita reduction targets for the MPOs rather than a total magnitude reduction target. SCAG's targets are an 8 percent per capita reduction from 2005 GHG emission levels by 2020 and a 13 percent per capita reduction by 2035. Targets must be periodically updated.

#### Assembly Bill 32

In 2006, the State adopted the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). AB 32 declared that global warming poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. AB 32, codified as *California Health and Safety Code* Sections 38500 – 38599, established a State goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the 2020 as set forth in EO S-3-05.

The AB 32 Scoping Plan contains the main strategies California will use to reduce the GHG emissions that cause climate change. The scoping plan has a range of GHG emission reduction actions, which include direct regulations, alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, voluntary actions, market-based mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade system, and an AB 32 cost of implementation fee regulation to fund the program.

In October 2008, ARB published its Climate Change Proposed Scoping Plan, which is the State's plan to achieve GHG reductions in California required by AB 32. The Scoping Plan includes measures to reduce GHG emissions associated with transportation, electricity consumption, natural gas usage, water conservation, green buildings, and recycling and waste management. AB 32 measures are generally

[1] Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.

applied at the State level and are largely not under the jurisdiction of local agencies except for measures related to SB 375 (see below).

### Senate Bill 97

In August 2007, the State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 97. SB 97 acknowledged that climate change was a prominent environmental issue that required analysis under CEQA. SB 97 directed the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to adopt CEQA guidelines for GHG emissions and mitigation. The CEQA Guidelines Amendments became effective on March 18, 2010.

### Executive Order (EO) B-30-15

EO B-30-15, signed on April 29, 2015, established an interim GHG emission reduction goal for the State to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. This Executive Order directs all State agencies with jurisdiction over GHG-emitting sources to implement measures designed to achieve the new interim 2030 goal, as well as the pre-existing, long-term 2050 goal identified in EO S-3-05. The Executive Order directs the Air Resources Board to update its Scoping Plan to address the 2030 goal. It also requires the Natural Resources Agency to conduct triennial updates of the California adaption strategy, Safeguarding California, to ensure climate change is accounted for in State planning and investment decisions.

### Senate Bill (SB) 32

On September 8, 2016, Governor Brown signed SB 32 which will extend the State's GHG targets from 2020 to 2030. SB 32 codifies the interim 2030 GHG target included in EO B-30-15. The interim target is intended to ensure California meets its target of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. SB 97, a companion bill, directs the California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency) to certify and adopt guidelines for the mitigation of GHG or the effects of GHG emissions.

### Senate Bill 1383

Adopted in September 2016, SB 1383 requires CARB to approve and begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. The bill requires the strategy to achieve the following reduction targets by 2030:

- Methane: 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Hydrofluorocarbons: 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Anthropogenic black carbon: 50 percent below 2013 levels

### Executive Order B-55-18

On September 10, 2018, the governor issued Executive Order B-55-18, which established a new statewide goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter. This goal is in addition to the existing statewide GHG reduction targets established by SB 375, SB 32, SB 1383, and SB 100.

## Regional

### 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375), requires SCAG to develop a SCS to reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks through integrated transportation, land use,

housing, and environmental planning. On April 7, 2016, the Regional Council of the SCAG adopted the *2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* (RTP/SCS). The SCS provides a plan for meeting the greenhouse gas emission-reduction targets set by the ARB for the SCAG region. The 2016-2040 RTP/SCS has been designed to achieve minimum GHG reductions (below 2005 levels) of 8 percent by 2020, 18 percent by 2035, and 21 percent by 2040.

### Local

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The City of Indio General Plan's Land Use, Mobility, Health and Equity, and Conservation Elements contain policies intended to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 3 – Land Use Element**

**LU-1.1 Overall City Structure.** Establish a clearly defined City structure by:

- Re-establishing the City's pedestrian-oriented Downtown as a community anchor with local and regional-serving civic, arts, education, and entertainment uses.
- Creating mixed-use corridors along Highway 111, Monroe Street, Avenue 42, and Avenue 44 that contain a mix of retail, service, office, and residential uses. Corridors should have defined nodes that provide a mix of local- and regional-serving uses.

**LU-1.2 Infill First.** Prioritize initial capital improvements and other public investments and guide private investments into the Downtown, Midtown, Jackson Neighborhood, and Avenue 42 Subarea first to limit expansion of the City's urban footprint.

**LU-2.1 Walkable Neighborhoods.** Require all new neighborhoods to be pedestrian friendly by including features, such as short blocks, wide sidewalks, shaded streets, buildings that define and are oriented to streets or public spaces, traffic-calming features, convenient pedestrian street crossings, and safe streets designed for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

**LU-4.6 Climate-Appropriate Design.** Encourage the use of building techniques and materials that relate to Indio's warm and dry desert climate. Promote solar control and use of shade in building design and associated pedestrian amenities.

**LU-5.2 Street Connectivity.** Encourage short block spacing for new development to enhance connectivity to neighborhoods. In key areas of the City, work with existing land owners to improve connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians.

**LU-10.4 Non-polluting Industries.** Promote development of non-polluting industries that are not major sources of air and water pollution or other negative externalities.

**Chapter 3 – Mobility Element**

**ME-1.3 Projects and Phases.** Design, plan, maintain, and operate streets using complete streets principles for all types of transportation projects including design, planning, construction, maintenance, and operations of new and existing streets and facilities. This includes repurposing unneeded roadway pavement to implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements (e.g. road diets) when Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes are less than 20,000 vehicles.

**ME-8.1 Off-Street Parking.** Require new developments to provide sufficient off-street parking (or payment in-lieu fees) to reduce on-street parking congestion and increase both auto and pedestrian safety. New development shall provide electric vehicle charging stations and preferential parking for carpools, vanpools, and alternative fuel vehicles.

**Chapter 6 - Health and Equity Element**

**HE-2.1 Neighborhood Design.** Design neighborhoods to promote pedestrian and bicycle activity as alternatives to driving. This policy is implemented through the Land Use and Community Design Element.

**HE-3.1 Regional Air Quality Planning Efforts.** Participate in air quality planning efforts with local, regional, and State agencies that improve local air quality to protect human health and minimize the disproportionate impacts on sensitive population groups.

**HE-3.3 Construction Pollution.** Reduce particulate emissions from paved and unpaved roads, construction activities, and agricultural operations.

**HE-3.4 Sensitive-Receptor Uses.** Discourage development of sensitive land uses – defined as schools, hospitals, residences, and elder and childcare facilities – near air pollution sources that pose health risks – including freeways and polluting industrial sites.

**HE-3.10 Lower Emission Fuel Technologies.** Support collaboration between State, regional, and local agencies to continue transitioning goods movement and transit vehicles to lower-emission fuel technologies in order to reduce vehicle air pollution.

**Chapter 8 - Conservation Element**

**CE-2.1 Reduction Targets.** Establish greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in line with those of the State that call for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as follows:

- 1990 levels by 2020
- 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030
- 60 percent below 1990 levels by 2040

**CE-2.2 Reduction Measures.** Implement greenhouse gas reduction measures consistent with the Climate Action Plan to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets.

**CE-2.5 Municipal Emissions.** Prioritize municipal policies and programs that reduce the City's carbon footprint, such as purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, pursuing solar installation, implementing green purchasing, and retrofitting existing buildings.

**CE-3.6 Zero Net Energy Use.** Implement building design requirements to achieve zero net energy use for new residential development by 2020 and zero net energy use for new commercial development by 2030 consistent with the California Public Utilities Commission's California Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan.

**CE-3.8 Building Energy Use.** Encourage the use of building placement, design, and construction techniques to limit energy consumption, reduce the heat island effect, increase renewable energy use, and maintain solar access.

### City of Indio Climate Action Plan

As part of its General Plan Update effort, the City adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in September 2019. The CAP includes measures to reduce GHG emissions from various sectors and emission sources, including transportation, waste generation, water use and energy use. The CAP includes the following objectives:

- Establish the City's goals for addressing the issue of climate change with consideration to the statewide reduction goal outlined in Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 32
- Quantify both community and municipal GHG emissions in 2010 through an updated emissions inventory, using new modeling methodology adopted by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)/Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC) and recommended by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)
- Forecast future emissions that would occur through 2020, 2030, and 2040 (time horizon of the General Plan)
- Provide the framework for future projects to tier from the CAP analysis, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)

### City of Indio 2010 GHG Emissions Inventory

The City prepared a community-wide GHG emissions inventory inclusion in the Draft CAP. The intent of the inventory was to take stock of emission sources and sectors in to identify policies that would further reduce GHG emissions in the City. Based on this inventory, annual community-wide GHG emissions totaled 607,946 $MTCO_2e$ (metric tons [MT] of $CO_2$ equivalents [$CO_2e$]) in the baseline 2010 year. Residential and commercial energy use constituted most of the GHG emissions accounting for roughly sixty-six (66) percent of the total GHG emissions inventory; whereas, mobile sources constituted approximately twenty-four (24) percent of the inventory. Solid waste, water and wastewater, and fugitive emissions sources constituted the remaining approximately ten (10) percent of the City's GHG emissions inventory.

## *4.6.4 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

### Efficiency Thresholds

The State has adopted a target of reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2030 (SB 32) and has developed the 2017 Scoping Plan to demonstrate how the State will achieve the 2030 target and make substantial progress toward the 2050 goal of an 80 percent reduction in 1990 GHG emission levels set by EO S-3-05. In the recently signed EO B-55-18, which identifies a new goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 and supersedes the goal established by EO S-3-05, CARB has been tasked with including a pathway toward the EO B-55-18 carbon neutrality goal in the next Scoping Plan update.

While State and regional regulators of energy and transportation systems, along with the state's Cap and

Trade program, are designed to be set at limits to achieve most of the reductions needed to hit the state's long-term targets, local governments can do their fair share toward meeting the State's targets by siting and approving projects that accommodate planned population growth and projects that are GHG-efficient. The AEP Climate Change Committee recommends that CEQA GHG analyses evaluate project emissions in light of the trajectory of State climate change legislation and assess their "substantial progress" toward achieving long-term reduction targets identified in available plans, legislation, or EOs. Consistent with AEP Climate Change Committee recommendations, GHG impacts are analyzed in terms of whether the anticipated development under the Downtown Specific Plan would impede "substantial progress" toward meeting the reduction goal identified in SB 32 and EO B-55-18. Because SB 32's 2030 targets is an interim target toward meeting the 2045 state goal, consistency with SB 32 would be considered contributing substantial progress toward meeting the state's long-term 2045 goals. Avoiding interference with, and making substantial progress toward, these long-term state targets is important because these targets have been set at levels that achieve California's fair share of international emissions reduction targets that will stabilize global climate change effects and avoid the adverse environmental consequences described under Section 4.6.3, *Regulatory Setting* (EO B-55-18).

Efficiency thresholds are quantitative thresholds based on a measurement of GHG efficiency for a given project, regardless of the amount of mass emissions. These thresholds identify the emission level below which new development would not interfere with attainment of statewide GHG reduction targets. A project that attains such an efficiency target, with or without mitigation, would result in less than significant GHG emissions.

As identified in the City's CAP, the City uses per capita and per service population[2] approaches to identify a communitywide emissions target that equates to 10.6 $MTCO_2E$ per capita and 7.4 $MTCO_2E$ per service population in 2020; achieving this communitywide emissions target would represent the City's fair share of the statewide GHG reduction targets under AB 32 and the Scoping Plan. Achieving a communitywide emissions target of 5.9 $MTCO_2E$ per capita and 4.2 $MTCO_2E$ per service population in 2030 would represent the City's fair share of the statewide emission targets under SB 32 and the 2017 Scoping Plan and would demonstrate "substantial progress" toward meeting the State's long-term 2045 goals.

### *4.6.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold a** | Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? |

**Impact GHG-1** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES CONTAINED IN THE CITY'S ADOPTED GENERAL PLAN AND THE GROWTH PROJECTIONS ANTICIPATED IN THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN. EMISSIONS FORECASTS IN THE CAP MEET THE 2030 PER CAPITA AND PER SERVICE POPULATION EMISSIONS TARGETS INTENDED TO MEET STATEWIDE EMISSIONS TARGETS UNDER SB 32 AND DEMONSTRATE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING THE STATE'S LONG-TERM EMISSIONS REDUCTION GOALS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

No specific development projects are proposed as part of the Downtown Specific Plan. However, annual operational GHG emissions have been estimated using CalEEMod based on existing land uses in the Planning Area and growth estimates associated with Downtown Specific Plan implementation. These emissions estimates do not account for project-specific design features or compliance with future building

[2] The service population is defined as the number of residents plus employees for a given project.

code requirements and are included for informational purposes only. Annual operational emissions associated with existing land uses and proposed future development for the Specific Plan's horizon year (2035) operational conditions are summarized in Table 4.6-1 and Table 4.6-2, respectively. As identified in Table 4.6-1, existing land uses would generate approximately 13,646 MT $CO_2e$/year. As noted in Table 4.6-2, the Downtown Specific Plan would generate approximately 45,276 MT $CO_2e$/year. Estimated GHG emissions associated with the Downtown Specific Plan would be largely associated with increases in mobile source emissions, which would account for approximately forty-one (41) percent of the projected total increase in emissions. In comparison to existing land uses, future development within the Specific Plan area would result in an overall increase in GHG emissions of approximately 31,631 MT $CO_2e$/year.

**Table 4.6-1 Annual Operational GHG Emissions at Horizon Year: Existing Land Uses**

| Source | Emissions (MT $CO_2e$) | Percent Contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Area | 62.1 | 0.5% |
| Energy Use | 4,351.7 | 31.9% |
| Mobile | 7,502.5 | 55.0% |
| $N_2O$ | 190.9 | 1.4% |
| Waste | 432.7 | 3.2% |
| Water | 1,105.6 | 8.1% |
| Total | 13,645.5 | |
| Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding. Emissions were quantified using CalEEMod. | | |

**Table 4.6-2 Annual Operational GHG Emissions at Horizon Year: Proposed Specific Plan Without Mitigation**

| Source | Emissions (MT $CO_2e$) | Percent Contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Area | 948.6 | 2.1% |
| Energy Use | 18,743.6 | 41.4% |
| Mobile | 20,072.3 | 44.3% |
| $N_2O$ | 548.8 | 1.3% |
| Waste | 1,745.2 | 3.9% |
| Water | 3,217.5 | 7.1% |
| Total | 45,275.9 | |
| *Change Compared to Existing Land Uses* | *31,630.4* | |
| Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding. Emissions were quantified using CalEEMod based on projected future development associated with implementation of the Specific Plan and trip-generation rates derived from the traffic analysis prepared for this project. | | |

Mitigation Measure AQ-1 in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, includes measures to reduce mobile-source emissions from both on-road vehicles and off-road equipment which would serve to reduce short-term GHG emissions, such as black carbon. Mitigation Measure AQ-2 would serve to promote the use of alternative means of transportation, energy and water conservation, and waste reduction, which would help to reduce long-term operational GHG emissions associated with future development. As identified in Table 4.6-3 the implementation of mitigation would reduce long-term operation GHG emissions to approximately 40,856 MT $CO_2e$/year. In comparison to existing land uses, the proposed land uses would result in overall increase in annual GHG emissions of approximately 27,210 MT $CO_2e$/year. The actual reductions in emissions achieved by the mitigation would vary depending on multiple factors, including the

type of land uses ultimately developed and the applicable measures implemented. It is important to note that this estimate assumes compliance with current building standards. Future energy use-related emissions would likely decrease, particularly if future development in the Downtown Specific Plan area were to achieve the goal of zero net energy use, as identified in the City's CAP.

**Table 4.6-3 Annual Operational GHG Emissions at Horizon Year: Proposed Specific Plan With Mitigation**

| Source | Emissions (MT $CO_2e$)[1] | Percent Contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Area | 863.5 | 2.1% |
| Energy Use | 15,347.9 | 37.6% |
| Mobile | 20,072.3 | 49.1% |
| $N_2O$ | 548.8 | 1.3% |
| Waste | 1,316.2 | 3.2% |
| Water | 2,706.8 | 6.6% |
| Total | 40,855.5 | |
| *Change Compared to Existing Land Uses* | *27,210.0* | |

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding. Emissions were quantified using CalEEMod based on projected future development associated with implementation of the Project and trip-generation rates derived from the traffic analysis prepared for this project.
[1] Includes mitigation measures to provide increased energy and water conservation, use of low VOC paints, prohibited use of wood-burning hearths, increased recycling/diversion of solid waste, and vehicle trip-reduction.
[2] Assumes net zero energy use for proposed future development. This value is provided for informational purposes only.

Although overall net GHG emissions would increase substantially with implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan, the Specific Plan would also substantially increase population density in the Planning Area. The Downtown Specific Plan would involve development of retail, office space, civic, educational, and residential uses in close proximity to each other, accommodating a portion of the City's projected population growth in a walkable neighborhood accessible via existing transit facilities. Combined with more stringent energy efficiency requirements anticipated in future building codes adopted throughout the course of Downtown Specific Plan implementation, the Downtown Specific Plan would be expected to result in an overall reduction of per capita and per service population GHG emissions in the Planning Area.

As discussed in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, the Downtown Specific Plan reflects current land use assumptions and other development policies described in the City's adopted General Plan. The Downtown Specific Plan's standards and provisions would comply with the directives of General Plan's policies and action programs. The City's CAP includes forecasted future emissions through 2040 for residential buildings, commercial and industrial buildings, transportation, solid waste, fugitive emissions, and municipal buildings sectors. The forecasts in the CAP are based on anticipated future development consistent with the General Plan Update, effects of existing City and State regulations, and the effects of reduction measures proposed in the adopted General Plan) Additionally, the CAP anticipates a population increase of approximately 31,974 people and employment increase of approximately 9,227 employees between 2018 and 2040 (City of Indio 2019b). As described in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, the Downtown Specific Plan would result in a net increase of approximately 3,772 residents and 1,722 employees, or approximately twelve (12) and nineteen (19) percent of the projected population and employment growth anticipated in the CAP, respectively. Consequently, the growth forecasts associated with the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with those anticipated in the CAP emissions forecasts.

The CAP projects total GHG emissions of 405,125 $MTCO_2e$ in 2030 and 388,966 $MTCO_2e$ in 2040. Based on population and service population estimates contained in the General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), such emissions correspond to 3.9 $MTCO_2e$ per capita emissions rate and 3.3 $MTCO_2e$ per service population emissions rate in 2030, and a 3.2 $MTCO_2e$ per capita emissions rate and 2.7 $MTCO_2e$ per service population emissions rate in 2040 (City of Indio 2019). These emissions rates meet the 2030 communitywide emissions target of 5.9 $MTCO_2e$ per capita and 4.2 $MTCO_2e$ per service population that would represent the city's fair share of the statewide emission targets under SB 32 and the 2017 Scoping Plan and demonstrate "substantial progress" toward meeting the State's long-term emissions reduction goals.

As demonstrated above, the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with the land use assumptions and other development policies contained in the Indio 2040 General Plan Update, and growth estimates associated with the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with those described in the CAP. Emissions forecasts in the CAP meet the 2030 emissions targets of 5.9 $MTCO_2e$ per capita and 4.2 $MTCO_2e$ per service population emissions rates intended to meet statewide emissions targets under SB 32 and demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the State's long-term emissions reduction goals. Therefore, the project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that would result in a significant impact on the environment. This impact would be less than significant. Furthermore, implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would further reduce impacts related to GHG emissions.

### Mitigation Measures

While this impact would be less than significant, implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 from Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, would further reduce potential impacts associated with GHG emissions. Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would reduce GHG emissions associated with construction by requiring the use of alternatively-fueled or electrically-powered equipment, to the extent locally available, and restricting idling of diesel-fueled motor vehicles. Mitigation Measure AQ-2 would reduce operational GHG emissions by requiring the implementation of energy-efficient design features, including, but not limited to, energy-efficient appliances, interior lighting, and building mechanical systems; incorporation of renewable energy sources in project design; and installation of light-colored "cool" roofs and pavements.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold b** | Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? |

**Impact GHG-2 THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE 2016-2040 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY (RTP/SCS) AND THE CITY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN. WHERE NOT DIRECTLY CONSISTENT, MITIGATION INCORPORATED THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT WOULD IMPROVE THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN'S CONSISTENCY WITH APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES ADOPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDUCING THE EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

The Downtown Specific Plan would promote a multi-modal transportation system and would result in increased development density proximate to local destinations, including the Indio Transportation Center, which would support local and regional goals for reductions in motor vehicle use and decreased VMT. The Downtown Specific Plan incorporates measures that would be consistent with and help implement AB 32 and SB 32 GHG-reduction goals, including those related to energy and water conservation, the promotion of alternative modes of transportation, and waste reduction. Table 4.6-4 identifies that the Downtown

Specific Plan would be consistent with the goals established in SCAG's *2016-2040 RTP/SCS*.

**Table 4.6-4 Consistency with 2016-2040 RTP/SCS Goals**

| Goals | Project Consistency |
|---|---|
| Align the plan investments and policies with improving regional economic development and competitiveness. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan would result in increased development density in the downtown area and proximate to local destinations, including the City of Indio Transportation Center. The Downtown Specific Plan would help to promote regional economic development, competitiveness, and transportation efficiency through the creation of activity destinations for residents and visitors and by improving development potential of vacant or underutilized properties in the downtown area. Mitigation has been included (AQ-2) to further promote a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system. |
| Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region. | |
| Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region. | |
| Protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (non-motorized transportation, such as bicycling and walking). | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan includes Guiding Principle 2, *Complete Street Network,* which seeks to create a network of complete streets each balancing accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and transit, as well as Guiding Principle 3, *Human Scale Design*, which encourages a network of public spaces that invite walking, biking, and human activity. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate design measures promoting safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, including bike lanes, bicycle-friendly intersections, and bicycle parking and storage facilities. These measures would help to provide a safe, efficient, and sustainable multi-modal transportation system. MM AQ-2 further requires energy efficiency measures for anticipated development under the Downtown Specific Plan. Finally, the Downtown Specific Plan itself includes goals to promote walkability and non-motorized transportation and improve community safety. |
| Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and non-motorized transportation | |
| Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system. | |
| Maximize the productivity of our transportation system. | |
| Maximize the security of the regional transportation system through improved system monitoring, rapid recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies. | |
| Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible. | |
| Source: SCAG 2016 | |

The Downtown Specific Plan would also be consistent with the GHG-reduction policies contained in the City's CAP, as identified in Table 4.6-5. For these reasons, the proposed Specific Plan would not conflict with applicable GHG-reduction plans, policies, or regulations.

**Table 4.6-5 Consistency with Applicable Measures in the City of Indio Climate Action Plan (September 2019)**

| Climate Action Plan Measure | Project Consistency |
|---|---|
| **Low-Carbon Building** | |
| **Net Zero Buildings.** Adopt regular updates to the City's building code. Require all new buildings to meet or exceed Title 24 standards for net zero building (low rise residential buildings by 2020 and commercial buildings by 2030). | **Consistent.** While this measure pertains to building code updates to be adopted by the City, development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would be subject to all updated building code requirements, including net zero building requirements. |
| **Zero Waste Diversion** | |
| **Zero Waste.** Implement a zero waste plan to divert waste from landfills. Actions include working with waste haulers, businesses, and residents to increase recycling and composting, adjusting rate schedules to promote recycling and diversion, and ensuring schools have three-bin programs. | **Consistent.** Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate measures that reduce waste generation. |
| **Sustainable Land Use and Transportation** | |
| **Low-Carbon Vehicles.** Increase the deployment of electric and zero-emission vehicles in Indio. Support expansion of charging station infrastructure and develop an educational campaign. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan includes an objective that includes supporting facilities for electric vehicles and emerging transportation technologies. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate design measures promoting safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, including neighborhood electric vehicles. Such measures include incorporation of electric vehicle charging stations. |
| **Golf Cart Routes and Neighborhood Electric Vehicles**. Develop infrastructure that promotes the use of golf carts and neighborhood electric vehicles. This includes installation of paths in new developments that connect to a larger transportation network of charging stations at non-residential uses | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan includes an objective which includes supporting facilities for electric vehicles and emerging transportation technologies. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate design measures promoting safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, including neighborhood electric vehicles. Such measures include incorporation of electric vehicle charging stations. |
| **Complete Street and Bicycle Network**. Implement a citywide Complete Street and bicycle network consisting of Class I multi-use paths, Class II bike lanes, and Class III and Class IV bicycle routes. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan includes an objective which seeks to create a network of complete streets each balancing accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and transit, as well as an objective which encourages a network of public spaces that invite walking, biking, and human activity. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate design measures promoting safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, including bike lanes, bicycle-friendly intersections, and bicycle parking and storage facilities. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bicycle Parking.** Require all new develop to provide safe and secure parking for bicycles. | **Consistent.** Mitigation Measure AQ-2 requires future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan subject to discretionary review to incorporate design measures promoting safe and efficient use of alternative modes of transportation, including bicycle parking and storage facilities. |
| **Service Network**. Expand transit services (frequency and network) in Indio. | **Consistent.** While the Downtown Specific Plan would not directly expand transit frequency or network, it would expand service by increasing residential and employment density in proximity to established transit nodes, including the Indio Bus Station and Highway 111 corridor. In doing so, the Downtown Specific Plan would increase the population and destinations served by existing transit services |
| **Managed Parking.** Implement parking standards and management practices through the Zoning Code update that provide sufficient parking, limit impervious surface, and reduce congestion | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan includes an objective which aims to provide a combination of on-site and off-site parking nearby in shared lots and structures, allowing parking to be concentrated into efficient areas shielded from public views. |
| **Prioritize Mixed-Use, Connected Development.** Implement the Land Use and Urban Design Element's focused growth strategy. Update the City's Zoning Code. Implement the Downtown Specific Plan. Seek a master developer for the Midtown area | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan promotes sustainable design and would increase density in the urban core, promoting walkable, connected development in the city. |
| **Create Infill Housing.** Establish an infill housing incentive program. Promote the construction of housing affordable to all income levels. | **Consistent.** A primary goal of the Downtown Specific Plan is to redevelop vacancies and underutilized properties in the downtown area into a variety of land uses, including new housing. Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would result in the creation of 1,114 dwelling units in the developed Downtown Specific Plan area. |
| **Placemaking Program.** Implement a placemaking program focused on cost-effective and flexible activities. | **Consistent.** While this measure relates to the creation of a placemaking program, the Downtown Specific Plan would encourage placemaking in the downtown core. A primary goal of the Downtown Specific Plan is to create activity destinations for residents and visitors alike. Additionally, the Specific Plan includes an objective which calls for the careful and successful design of frontages that shape and accommodate active, safe, 18-hour live/work/shop/play environment envisioned for Downtown Indio |
| Source: City of Indio 2019 | |

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure AQ-2 from Section 4.2, *Air Quality*.

### Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2 require future projects implemented under the Downtown Specific Plan to incorporate design measures that would improve consistency with SCAG's 2016-2040 RTP/SCS and the City's CAP, as demonstrated in Table 4.6-4 and Table 4.6-5 above. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| **Cumulative** | Result in cumulative impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions? |
|---|---|

**Impact GHG-3** **IMPACTS RELATED TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE ARE, BY DEFINITION, CUMULATIVE IMPACTS, AS THEY AFFECT THE ACCUMULATION OF GREENHOUSE GASSES IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE PLANS AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT REDUCING EMISSIONS AND WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED IN THE CITY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN EMISSIONS FORECASTS. THEREFORE, THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S CUMULATIVE IMPACTS WOULD NOT BE CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE.**

Planned, pending, and reasonably foreseeable future development in Indio would have the potential to incrementally increase overall GHG emissions generated in the city and the region. GHG and climate change are, by definition, cumulative impacts, as they affect the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The Downtown Specific Plan reflects the land use assumptions and other development policies contained in the Indio 2040 General Plan Update and would be consistent with the growth projections used in the CAP. The CAP developed emissions forecasts accounting for anticipated growth consistent with the General Plan Update, and such forecasts meet the per capita and per service population emissions rates intended to meet statewide emissions targets under SB 32 and demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the State's long-term emissions reduction goals. Furthermore, as discussed above, with implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2, the Specific Plan would be consistent with applicable plans and programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions. Therefore, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative GHG emissions would not be cumulatively considerable. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure AQ-2 from Section 4.2, *Air Quality*.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2, the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with applicable plans and programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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# 4.7 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

## *4.7.1 Introduction*

This section of the EIR addresses potential impacts of the project on hydrology and water quality, describes the environmental and regulatory setting, and discusses mitigation measures to reduce impacts where applicable. Data collection was conducted through review of the following resources: aerial photographs; United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps; information from the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB); the 2014-2016 CWA Section 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB); groundwater basin data from Bulletin 118 – Update 2003 published by the Department of Water Resources (DWR); flood hazard data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and soil data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and water quality, supply and storm drain data from the Indio Water Authority (IWA).

## *4.7.2 Existing Conditions*

### Watershed

The City of Indio lies within the larger Whitewater River Watershed, which extends from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea. The surrounding mountains isolate Indio and the Coachella Valley from moist and cool maritime air masses from the west, creating a dry subtropical desert climate. Summer daytime temperatures can occasionally exceed 125 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) and winter temperatures occasionally fall below freezing. Mean annual rainfall on the valley floor is between two and six inches per year, and while some years record no measurable rainfall, other years may be subjected to flash flood and other substantial rain events.

### Storm Drain Facilities

The main drainage facility for the region includes the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Storm Channel. The channel drains the surrounding mountains and valley floor, and flows southeast into the Salton Sea. The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) operates and maintains the channel and other regional facilities in the eastern portion of the Coachella Valley, and is responsible for regional flood protection. Other regional flood control facilities in, or affecting, the City of Indio include the Thousand Palms Wash, Detention Channel No. 3, and the East Side Dike.

### Regional Flooding

Historic and prehistoric flooding has played a key role in shaping the Coachella Valley's current hydrological setting. Flooding in the Coachella Valley generally results from one of the following storm conditions: winter storms with high volume rainfall in combination with rapidly melting snow; tropical storms out of the southern Pacific Ocean; or intense summer thunderstorms typically associated with a southeasterly Monsoon flow. Benchmark storms and historic data are used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other flood control agencies to gauge the potential for future flooding. In the Coachella Valley, these include two distinct storm events that occurred in 1939 and 1979. The 1939 storm event occurred on September 24, 1939 and was centered over Indio and originated off the west coast of Mexico. This storm generated 6.45 inches of rain in a six-hour period. The 1979 storm event was due to the Tropical Storm Kathleen, which impacted the area from September 9 through 11, 1979, and generated 6.81 inches of rain in the low-lying areas of the Coachella Valley, and as much as 14 inches in the

surrounding mountains.

### Groundwater

The Coachella Valley, although located in one of the driest regions of the United States, has a substantial subsurface groundwater basin. The aquifer has accumulated over millions of years due to water runoff from surrounding mountains and the geology of the valley. The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin as estimated by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), has an estimated storage capacity of over 29 million acre-feet of water (DWR 2003; DWR 2004).

Groundwater inflows within the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin include natural recharge from local mountain runoff, artificial recharge with Colorado River water, inflows from surrounding groundwater basins, and non-consumptive return flows from urban and agricultural drainage. Outflows include groundwater pumping, evapotranspiration, flows to the Salton Sea, and subsurface outflows to adjacent groundwater basins.

DWR has subdivided the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin into four distinct subbasins based on local geographic and geologic conditions, including the Indio Subbasin (commonly known as Whitewater River Subbasin), Mission Creek Subbasin, Desert Hot Springs Subbasin, and San Gorgonio Pass Subbasin. The Indio Subbasin is the largest subbasin and is further divided into the Upper and Lower Subbasins. These two subbasins are separated by a line extending from Point Happy, near Washington Street, northeast to the Indio Hills, near Jefferson Street. The City of Indio is in the Lower Subbasin.

The Indio Subbasin is approximately 525 square miles and is bordered on the north by Garnet Hill and Banning Faults, on the northeast by the San Andreas Fault and semi-permeable rocks of the Indio Hills, on the south by the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains, and on the east by the Salton Sea. The Indio Subbasin has a groundwater storage capacity of approximately 29,800,000 acre-feet. As mentioned, the City overlies the lower portion of the Subbasin. The Lower Subbasin, also known as the Thermal Subarea, has the largest groundwater storage capacity of all subareas in the Indio Subbasin. The Thermal Subarea has a groundwater storage capacity of approximately 19,400,000-acre-feet.

The Indio Water Authority (IWA), which provides water to the Downtown Specific Plan area, extracts groundwater from the Thermal Subarea. The CVWD, the Desert Water Agency (DWA), the City of Coachella, Mission Springs Water District and Myoma Dunes Mutual Water Company also extract water supplies from the Indio Subbasin.

### Overdraft

Groundwater throughout the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is in overdraft condition due to continuing reliance of groundwater supplies among the various water purveyors throughout the region. Since the 1930s, groundwater levels have declined because of pumping. In 1999, overdraft was estimated at 137,000 acre-feet per year (AFY), with a cumulative overdraft of nearly 4.8 million acre-feet between 1936 and 1999. Between 2000 and 2009, average annual overdraft was estimated at approximately 70,000 AFY (CVWD 2012). DWA and CVWD have entered into two separate agreements to obtain additional imported water supplies from the Colorado River that can be used to replenish groundwater supplies throughout the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. Although these groundwater recharge programs have reduced annual overdraft, increasing urban water demands and multi-year drought conditions exceed annual supplies, and result in annual overdraft.

Traditionally, groundwater recharge from natural recharge and artificial programs has averaged 49,000 AFY and 79,000 AFY, respectively. However, the average groundwater pumped from the Basin has averaged approximately 378,000 AFY. While long-term overdraft continues to be a concern for the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, recent annual reporting has indicated groundwater elevations have generally stabilized or increased over the past 10 years (CVWD et al. 2019). This slowing and, in some cases, reversal of overdraft conditions is largely attributable to recharge efforts in the Coachella Valley, which augment groundwater supplies with surface water imported via the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA).

Overdraft has led to subsidence throughout the southern Coachella Valley, made worse by the recent multi-year drought. Groundwater pumping since the late 1920s resulting in groundwater-level declines up to 50 feet through the late 1940s. In 1949, the Colorado River water imports to the eastern Coachella Valley began, resulting in reduced groundwater pumping and water level recover during the 1950 through the 1970s. Since the 1970s, demand for water in the valley has exceeded imported surface water deliveries, resulting in increased pumping and associate groundwater level declines and land subsidence. The USGS prepared the *Land Subsidence, Groundwater Levels, and Geology in the Coachella Valley, California, 1993-2010* (USGS 2014), which found that measurements taken between 2005 and 2010 in the southern Coachella Valley had a land surface elevation subsidence average of ten inches in this five-year period. From 1995 to 2010, total subsidence ranged from nine inches to two feet in areas around Indian Wells, La Quinta, and Palm Desert (USGS 2014; The Desert Sun 2014). Groundwater levels and land subsidence continue to be monitored within the Coachella Valley. The USGS is working with the CVWD to study land subsidence and groundwater level changes for a 17-year period from 2010 through 2017 (USGS 2015). To help reduce effects of overdraft, the IWA has participated in the development of an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP). The IRWMP is a joint effort with other local water agencies to develop and implement a sustainable programmatic water planning document and water management strategy to promote water efficiency measures, use source substitution, conduct groundwater recharge and participate in regional efforts to maintain a reliable and sustainable water supply.

### Domestic Water Services

The IWA provides water services to the City with an area that encompasses approximately 38 square miles. In 2015, IWA supplied over 6.3 billion gallons (19,566 AF) of water to nearly 22,600 active meter accounts, serving a population of 85,000 businesses and residents (IWA 2019; California Drought 2015a). IWA extracts groundwater to meet the needs of its current customer population. Groundwater is drawn from the Indio Subbasin and is delivered to the service area via a pressurized distribution system consisting of 326 miles of pipeline and 10 active wells (IWA 2016). IWA also has emergency inter-tie connections with CVWD and the City of Coachella. It has 7 water storage reservoirs with a total capacity of 19 million gallons.

IWA has an internal goal to limit its groundwater production to 20,000 AFY and therefore must seek other options to supply or offset demands (IWA 2012). In 2015, approximately 66 percent of IWA water demand was attributable to single-family and multi-family residential uses; the remaining 34 percent of water consumption was attributable to a combination of landscape irrigation, commercial, industrial, and other uses (i.e., fire services, non-revenue water). Water demands fluctuate seasonally, with lower demands in the cooler winter months and high demands during the summer.

The Coachella Valley, including Indio, is expected to continue to experience population growth over the next few decades. Using DWR's online population tool and 2012 adopted Southern California Association of

Governments (SCAG) projections for the city, IWA projects that its service population will reach approximately 110,162 people by 2040, an approximately 45 percent increase over IWA's 2015 service population (IWA 2016). Continued influx of seasonal residents is also expected to rise. Because of this population growth both in Indio and throughout the Coachella Valley, water demands in the Coachella Valley would also increase proportionally. Water conservation programs have been implemented to reduce water demands. Currently, the City of Indio has a Landscaping and Water Conservation Ordinance to reduce outdoor water use and an Urban Conservation Program to help reduce indoor water use.

## Water Quality

### Surface Water

Pollutants of concern for surface water and groundwater are pollutants that have the potential to be present in runoff discharges at levels that may cause or contribute to exceedances of applicable water quality standards based on the source and nature of the discharge. Surface water pollutants of concern are typically selected based on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waterbodies listing of constituents that are determined by the Colorado River RWQCB to be impacting the beneficial uses of receiving waters and constituents that are generated by the project at concentrations or loads that would cause impairment of beneficial uses. No surface water resources are located in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Outside of the Downtown Specific Plan area, there are two surface water resources that are listed on the California 2010 303(d) list: the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel (CVSC) and the Salton Sea. The CVSC 303(d) listing of four pollutants of concern (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane [DDT], Dieldrin, Polychlorinated biphenyls [PCBs], and toxaphene) applies to a two-mile stretch of the CVSC from Lincoln Street to the Salton Sea, which is approximately 15 miles south of the Downtown Specific Plan area. The CVSC 303(d) listing for indicator bacteria applies to 17 miles of the channel from Dillion Road to the Salton Sea which is approximately 1.5 miles south of the Downtown Specific Plan area. Finally, the CVSC 303(d) listings for nitrogen, ammonia (total ammonia) and toxicity apply to the entirety of the channel which, at its closest point, flows approximately 0.6 mile northeast of the Downtown Specific Plan area. The Salton Sea 303(d) listing includes arsenic, chloride, chlorpyrifos, DDT, enterococcus, low dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, ammonia (total ammonia), nutrients, salinity, and toxicity; the Salton Sea is located more than 16 miles south of the Downtown Specific Plan area (SWRCB 2019).

### Groundwater

Groundwater quality is more variable than surface water, with the water quality at any given well dependent on well depth, proximity to faults, presence of surface contaminants, proximity to recharge basins, and other hydrogeologic and cultural features. Between 1996 and 2004, groundwater samples were taken from wells throughout Coachella Valley failed to reach primary and secondary drinking water standards for total dissolved solids (TDS), nitrate, sulfate, chloride, fluoride, and arsenic concentrations. The 2018 Consumer Confidence Report (IWA 2019) shows that groundwater quality for IWA wells do not violate maximum contaminant levels for any of the tested constituents (radiologicals, inorganic chemicals, secondary standards, and unregulated contaminants required monitoring). However, IWA previously deactivated 13 wells where chromium-6 concentrations had exceeded 10 parts per billion (ppb), California's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), based on the findings of IWA's 2014 water quality testing (IWA 2016).

### Water Resources and Climate Change

The primary concern of changing climatic condition when planning for water resources is accurately predicting future hydrological and water resource conditions so that appropriate management techniques can be established. The most agreed upon effect of climate change is that temperatures are rising and this increase in temperature has the potential to cause a shift in the hydrological cycle. While predicted patterns vary with latitude and global location, roughly seventy-five (75) percent of analyzed climate change models agree that in the western United States there will be a ten (10) to forty (40) percent decrease in stream flow by 2050. This may be due to a decrease in precipitation levels, which has been evident in drought conditions suffered by the southwest and California in recent years, as well as an increase in evaporation, which is temperature dependent and increases as temperatures climb. It has been predicted that a change in the global average surface temperature of two degrees Celsius (C) would be at the low end of the possible range (IPCC 2007). The Institute for the Study of Planet Earth at the University of Arizona has estimated that a two degree C increase in temperature corresponds to a nine (9) to twenty-one (21) percent decrease in stream flow on the Colorado River (Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc. 2011).

Although there is consensus that climate change is causing average temperatures to rise, there is much debate over how global warming will affect precipitation levels (Garfin and Lenart 2007). Historic precipitation figures collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from 1950 through 2003 indicate an average increase of precipitation levels by 20 percent in the southwest region of the United States, however it is unclear if this trend will continue. As such, a conjunctive use approach to managing regional water resources considering the potential effect of climate change as it related to water resources is appropriate given the extensive water storing capacity of the Coachella Valley Whitewater River Groundwater Basin.

### Specific Plan Area Conditions

The Specific Plan area is located approximately 0.6 mile south of the Whitewater River/CVSC, at the area's closest point. Currently, there are limited local drainage facilities throughout the Specific Plan area; local streets convey storm water into local facilities and ultimately to the CVSC. As a result, flooding and standing water are prevalent throughout the Specific Plan area during rain storms, particularly at intersections along Oasis Street between SR-111 and Indio Boulevard. There are several local drainage system improvements planned for the area and set forth in the City's Master Drainage Plan that would improve drainage in the Downtown Specific Plan area, as discussed further below.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and FEMA designate areas within 100-year flood zones. Based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panels 06065C2251G, 06065C2252H, 06065C2253H, and 06065C2254H, the Downtown Specific Plan area is mapped as Zone X, indicating areas of minimal flood hazard that lie outside the 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard area (i.e., the 500-year floodplain), areas of one percent annual chance flood with average depths of less than one foot or with drainage areas less than one square mile and areas protected by levees from the one percent chance flood. According to Chapter 10, *Safety*, of the City's General Plan, the city is not exposed to risk of dam failure because no true dams exist in the vicinity of the city, but levees, dikes, and earthen retention basins may pose a threat for failure and subsequent flooding (City of Indio 2019).

### *4.7.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### Federal Clean Water Act (33 USC 1251 through 1376)

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 USC Section 1251 et seq.) was enacted with the intent of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the United States. The CWA requires states to set standards to protect, maintain, and restore water quality through the regulation of point source and certain non-point source discharges to surface water. Those discharges are regulated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process (CWA § 402). In California, the NPDES permitting authority is delegated to and administered by the RWQCBs.

**Section 401, Water Quality Certification.** Section 401 requires that a project proponent for a federal license or permit that allows activities resulting in a discharge to waters of the United States must obtain a State certification that the discharge complies with other provisions of CWA. The RWQCBs administer the certification program in California.

**Section 402, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).** Section 402 establishes a permitting system for the discharge of any pollutant (except dredge or fill material) into waters of the United States. The CWA is based on the concept that all discharges into the nation's waters are unlawful unless specifically authorized by permit. The 1972 amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act established the NPDES permit program to control discharges of pollutants from point sources (Section 402). The 1987 amendments to the CWA created a new section of the act devoted to storm water permitting (Section 402[p]). The U.S. EPA has granted the states primacy in administering and enforcing the provisions of the CWA and the NPDES permit program. The NPDES permit program is the primary federal program that regulates point-source and nonpoint-source discharges to waters of the United States. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issues both general and individual permits for certain activities.

Both the U.S. EPA and SWRCB have revised their NPDES construction guidelines and permits. The SWRCB Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of an SWPPP. The SWPPP should contain a site map that shows the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, storm water collection and discharge points, general topography both before and after construction, and drainage patterns across the project site. The SWPPP must list Best management practices (BMPs) that the discharger would use to protect storm water runoff and the placement of BMPs. Additionally, the SWPPP must contain a visual monitoring program, a chemical monitoring program for nonvisible pollutants to be implemented (if there is a failure of BMPs), and a sediment monitoring plan if the site discharges directly to a water body. If a single project traverses more than one RWQCB jurisdiction, a complete notice of intent package (notice of intent, site map, and fee) and notice of termination (upon completion of each section) must be filed for each RWQCB.

In addition, the U.S. EPA published effluent limitation guidelines (ELGs) and new source performance standards (NSPS) to control the discharge of pollutants from construction sites, effective February 1, 2010.

After this date, all permits issued by the U.S. EPA or individual states must incorporate the final rule requirements. All construction sites required to obtain U.S. EPA permit coverage must implement a range of erosion and sediment controls and pollution prevention measures.

**Section 303, Water Quality Standards and Implementation Plans.** Section 303(d) of the CWA (CWA, 33 USC 1250, et seq., at 1313(d)) requires states to identify "impaired" water bodies as those which do not meet water quality standards. States are required to compile this information in a list and submit the list to the U.S. EPA for review and approval. This list is known as the Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. As part of this listing process, states are required to prioritize waters and watersheds for future development of Total Maximum Daily loads (TMDL) requirements. The SWRCB and RWQCBs have ongoing efforts to monitor and assess water quality, to prepare the Section 303(d) list, and to develop TMDL requirements.

#### California Toxics Rule

In 2000, the U.S. EPA established water quality criteria for potentially toxic constituents in receiving waters with human health or aquatic life designated uses for California inland surface waters, enclosed bays, and estuaries. The California Toxic Rule fills a gap in California water quality standards that was created in 1994 when a state court overturned the state's water quality control plans containing water quality criteria for priority toxic pollutants (U.S. EPA 2000). These federal criteria are legally applicable in California for inland surface waters, enclosed bays and estuaries for all purposes and programs under the CWA. The California Toxic Rule criteria are calculated based on the hardness of the receiving waters. Lower hardness concentrations result in lower, more stringent California Toxic Rule criteria.

#### National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

FEMA is responsible for managing the NFIP, which makes federally- backed flood insurance available for communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage. The NFIP requires that participating communities adopt certain minimum floodplain management standards including restrictions on new development in designated floodways, a requirement that new structures in the 100-year flood zone be elevated to or above the 100-year flood level (known as base flood elevation), and a requirement that subdivisions be designed to minimize exposure to flood hazards. To help identify areas with flood potential, FEMA has developed FIRMs that can be used for planning purposes, including floodplain management, flood insurance, and enforcing mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements.

### State of California

#### Department of Water Resources

The California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) major responsibilities include preparing and updating the California Water Plan to guide development and management of the State's water resources; planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the State Water Resources Development System; regulating dams; providing flood protection; assisting in emergency management to safeguard life and property; educating the public; and serving local water needs by providing technical assistance. In addition, DWR cooperates with local agencies on water resources investigations; supports watershed and river restoration programs; encourages water conservation; explores conjunctive use of ground and surface water; facilitates voluntary water transfers; and, when needed, operates a State drought water bank.

#### Senate Bills 610 (Chapter 643, Statutes of 2001) and 221 (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2001)

Senate Bill (SB) 610 and SB 221 are companion measures that seek to promote more collaborative planning among local water suppliers and cities and counties. SB 610 requires that Water Supply

Assessments occur early in the land use planning process for all large-scale development projects. Projects, as defined in the California Water Code Section 10912, include the following:

- A proposed residential development of more than 500 dwelling units.
- A proposed shopping center or business establishment employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space.
- A proposed commercial office building employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 250,000 square feet of floor space.
- A proposed hotel or motel, or both, having more than 500 rooms.
- A proposed industrial, manufacturing, or processing plant, or industrial park planned to house more than 1,000 persons, occupying more than 40 acres of land, or having more than 650,000 square feet of floor area.
- A mixed-use project that includes one or more of the projects specified in this subdivision.
- A project that would demand an amount of water equivalent to, or greater than, the amount of water required by a 500 dwelling unit project

If groundwater is the proposed supply source, the required assessments must include detailed analyses of historic, current, and projected groundwater pumping and an evaluation of the sufficiency of the groundwater basin to sustain a new project's demands. They also require an identification of existing water entitlements, rights, and contracts and a quantification of the prior year's water deliveries. In addition, the supply and demand analysis must address water supplies during single and multiple dry years presented in 5-year increments for a 20-year projection. Under SB 221, approval by a county or city of a subdivision of more than 500 homes requires an affirmative written verification of a sufficient water supply.

### Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter Cologne Act, passed in 1969, acts in concert with the federal CWA. The Act established the SWRCB and divided the state into nine regions, each overseen by an RWQCB. The SWRCB is the primary state agency responsible for protecting the quality of the state's surface and groundwater supplies; however, much of its daily implementation authority is delegated to the nine RWQCBs.

The Porter Cologne Act provides for the development and periodic review of water quality control plans (basin plans) that designate beneficial uses of California's major rivers and groundwater basins and establish narrative and numerical water quality objectives for those waters. Basin plans are primarily implemented by using the NPDES permitting system to regulate waste discharges so that water quality objectives are met. Basin plans provide the technical basis for determining waste discharge requirements, taking enforcement actions, and evaluating clean water grant proposals. The Act also assigns responsibility for implementing CWA Sections 401, 402, and 303(d) to the SWRCB and RWQCBs.

### California Water Conservation Act (Senate Bill X7-7)

SB X7-7 was enacted in November 2009 and is also known as the California Water Conservation Act of 2009. The Water Conservation Act of 2009 was intended to increase efforts to reduce the use of potable water supplies. It requires all retail, urban water suppliers serving more than 3,000 AFY or 3,000 service

connections to achieve a 20 percent reduction in potable water demands (from a historical baseline) by 2020.

### Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

In September 2014 the governor signed legislation requiring that California's critical groundwater resources be sustainably managed by local agencies. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) gives local agencies the power to sustainably manage groundwater and requires groundwater sustainability plans to be developed for medium- and high-priority groundwater basins.

The Downtown Specific Plan area is located in the Indio Subbasin. The Indio Subbasin is designated a Medium priority basin (not critically overdrafted). As such, SGMA requires a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) be adopted for the basin by January 31, 2022. SGMA requires basins that are not critically overdrafted to achieve sustainability by halting overdraft and bringing groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge by 2042. Coachella Water Authority, IWA, CVWD, Desert Water Agency, and Mission Springs Water District have all filed notices to be designated as groundwater sustainability agencies (GSA) with authority over the Indio Subbasin in their respective service areas. The Downtown Specific Plan area is located in the IWA GSA boundary.

The Coachella Valley Water Management Plan (CVWMP) was originally prepared in 2002 by CVWD, with a 2010 Update finalized in January 2012. The CVWMP describes the condition of the groundwater basin, identifies future water supply needs, sets water conservation targets for agriculture, urban, and golf course water users, and describes implementation costs (CVWD 2012). The CVWMP was submitted collaboratively by the GSAs to the California DWR to fulfill the requirements of SGMA. On July 17, 2019, the California DWR informed CVWD that the CVWMP meets the requirements of SGMA to serve as a GSP.

### Recycled Water Policy

On February 3, 2009, by Resolution No. 2009-0011, the SWRCB adopted a Recycled Water Policy to move towards a sustainable water future. In the Recycled Water Policy states "we declare our independence from relying on the vagaries of annual precipitation and move towards sustainable management of surface waters and groundwater, together with enhanced water conservation, water reuse and the use of stormwater."

### California Drought Regulations

During California's most recent multi-year drought, the Governor issued numerous Executive Orders (EOs) aimed at improving water conservation. In January 2014, Governor Jerry Brown issued EOs B-26-14, B-28-14, and B-29-15, regarding water supply, water demand, and water use in the state during severe drought conditions. EO B-29-15, issued April 1, 2015, set limitations not only for existing land uses and water supply systems, but also for new construction. In addition, EO B-29-15 required that DWR update the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance through expedited regulation by the end of 2015. On November 13, 2015, Governor Brown issued EO B-36-15, which upheld the previous EOs, and directed the SWRCB to extend of urban water use restrictions through October 31, 2016 based on drought conditions known through January 2016. The SWRCB issued Emergency Regulations on February 2, 2016, in compliance with EO B-36-15. These emergency regulations maintained the current tiers of required water reductions; however, additional adjustments in response to stakeholders; equity concerns were included in the Emergency Regulations. Following record-breaking rainfall in winter and spring 2017, these drought regulations were subsequently rescinded by EO B-40-17 on April 7, 2017 for all counties except Fresno,

Kings, Tulare, and Tuolomne.

### California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen Code)

The State of California enacted The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen Code) as part 11 of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24). The CALGreen Code contains measures that are designed to improve public health, safety, and general welfare by utilizing design and construction methods that reduce the negative environmental impact of development and encourage sustainable construction practices. The CALGreen Code provides mandatory direction to developers of all new construction and renovations of residential and non-residential structures regarding all aspects of design and construction, including but not limited to site drainage design, storm water management, and water use efficiency. Required measures are accompanied by a set of voluntary standards that are designed to encourage developers and cities to aim for a higher standard of development.

Under the CALGreen Code, all residential and non-residential sites are required to be planned and developed to keep surface water from entering buildings and to incorporate efficient outdoor water use measures. Construction plans are required to show appropriate grading and surface water management methods such as swales, water collection and disposal systems, French drains, and rain gardens. Plans should also include outdoor water use plans that utilize weather or soil moisture controlled irrigation systems. In addition to the above-mentioned requirements, non-residential structures are also required to develop: (1) a SWPPP; (2) irrigation budget for landscapes greater than 2,500 sf feet, and (3) quantified plan to reduce waste water by twenty (20) percent through utilizing water efficient fixtures or non-potable water systems such as use of harvested rainwater, grey water, and/or recycled water.

## Local

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The City of Indio General Plan's Conservation, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, and Safety Elements contain policies which are intended to minimize adverse effects related to hydrology and water quality. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 8 – Conservation Element**

**Policies**

**CE-7.11 Aquifer Recharge Areas.** Continue to identify and protect aquifer recharge areas and natural drainages throughout Indio.

**CE-7.9 Hazardous Open Space.** Maintain open space areas that are designed to protect people and property from risks associated with hazards, such as fault lines, flood zones, high voltage power line areas, and electrical substations.

**Chapter 9 – Infrastructure and Public Facilities Element**

**Policies**

**IE-1.3 NPDES Compliance.** Ensure project developer compliance with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permit requirements.

**IE-1.4 Promote Public Awareness.** Continue to work with co-permittees of the NPDES permit to promote public awareness of water quality issues.

**IE-1.6** **Public Awareness.** Use agency websites, public service announcements, and other means to inform the public about water quality issues and methods to prevent contaminants from entering the storm drain system.

**IE-2.1** **Facility Capacity.** Ensure that local storm drain and flood control facilities are designed with sufficient capacity to protect the public and property from stormwater damage.

**IE-2.2** **Stormwater Facility Funding.** Ensure adequate funding is available to maintain and improve existing local stormwater facilities

**IE-2.3** **Storm Drain Master Plan.** Periodically review and update the City's Storm Drain Master Plan and Hydraulics Analysis to determine the facilities and improvements necessary to adequately service existing and future demand.

**IE-2.4** **Multiple Use.** Promote multiple use of flood control facilities where feasible, combining for example retention basins and recreational facilities.

**IE-2.5** **Agency Coordination.** Work with the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) when regional stormwater facility projects are planned in or adjacent to Indio.

**IE-2.6** **Stormwater Facility Design.** Design storm drain facilities to allow for infiltration, evapotranspiration, or reuse of stormwater or runoff on the site where it is generated to the extent practical.

**IE-2.7** **Mitigation Measures for New Development.** Restrict or where feasible, require adequate mitigation measures for any development of habitable structures within watercourses and/or other stormwater facilities.

**IE-2.8** **Flood Control Facilities.** Allow flood control facilities to be developed in conjunction with compatible recreational facilities or other land uses that are not susceptible to flood damage.

**IE-2.9** **State and Federal Guideline.** Construct and maintain storm drains and flood control facilities in accordance with local, State, and federal guidelines.

**Chapter 10 – Safety Element**

**Policies**

**SE-6.1** **Flood Hazard Enforcement.** Restrict development in Special Flood Hazard Areas. Require mitigation measures which may include (but are not limited to) the design of onsite drainage systems connected to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, keeping surface waters within the project area, grading of the sites so that runoff does not affect adjacent properties, and building structures so they are elevated above the anticipated flood levels.

**SE-6.2** **Flood Mitigation in Repetitive-Flooding Areas with Existing Development.** Prioritize hydrological studies of areas that flood repeatedly during storms and require feasible engineering solutions to mitigate these sites. Prohibit any additions or reconstruction of structures damaged by flooding, unless the structure is relocated to a safer area or can be demonstrated the proposed project and its occupants can be protected from future, recurrent flood damage by implementing mitigation measures not present in the original, damaged structure.

**SE-6.3 Hydrological Studies in New Development.** Require new development proposals to include as a condition of approval, hydrological studies prepared by a state-certified engineer with expertise in these kinds of studies, that assess the impact the new development will have on the flooding potential of existing development down-gradient. The studies shall provide mitigation measures to reduce this impact to an acceptable level.

**SE-6.4 New Critical Facilities.** Limit the future development of critical facilities including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities within the boundaries of the 100-year flood plain.

**SE-6.5: Existing Critical Facilities.** Encourage critical facilities to implement feasible mitigation measures that ensure the building will not flood during a 100-year flood event to greatest extend practical. Also encourage ingress/egress of facility also follows mitigation measures.

**SE-6.6 Storm Drainage Facilities and Stormwater Runoff.** Maintain, develop and improve where needed, the storm drain facilities (including bridges and other stormwater channel crossings) with an emphasis on those areas in the City that flood repeatedly. Promote the use of bio-swales, tree wells, green roofs, and other infiltration mechanisms to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff.

**SE-6.8 Floodplain Development.** Promote the use of floodplains as parks, nature trails, equestrian parks, golf courses or other types of recreational facilities that can withstand periodic inundation. In the planned build-out of the City, create an atmosphere of working with nature and the natural processes characteristic of the arid environment.

**SE-6.9 Flood Barriers.** Minimize construction of flood barriers within the 100-year flood plain which would divert flood water or increase flooding in other areas.

**SE-6.10 Coordination.** Work with the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), the Regional Floodplain Administrator, the Indio Water Authority (IWA), and federal agencies, where applicable, to limit the potential for inundation by levee or water tank failure, or seismically induced inundation.

**SE-6.11 Disaster Response Plan.** Require all essential and critical facilities (including but not limited to essential City offices and buildings, medical facilities, schools, childcare centers and nursing homes) in or within 200 feet of Flood Zones A and X, to develop disaster response and evacuation plans that address the actions to be taken in the event of storm flooding or inundation due to catastrophic failure of a water reservoir or other water retention facilities such as the All American Canal, the Eastside Dike and levees of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. Encourage the use of technology to identify flood-prone areas and to warn residents and motorists of impending flood hazards.

**SE-6.13 Flood Insurance.** Encourage property owners and residents to purchase flood insurance for areas outside of the FEMA-mapped 100-year flood zones, especially in those areas that have experienced flooding in the past.

**SE-6.14 Land Use and Flood Hazard Maps.** In coordination with the Public Works Department, annually review the City's Land Use and Flood Hazard Maps to ensure that they accurately reflect areas recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as being subject to flooding.

**SE-6.15 Designing for Changing Precipitation Patterns.** Periodically evaluate stormwater control strategies and systems for sensitivity to changes in precipitation regimes and consider adjusting those strategies to accommodate future precipitation regimes.

#### City Landscape and Water Conservation Ordinance and Guidelines

The City has several ordinances to enforce water conservation and landscaping. Ordinance 1662 (as codified in Title 5, Chapter 54 of the Indio Code of Ordinances) requires water conservation and implements the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, as a response to extended drought perioods. The contingency plan establishes four stages, with Stage I being normal conditions and Stage IV being water emergency conditions which prohibits irrigation on lawns and landscaping with potable water, restricts how restaurants serve water (i.e., by request only), prohibits the filling of swimming pools, and prohibits the issuance of new construction meters (Indio Code of Ordinances § 54.055 - § 54.058). Ordinance 1672 declares the urgency of water conservation and restricts outdoor irrigation. Ordinance 1673 further restricts outdoor irrigation, providing specific days and times for irrigation as well as maintenance and repairs on irrigation systems.

The City's Landscape and Water Conservation Guidelines establishes practical water efficient standards for landscape and irrigation design of new and rehabilitated landscapes. The Guidelines are intended to prevent water waste and runoff into the streets and storm water system, and to meet mandates of the State Water Conservation in Landscaping Act (Government Code Section 65591, et. seq.). The Guidelines include requirements such as the percentage of total landscape area that can be water-intensive and where the water-intensive landscaping is allowed within the area (Indio 2016).

### *4.7.4 Thresholds of Significance*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been used to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

   i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

   ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

   iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned

stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

As previously discussed in Section 1.6.2, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the project would not have a significant impact pertaining to threshold d, as there are no large water bodies in the Planning Area's vicinity that could create a hazard of producing a tsunami, no impounding levees, dams or large water storage tanks that could expose people or structures to a seiche, and the Specific Plan Area lies outside the 0.2 percent annual chance flood zone. All other thresholds (a, b, c.i, c.ii, c.iii, c.iv, and e) are discussed in detail in this section.

### *4.7.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

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| **Threshold a** | Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? |

**Impact HYD-1** **CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD RESULT IN GROUND DISTURBANCE AND USE OF CONSTRUCTION-RELATED CHEMICALS, SUCH AS OIL, LUBRICANTS, AND SOLVENTS. THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD GENERALLY INVOLVE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING DEVELOPED AND VACANT LAND IN THE PLANNING AREA. SUCH DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE IMPERVIOUS SURFACE COVER, RESULTING IN POTENTIAL WATER QUALITY IMPACTS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

#### Construction

Construction activities could loosen soils or remove stabilizing vegetation and expose areas of loose soil. These areas, if not properly stabilized during construction, could be subject to increased stormwater runoff and, thus, impact water quality. Additionally, construction may involve the use of harmful and potentially hazardous materials required to operate construction equipment and vehicles, including oil, lubricants, and solvents.

Projects disturbing one acre or more, or projects disturbing less than one acre but which are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, would be subject to the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ). For all covered projects, the Construction General Permit requires visual monitoring of stormwater and non-stormwater discharges, sampling, analysis, and monitoring of non-visible pollutants, and compliance with all applicable water quality standards established for receiving waters potentially affected by construction discharges. Additionally, construction site operators would be responsible for preparing and implementing a SWPPP that outlines project-specific best management practices (BMPs) to control erosion, sediment release, and otherwise reduce the potential for discharge of pollutants in stormwater. Typical BMPs include:

- Utilizing temporary de-silting basins to ensure that surface water flows do not carry significant amounts of on-site soils and contaminants downstream

- Conducting construction vehicle maintenance in staging areas where appropriate controls have been established to ensure that fuels, motor oil, coolant, and other hazardous materials are not deposited into areas where they may enter surface water and groundwater
- Restricting the use of chemicals that may be transferred to surface waters by stormwater flows or leach to groundwater basins through water percolation into the soil
- Requiring that permanent slopes and embankments be vegetated following final grading
- Installation of silt fences, erosion control blankets
- Proper handling and disposal of wastes
- Installation of anti-tracking pads at site exits to prevent off-site transport of soil materials

Implementation of construction BMPs would minimize surficial erosion and transport of pollutants, and would ensure compliance with applicable NPDES requirements, thereby protecting water quality both on- and off-site. Compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit is further required pursuant to Title V, Chapter 55 of the Indio Code of Ordinances. Furthermore, the City's grading ordinance contained in Title XV, Chapter 162 of the Indio Code of Ordinances, requires preparation and implementation of an erosion control plan for all grading work performed between October 15 and April 15 on any site where the Director of Public Works determines erosion, mudflow, or sediment discharge may adversely affect downstream properties, facilities, or waterways.

Existing regulatory requirements under the NPDES Construction General Permit and the Indio Code of Ordinances would cover the majority of projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, projects disturbing less than one acre and or not subject to erosion control provisions of the City's grading ordinance could still result in impacts to water quality due to soil disturbance, discharge of litter or trash, or equipment leaks and spills. Such impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with incorporation of Mitigation Measure HYD-1.

### Operation

Development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would allow for the reuse and conversion of existing structures and urban vacant land to residential, commercial, office, hotel, and civic land uses. These land uses, with the exception of hotel land uses, currently exist in the Planning Area. However, due to the intensification of development in the Planning Area, the Downtown Specific Plan may result in an increase in urban runoff and associated pollutants, including sediment, nutrients, pet waste, and automobile chemicals. Development projects would be required to have design plans approved by the City, which would include the drainage plans, BMPs, and LID techniques at each future project site.

Pursuant to Title XV, Chapter 162.140 of the Indio Municipal Code, projects one acre or greater in size would be required to demonstrate retention of the 100-year, 24-hour storm event as part of the grading permit application. Projects less than one acre in size would similarly be required to incorporate retention and drainage systems to be approved by the Director of Public Works. Furthermore, the City is a permittee to the Waste Discharge Requirement for Discharges to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) within the Whitewater River Watershed (Order No. R7-2013-0011, "MS4 Permit"). Pursuant to the Whitewater River Region Stormwater Management Plan, an enforceable element of the MS4 Permit, the following projects would be required to prepare project-specific Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs): single-family hillside residences, commercial and industrial developments of 100,000 square feet or more, automotive repair shops, retail gasoline outlets and restaurants disturbing more than 5,000

square feet, home subdivisions with 10 or more housing units, parking lots of 5,000 square feet or more or 25 or more spaces (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 2015). The WQMP would identify site design BMPs, source control, LID and/or treatment control BMPs to minimize potential water quality impacts over the lifetime of each project. Other projects discharging to the MS4 and disturbing one acre or more would be required to implement structural (e.g., landscape and irrigation design, protection of slopes and channels) and non-structural (e.g., activity restrictions, education and training for property owners) BMPs.

Existing regulatory requirements under the Indio Code of Ordinances and the MS4 Permit would cover the majority of projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. Nevertheless, in order to ensure all development under the Downtown Specific Plan incorporates measures to reduce potential water quality impacts, Mitigation Measure HYD-2 and HYD-3 would apply. Such measures would require use of LID techniques and preparation of a WQMP for all projects under the Downtown Specific Plan, reducing potential impacts to water quality to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure GEO-4 contained in Section 4.5, *Geology and Soils*, would apply to this impact. Additionally, the following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts association with construction-related and operational water quality degradation.

**HYD-1** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the Public Works Department an approved copy of the following: a) Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); b) the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES); and c) Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board to include the project site.

The requirements of the SWPPP and NPDES shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices for the construction phases may include the following:

1. Stockpiling and disposing of demolition debris, concrete, and soil properly.
2. Protecting existing storm drain inlets and stabilizing disturbed areas.
3. Implementing erosion controls.
4. Properly managing construction materials.
5. Managing waste, aggressively controlling litter, and implementing sediment controls.

Projects which are not subject to the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit because they involve less than one acre of disturbance area shall implement, at a minimum, the following measures:

- Silt fencing, straw bales composed of rice straw (that are certified to be free of weed seed), fiber rolls, gravel bags, mulching erosion control blankets, soil stabilizers, and storm drain filters shall be used, in conjunction with other methods, to prevent erosion throughout the entire project site.

- Temporary berms and sediment basins shall be constructed to avoid unnecessary siltation into local waterways or the storm drain during construction activities.
- Erosion controls that protect and stabilize stockpiles and exposed soils shall be used to prevent movement of materials. Potential erosion control devices include plastic sheeting held down with rocks or sandbags over stockpiles, silt fences, or berms of hay bales.
- Temporary stockpiling of excavated material shall be minimized. However, excavated material shall be stockpiled in areas where it cannot enter the waterways or the storm drain system. Available stockpiling sites at or near the project site shall be determined prior to the start of construction.
- Upon completion of project construction, all exposed soils present in and around the project site shall be stabilized within seven days using mulch, revegetation, geotextile binding fabrics or other appropriate erosion control technique.
- An adequate supply of erosion control materials (gravel, straw bales, shovels, etc.) shall be maintained on-site to facilitate a quick response to unanticipated storm events or emergencies.

**HYD-2** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the Public Works Department all storm water control and storm drain plans that include low impact development (LID) techniques. LID techniques shall include, but are not limited to:

- Onsite surface water collection and bio-filtration treatment of runoff;
- Subsurface drainage facilities within each development site to store and percolate onsite runoff;
- Specific to each development site, onsite capacity to store up to 100 percent of the 100-year onsite runoff; and
- Bio-remediation for runoff prior to percolating into subsurface soils;
- Rain barrels and cisterns that allow rainwater to be captured and used for irrigation purposes; and
- Permeable paving materials that allow water to percolate into the ground.

**HYD-3** Prior to the issuance of any discretionary permits for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit to the City of Indio Public Works Department a Water Quality Management Plan for review and approval. The Water Quality Management Plan shall include details regarding the control and reduction of urban runoff, incorporating the measures taken through MM HYD-1 and MM HYD-2, at any development sites in the Indio Downtown Specific Plan.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term water quality impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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| **Threshold b** | Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? |

**Impact HYD-2** **DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD BE SERVED BY THE INDIO WATER AUTHORITY, WHICH OBTAINS POTABLE WATER SUPPLIES FROM THE UNDERLYING INDIO SUBBASIN. WHILE THE INDIO SUBBASIN HAS BEEN IN A STATE OF OVERDRAFT SINCE 1936, GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN ARE CONSISTENT WITH POPULATION PROJECTIONS THAT FORM THE BASIS OF IWA'S WATER DEMAND PLANNING. PROJECTS WOULD IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE POTENTIAL WATER DEMAND AND WOULD NOT IMPEDE ONGOING RECHARGE AND WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS INTENDED TO END OVERDRAFT IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

Anticipated development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would require temporary water supply for construction activities, such as dust suppression and concrete manufacturing, as well as long-term operational supply for indoor potable uses, outdoor landscaping, and fire suppression. The Downtown Specific Plan area is served by IWA. As stated above, IWA provides potable water services by extracting groundwater drawn from the Lower Indio Subbasin. Groundwater levels in the basin have historically declined because of overdraft since 1936; however, recent monitoring indicates groundwater levels have stabilized or increased in the Subbasin over the past 10 years (CVWD et al. 2019).

IWA pumps groundwater from multiple wells as needed to meet demands in its service area. As discussed in the 2012 Water Master Plan Update, the water demands developed in the 2007 Master Plan are still considered representative of the conditions. The goal of the IWA is to keep these demands the same or reduced in 2015, as shown in Table 4.7-1 (IWA 2012). Furthermore, as noted in IWA's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), IWA's 2015 per capita water demand of 214 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) meets the 2020 per capita water consumption goal established pursuant to SB X7-7.

**Table 4.7-1 Water Demand Summary**

| Demand Category | Water Demand | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2007 | 2015 Goal |
| Single Family Residential | 700 gpd/DU | 630 gpd/DU |
| Multi-Family Residential | 500 gpd/DU | 450 gpd/DU |
| Commercial/Industrial | 2,700 gpd/acre | 2,430 gpd/acre |
| Restaurants | 4,000 gpd/acre | 3,600 gpd/acre |
| Park Irrigation | 4,000 gpd/acre | 3,600 gpd/acre |
| gpd/DU = gallons per day per dwelling unit; gpd/acre = gallons per day per acre Source: IWA 2012 | | |

IWA has established a goal of limiting groundwater pumping to 20,000 AFY, which requires that it actively identify other sources of water, including purchase and treatment of imported water from CVWD. IWA anticipates using this source as early as 2020 (IWA 2016). Use of these additional sources of water would further reduce IWA's groundwater extraction and contribution to overdraft conditions.

The Downtown Specific Plan reflects current land use assumptions and other development policies as described in the General Plan. Therefore, the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with the City's water use assumptions resulting from anticipated growth under the General Plan, which was determined to result in less than significant impacts to groundwater and water supply in the General Plan FEIR (City of Indio 2019). Additionally, population growth assumptions contained in SCAG's RTP/SCS form the basis of long-term water demand planning for IWA in its 2016 UWMP, which shows IWA attaining its 20,000 AFY groundwater extraction goal by 2025 (IWA 2016). As demonstrated in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, growth assumptions associated with the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with SCAG's anticipated population growth for the City. Development projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be required to identify water use and water availability, including review and approval by IWA. If a project would meet the definition of a project pursuant to the requirements of SB 610, as discussed in Section 4.7.3, *Regulatory Setting*, a Water Supply Assessment would be required. In addition, any new development would be required to comply with federal, state and local plans, policies and regulations, including any applicable drought regulations or water shortage contingency measures.

While development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be required to comply with federal, state, and local plans, policies and regulation, Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5 would aid in reducing water use as the Downtown Specific Plan is implemented. Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would also apply and reduce anticipated water demand by requiring xeriscaping, high-efficiency irrigation systems, and the implementation of building strategies to reduce fire flow. The Downtown Specific Plan area is located in a predominantly urbanized area and would not interfere with ongoing or future groundwater recharge efforts at existing or planned recharge facilities throughout the Coachella Valley. Therefore, given that development would be consistent with General Plan land use growth assumptions and population growth assumptions that form the basis of IWA's demand projections, be required to obtain approval from IWA, and would not interfere with ongoing and planned recharge, conservation, and imported water supply strategies implemented to achieve basin sustainability, implementation of the Specific Plan would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 described in Section 4.11, *Utilities and Service Systems*, would apply to this impact and would reduce future development's water demand by requiring efficient irrigation systems, xeriscaping, and building strategies to reduce necessary fire flow. Additionally, the following mitigation measures would reduce potential decreases in groundwater supplies associated with future development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan.

**HYD-4** Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permit for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit a landscape plan to the City of Indio Community Development Department. The landscape plan for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- To the greatest extent practicable for each development site, native plant materials and other approved drought-tolerant plants shall be used in all project landscaping.

- Any proposed irrigation systems shall be reviewed and an irrigation system performance analysis shall be conducted to maximize the efficiency of the system and further reduce water demands.
- Any irrigation system installed shall be maintained effectively to ensure that runoff and evaporation is kept to a minimum. This includes maximizing the effective watering of plant roots, using drip irrigation, moisture detectors, and computer- controlled systems to increase the efficiency.

**HYD-5** Prior to the issuance of a building permit for any development projects under the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, the project proponent shall submit final design plans. These plans shall include the use of low-flush toilets and water-conserving shower heads and faucets shall be required in conformance with Section 17921.3 of the Health and Safety Code, Title 20, California Code of Regulations 1601(b), and applicable sections of Title 24 CCR.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-4, HYD-5, and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would reduce potential water demand associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan. Because anticipated development would be required to implement these water conservation measures and growth assumptions would be consistent with population estimates that form the basis of IWA's demand projections, such development would not impede sustainable management of the Indio Subbasin and this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold c.i** | Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? |

**Impact HYD-3** **ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO ALTER DRAINAGE PATTERNS THROUGH THE ADDITION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL EROSION OR SILTATION. WITH ADHERENCE TO APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL WATER QUALITY AND EROSION CONTROL REGULATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES HYD-1 THROUGH HYD-3, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

The Downtown Specific Plan area contains existing structures, vacant parcels, and roadways. Growth under the Downtown Specific Plan forecasts a net increase of 1,106 dwelling units and 746,648 sf of non-residential uses. There are no streams or rivers in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

As discussed in Impact HYD-1, construction activities could loosen on-site soils or remove stabilizing vegetation and expose areas of loose soil. These areas, if not properly stabilized during construction, could be subject to increased erosion and siltation runoff. Projects with a disturbance area of one acre or greater would be required to obtain coverage under the NPDES Construction General Permit. As part of the NPDES permit, a SWPPP, which includes site-specific BMPs for erosion and sediment control, would be prepared and implemented for projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Furthermore, the City's grading ordinance requires preparation and implementation of an erosion control plan for all grading work performed between October 15 and April 15 on any site where the Director of Public Works determines erosion, mudflow, or sediment discharge may adversely affect downstream properties, facilities, or

waterways. Projects not covered under NPDES Construction General Permit would or requiring an erosion control plan pursuant to the grading ordinance would still be required to implement erosion control BMPs pursuant to Mitigation Measure HYD-1.

Due to the proposed intensification of development in the Downtown Specific Plan area, implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan could result in increased impervious surface area and, in turn, increased runoff resulting in erosion or siltation. Projects would be required to incorporate LID techniques to reduce erosion and siltation runoff from development sites over the lifetime of each project. Each individual project would also be required to prepare a WQMP for construction activities, pursuant to Mitigation Measure HYD-3.

Impacts regarding drainage patterns and erosion and siltation would be considered potentially significant without mitigation. Compliance with federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations and implementation of the Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would reduce impacts regarding erosion and siltation to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term erosion and siltation impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold c.ii** | Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? |
| **Threshold c.iv** | Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which impede or redirect flood flows? |

**Impact HYD-4 ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD INCREASE IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREA, RESULTING IN POTENTIALLY INCREASED STORMWATER RUNOFF AND FLOODING. IMPLEMENTATION OF LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES PURSUANT TO EXISTING REGULATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES HYD-2 AND HYD-3 WOULD REDUCE THIS IMPACT TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.**

As discussed under Impact HYD-3, the Downtown Specific Plan area contains existing structures, vacant parcels, and roadways. The growth forecast of Downtown Specific Plan would result in a net increase of 1,106 dwelling units and 746,648 sf of non-residential uses. There are no streams or rivers in the Downtown Specific Plan area. No portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area is located in a flood hazard zone. Therefore, development would not impede or redirect flood flows in a flood zone.

Development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan may result in increased impervious surface area and, consequently, increased runoff that could contribute to downstream flooding. Future projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be required to submit grading plans to the City, which would be

accompanied by drainage calculations, to obtain the required grading permits. The City requires new development to implement LID techniques which focus on site design strategies to maintain pre-development runoff rates and volumes. Each individual project would also be required to prepare a WQMP for construction activities, as discussed under Impact HYD-1, above, pursuant to Mitigation Measure HYD-3. Because projects would require LID techniques and preparation of a WQMP, projects would be required to retain runoff on-site, minimizing the potential for flooding.

Impacts regarding drainage patterns would be considered potentially significant without mitigation. Compliance with federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations and implementation of the Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3 would reduce impacts regarding drainage and flooding to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential downstream flooding. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold c.iii** | Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? |

**Impact HYD-5** **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD ALTER THE EXISTING DRAINAGE PATTERN THROUGH THE ADDITION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREA. PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE STORMWATER SYSTEM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EROSION-CONTROL AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES PURSUANT TO EXISTING REGULATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES HYD-1 THROUGH HYD-3 WOULD RENDER THIS IMPACT LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

The storm drain system in the City consists of gutters, engineered storm drains, and channels; most storm drain facilities are located south of the Whitewater River Storm Channel and I-10. The City's Storm Drain Master Plan identifies several locations in the Downtown Specific Plan area that are susceptible to flooding or standing water resulting from a storm event. The 2005 Storm Drain Master Plan identified future storm drain upgrades, which included a 36-inch storm drain and desilting catch basins within Oasis Street. A 2007 Downtown Infrastructure Needs Analysis provided further information on the storm drain needs, which included a 42-inch storm drains along Oasis from SR-111 to Indio Boulevard and a 39-inch storm drain pipeline in Civic Center from Jackson to Indio Boulevard. The recommendations were then prioritized and budget allocated to the projects through the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

In addition, the City requires any new development to implement LID techniques which focus on site design strategies to maintain pre-development runoff rates and volumes, reducing potential impacts to the stormwater drainage system. The LID techniques also improve water quality, often by conveying storm water runoff through a system of storage and biofiltration areas prior to entering subsurface soils or drainage systems. Furthermore, Title V, Chapter 55 of the Indio Code of Ordinances contains the City's

stormwater management and discharge control ordinance. The ordinance prohibits discharge of any pollutants to the storm drain system with certain exceptions and contains measures, such as required spill containment systems in outdoor storage areas, to reduce sources of polluted runoff. Compliance with federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations and implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would mitigate impacts to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would require all future projects under the Downtown Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to capture and treat on-site runoff during operation, in turn reducing potential short-term and long-term polluted runoff from future project sites. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| | |
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| **Threshold e** | Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? |

**Impact HYD-6** **DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH OR OBSTRUCT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION. FUTURE PROJECTS WOULD OBTAIN WATER SUPPLY FROM THE INDIO WATER AUTHORITY, WHICH DRAWS FROM THE UNDERLYING INDIO SUBBASIN. PROJECTS WOULD IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE POTENTIAL WATER DEMAND AND WOULD NOT IMPEDE ONGOING RECHARGE AND WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS INTENDED TO END OVERDRAFT IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY. AS SUCH, THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH OR OBSTRUCT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

The Downtown Specific Plan area is located in the Whitewater River watershed and overlies the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, Indio Subbasin. Impacts with respect to the applicable water quality control plan and sustainable groundwater management plan are discussed below.

### Surface Water

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region ("Basin Plan") designates beneficial uses for surface waters in the Colorado River Basin and associated water quality objectives to fulfill such uses. The CVSC and the Salton Sea have designated beneficial uses of Water Contact Recreation (REC1), Non-Contact Water Recreation (RECII), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), and Wildlife Habitat (WILD), and Preservation of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE)(Colorado River Basin RWQCB 2019). The CVSC also has a designated beneficial use of Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH), while the Salton Sea has a designated beneficial use of Aquaculture (AQUA) and a potential beneficial use of Industrial Service Supply (IND). The CVSC is currently listed as impaired for DDT; dieldrin; PCBs; toxaphene; indicator bacteria; nitrogen, ammonia (total ammonia); and toxicity. The Salton Sea is currently listed as impaired for arsenic; chloride; chlorpyrifos; DDT; enterococcus; low dissolved oxygen; nitrogen, ammonia (total ammonia); nutrients; salinity; and toxicity (SWRCB 2019).

As described under Impact HYD-1, construction of projects under the Downtown Specific Plan would result in soil erosion and potential leaks and spills of chemicals associated with construction equipment, such as oil, lubricants, and solvents. Furthermore, proposed intensification of development in the Downtown

Specific Plan may result in an increase in urban runoff and associated pollutants, including sediment, nutrients, pet waste, and automobile chemicals. Pursuant to existing regulations and Mitigation Measure HYD-1, projects implemented under the Downtown Specific Plan would be required to implement a project-specific SWPPP or other erosion control measures to reduce potential construction-related water quality impacts. Furthermore, pursuant to the City's grading ordinance, the applicable MS4 Permit, and Mitigation Measures HYD-2 and HYD-3, projects would prepare WQMPs and implement LID techniques to capture, retain, and treat stormwater runoff, providing an opportunity for debris, sediment, and sediment-bound pollutants to settle out of the water column prior to discharge downstream. The requirements of the MS4 Permit are intended to protect water quality and support attainment of water quality standards in downstream receiving water bodies. The Specific Plan does not involve use of septic systems, agricultural land or other land uses commonly associated with high concentrations of pesticides, herbicides, chloride, or chemical toxicity and, therefore, would not exacerbate these existing impairments to the CVSC or Salton Sea. The Specific Plan would not impair existing or potential beneficial uses of nearby water bodies and would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Groundwater

As discussed in Section 4.7.3, *Regulatory Setting,* the Indio Subbasin is designated a Medium priority basin (not critically overdrafted) and SGMA requires a GSP be adopted for the basin by January 31, 2022. While multiple agencies have filed notices to be designated as GSAs for the Subbasin, IWA serves as the GSA for its service area, including the Downtown Specific Plan area. On July 17, 2019, California DWR notified CVWD that the CVWMP submitted by the GSAs meets the requirements of SGMA to serve as a GSP for the Indio Subbasin.

The 2010 Update to the CVWMP describes the following objectives:

- Meet current and future water demands with a 10 percent supply buffer
- Eliminate long-term groundwater overdraft
- Manage and protect water quality
- Comply with state and federal laws and regulations
- Manage future costs
- Minimize adverse environmental impacts

As described in Impacts HYD-1 through Impacts HYD-5, development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would incorporate measures to protect water quality, minimize adverse environmental impacts, and comply with local, state, and federal laws, including those related to erosion control, water quality protection, and preparation of Water Supply Assessments.

Future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would require short-term construction water supply and long-term potable water supply. As described in Impact HYD-2, projects in the Planning Area would be served by IWA, which draws potable groundwater from the Lower Indio Subbasin. Projects would be required to submit landscape plans demonstrating use of drought-tolerant and native vegetation and efficient irrigation and implement low-flow plumbing fixtures pursuant to Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5. Furthermore, in order to obtain water supply, projects would be required to undergo review and approval by IWA, which has established a goal of limiting groundwater extraction to 20,000 AFY in order to minimize its contribution to overdraft in the Coachella Valley. The Downtown Specific Plan would

intensify land use in the Planning Area and would result in an increase in water demand. However, as discussed under Impact HYD-2, growth assumptions under the Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with SCAG's growth projections for Indio, which form the basis of IWA's demand projections in its UWMP. IWA's 2016 UWMP shows the supplier meeting its 20,000 AFY groundwater extraction goal by 2025. The Specific Plan would not interfere with ongoing and planned recharge, conservation, or other efforts intended to end overdraft conditions in the Coachella Valley. As such, implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with the objective of the CVWMP to eliminate long-term groundwater overdraft in the Subbasin. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 would reduce potential water quality impacts by requiring all projects under the Specific Plan to implement erosion-control BMPs during construction and LID techniques to reduce runoff and pollution throughout the lifetime of the project. Such measures would minimize potential water quality impacts and, as such, the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan.

Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5 along with Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would reduce anticipated water demand associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan. As described above, such development would be consistent with growth projections used in IWA's demand projections and, as such, would not interfere with ongoing and planned efforts to end overdraft conditions in the Coachella Valley. As such, the Downtown Specific Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of CVWMP. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| **Cumulative** | Contribute to cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts? |
|---|---|

**Impact HYD-7** **FUTURE PROJECTS UNDER THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHER PLANNED, PENDING, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT CUMULATIVE IMPACT ON WATER QUALITY, RUNOFF, AND FLOODING, WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. WHILE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS WITH RESPECT TO DEPLETION OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES AND CONFLICT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN WOULD BE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT, THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN'S CONTRIBUTION SUCH IMPACTS WOULD NOT BE CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE.**

The geographic scope for considering cumulative impacts regarding hydrology and water quality includes the extent of the general hydrologic area: for flooding, it would include the City of Indio; for surface water, it would include the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Storm Channel drainage area; and for groundwater it would include the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, specifically the Indio Subbasin, also known as the Whitewater River Subbasin. Impacts of the Downtown Specific Plan would be cumulatively considerable if they would have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects. The implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would require that each individual future project in the Downtown Specific Plan area be evaluated to identify site-specific drainage, flooding, water consumption, and runoff. With the incorporation of the Downtown Specific Plan mitigation measures, specifically Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3, the Downtown Specific Plan would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to water quality, drainage patterns runoff, and flooding because

of levee failure. Cumulative impacts to these issue areas would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

With respect to groundwater supply and depletion and consistency with the applicable sustainable groundwater management plan, the City is served by IWA for water supply, which maintains water supply by extracting groundwater from the Indio (Whitewater River) Subbasin. As stated in Impact HYD-2, the Subbasin has been in a state of overdraft since 1936, though recent monitoring indicates groundwater elevations have stabilized or increased over the past 10 years (IWA 2012; CVWD et al. 2019). Nevertheless, development under the Downtown Specific Plan in concert with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would continue to draw water from the Indio Subbasin. This cumulative impact would be potentially significant.

IWA has established a goal of limiting groundwater extraction to 20,000 AFY in order to minimize its contribution to overdraft in the Coachella Valley. As discussed under Impacts HYD-2 and HYD-6, development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would not impede IWA's attainment of its 20,000 AFY groundwater extraction goal, nor would it interfere with ongoing and planned efforts to end groundwater overdraft in the Coachella Valley. Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5 along with UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would help to reduce individual project water supply needs in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Therefore, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to any potentially significant impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1 through HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures HYD-4 and HYD-5 and UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 would reduce anticipated water demand associated with future development under the Downtown Specific Plan. While cumulative impacts related to groundwater supplies and consistency with the CVWMP would be potentially significant, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to such impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. All other cumulative impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

# 4.8 LAND USE AND PLANNING

## 4.8.1 Introduction

This section of the EIR addresses potential land use impacts that would result from implementing the Downtown Specific Plan. The following discussion addresses existing environmental conditions in the affected environment, evaluates the Specific Plan's consistency with applicable goals and policies, identifies and analyzes environmental impacts, and recommends any measures, if applicable, to reduce or avoid adverse impacts anticipated from construction and operational activities.

## 4.8.2 Existing Conditions

The Specific Plan area is approximately 140 acres in southeast Indio and includes the historic downtown area and the Civic Center. The Specific Plan area is generally bordered by Indio Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the north; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; Jackson Street and Grace Street to the east; and Deglet Noor and King Street to the west. Existing development includes commercial, manufacturing, open space, public, and residential uses. Table 3-1, in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, identifies the existing, on the ground, development in the proposed Specific Plan area.

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, *Project Setting*, existing commercial uses are concentrated on approximately 31.74 acres east of King Street and along SR-111. Storefront retail uses are along Fargo Street and there are numerous small-scale retail centers along Indio Boulevard and SR-111. Auto-related commercial uses are located along Jackson Street. Business and medical offices are located primarily along Oasis Street. Manufacturing uses are located on an approximately 35.85-acre area within the northwest portion of the Specific Plan area. Open space uses account for approximately 3.92 acres of the Specific Plan area; York Plaza, located on Indio Boulevard and Fargo Street has a gazebo and benches. The Civic Center and the College of the Desert are in the approximate center of the Specific Plan area. Other public and institutional uses are focused on the west side of the project area and include the Palm Academy Student Center (kindergarten through eighth grade [K-8]), Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and School (K-8), and several other churches. Multi-family residential uses are concentrated west of Oasis Street; there are several larger multi-family complexes but most have two to six units. There are single-family residential units in the Specific Plan area, mainly concentrated between Deglet Noor Street and Oasis Street, south of Bliss Avenue and north of Saidy Avenue. Additional single-family homes are scattered throughout the Specific Plan area. Approximately 21.84 acres (approximately 19 percent) of the Specific Plan area are vacant; most of the vacant land is east of Towne Street.

## 4.8.3 Regulatory Setting

### Local

#### City of Indio General Plan – Land Use Element

This Element provides the long-term vision, goals, policies, and implementation actions for land use, development, and urban design in Indio over the next 20 to 25 years. Land use is a State-mandated element, and topics covered include the location, distribution and intensity of future land use, the form and character of future land use, enhancement of the Downtown and Midtown areas, preservation of existing neighborhood character, development of new growth areas, and mixed-use corridor revitalization.

This Element also includes an extensive treatment of community urban design. Building on citywide goals and policies, the Element also provides a vision and key strategies for each of the City's unique neighborhoods, districts, and centers, delineating strategies for the desired uses, character, and economic development opportunities for each area.

### City of Indio Municipal Code - Zoning Regulations (Title XV, Chapter 159)

The City of Indio Municipal Code, Title XV, Land Usage, Chapter 159, Zoning Regulations, establishes the basic regulations under which land is developed. This includes allowable uses, building setback requirements, and development standards. Currently, the properties in the Planning Area are governed by the previously adopted Old Town Specific Plan and the Downtown Commercial zoning designations.

### *Thresholds of Significance*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Physically divide an established community?

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

As previously discussed in Section 1.6.1, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the project would not have a significant impact pertaining to threshold a as the Specific Plan would not divide an established community, as the goals of the Specific Plan are to generate cohesive streetscapes to unify the area and promote walkability and non-motorized mobility. Threshold b is discussed below.

## *4.8.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold b** | Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? |

**Impact LU-1** **ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, APPLICABLE CITY ZONING REQUIREMENTS, AND THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN POLICIES. THROUGH REQUIRED ADHERENCE TO THESE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS, AND POLICIES, THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT CAUSE A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT DUE TO CONFLICT, AND IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Approval of the proposed Specific Plan would include a change of the Specific Plan boundaries as shown on the General Plan Land Use Map and an amendment to the Zoning Code Map to identify the "Downtown Indio Specific Plan" area. The Specific Plan's estimated growth forecast, which includes existing development, is 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential development and 1,188 dwelling units totaling 1,113,074 gsf.

### City of Indio General Plan

The Specific Plan has been reviewed for consistency with the policies and goals of the adopted plans that are pertinent to the Specific Plan area. City policy makers would make the final interpretation of the Specific Plan's consistency with applicable policies. Although a project may be inconsistent in some manner with particular policies in a General Plan or Zoning Ordinance, the inconsistency does not

necessarily amount to a significant environmental effect. In the context of land use planning, significant impacts would occur when a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project results in an adverse physical environmental effect. Table 4.8-1 analyzes the Specific Plan's consistency with applicable General Plan goals and policies.

**Table 4.8-1 Specific Plan Consistency with the City General Plan Update**

| Goals and Policies | Project Consistency |
|---|---|
| **Land Use Element** | |
| **Goals** | |
| **LU-1: Citywide Urban Structure.** An urban structure that enhances the quality of life of residents, meets the community's vision for the future, and weaves new growth areas together with established Indio neighborhoods. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan is focused on leveraging and repairing the original urban structure of the original center of Indio, rehabilitating and reconnecting a multi-modal street network and restored passenger rail service to this historic depot site, to re-weave the Downtown with surrounding arterial streets, neighborhoods, employment districts, and festival venues and reconnect it to the region with improved gateways including the new rail station. |
| **LU-2: Active Places.** Indio is a City with active and comfortable places that encourage social interaction and community gathering. | **Consistent.** One of the top priorities for the Downtown Specific Plan is to provide a clear vision, standards, guidelines and implementation strategies for coordinating catalytic public and private improvements to make the streets and vacant lots of the Downtown area a comfortable, safe, active and attractive setting for community civic, cultural and commercial life and beautiful new venues for community celebrations and special events. |
| **LU-3: Human-Scaled Public Realm.** A City designed for people, fostering interaction, activity, and safety. | **Consistent.** The vision, standards and guidelines of the Downtown Specific Plan require coordination of new public improvements and private development to generate human-scale, pedestrian-oriented public spaces in which residents, visitors, workers and students can live, work, shop, learn and play. |
| **LU-4: High-Quality Building Design.** A beautiful city with a high-quality architecture and building design. | **Consistent.** The development standards and design guidelines of the Specific Plan provide clear direction that all new development and rehabilitation of existing buildings be high in quality, with scale and character calibrated to Indio and its Coachella Valley heritage and climate. |
| **LU-5: Connected Places.** A network of transportation corridors throughout the city that provides a high level of connectivity for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. | **Consistent.** The configuration of the Downtown street network and standards for street design are specifically crafted to ensure high levels of all-mode connectivity, safety and comfort, while ensuring connections into and out of the Downtown area to the surrounding portions of the City. |
| **LU-6: Enhance Existing Neighborhoods.** A City with well-maintained residential neighborhoods that support Downtown and Midtown. | **Consistent.** Portions of the Downtown Plan area were historically residential neighborhoods and portions are envisioned to be as part of the Plan, with possibilities of including neighborhood-serving commercial uses and office uses in the future. The Specific Plan focuses on improving connections to the historic neighborhoods to the west, thereby providing market support for their improvement, and to the envisioned Midtown area as well, which also includes new and improved neighborhoods. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **LU-7: New Neighborhoods.** Neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing types, densities, designs and mix of uses and services that support healthy and active lifestyles. | **Consistent.** There are large amounts of vacant land in and to the west of the Downtown Specific Plan area. Neighborhood infill at the scale of entire blocks and multiple blocks is anticipated as part of the Specific Plan, thereby meeting the general intent of "new neighborhoods" in this policy. |
| **LU-9: Centers.** A variety of mixed use, urban centers throughout the City that provide opportunities for shopping, recreation, commerce, employment, and arts and culture. | **Consistent.** The Downtown area is one of the original, mixed-use centers in Indio. The Specific Plan is intended to transform downtown into a true urban center and set the example for other areas of the City, including Midtown and future centers throughout the City. The Interim Development Standards and Design Guidelines of the Specific Plan would serve as a model for new zoning to shape other centers throughout the City of Indio. |
| **Policies** | |
| **LU-1: Overall City Structure.** Establish a clearly defined City structure by:<br>• Establishing the City's pedestrian-oriented Downtown as a community anchor with local and regional-serving civic, arts, education, and entertainment uses. | **Consistent.** This is the central focus of the vision, standards, guidelines and implementation strategies of the Downtown Specific Plan. |
| **LU-1.2: Infill First.** Prioritize initial capital improvements and other public investments and guide private investments into the Downtown, Midtown, Jackson Neighborhood, and Avenue 42 Subarea first to limit expansion of the City's urban footprint. | **Consistent.** One of the top priorities of the Downtown Specific Plan is attracting reinvestment to the historic center of Indio, thus reducing the economic and political pressure to extend expensive and potentially unsustainable infrastructure outward into the desert. |
| **LU-3.1 Streetscape Design.** Create pedestrian-oriented streetscapes by establishing a unified approach to street tree planting, sidewalk dimensions and maintenance, pedestrian amenities, and high-quality building frontages. | **Consistent.** The Specific Plan would be consistent with this policy, which is one of the primary objectives of the Downtown Specific Plan. |
| **LU 3.6 Public Plazas.** Encourage new development to incorporate public plazas, seating, drinking fountains, and gathering places, especially in prominent locations and areas of pedestrian activity. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan emphasizes vision and standards for such public gathering spaces throughout the Downtown area, providing comfortable places for gathering, resting and enjoying shade during the day and the warmth of desert evenings. |
| **LU-5.7 Pedestrian-Supportive Building Design.** Require new and substantially rehabbed commercial and mixed-use projects to follow best practices for pedestrian-supportive design. | **Consistent.** Building frontages, as defined by the ground floor building design and use, design of setback areas where provided, and enhanced public sidewalk and landscape design, are the central focus of the Interim Development Standards included in the Specific Plan. The design and development standards are all aimed towards making Downtown a comfortable, safe and compelling public place for pedestrian, residents, students and workers, as well as for visitors and shoppers. |
| **LU-11.6 Decorative Gateways.** Celebrate the gateways to Indio, Downtown, Midtown, and other prominent destinations by enhancing them with the integration of public art by local artists. | **Consistent.** Gateways to the Downtown area are critically important to its success and economic sustainability, as it is currently an underutilized and relatively "hidden" part of the City. Beyond making Downtown easy to find and accessible, gateways also offer great opportunities for local cultural and artistic expression, which are important in re-branding the Downtown and re-establishing it as a significant destination for the cultural and civic life of Indio and the Coachella Valley. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mobility Element** | |
| **Goals** | |
| **ME-1: Complete Streets.** A City that embraces complete streets by providing streets that are safe and accessible by users of all ages and all abilities. | **Consistent.** Sections of the Specific Plan are entirely devoted to this topic, as the Specific Plan intends to provide state-of-the-art standards and guidelines for a complete network of complete streets. |
| **ME-2: Active Transportation.** A City that provides a first-rate network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. | **Consistent.** Pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort are foundational to the economic success of the Downtown area, as well as supporting and extracting value from the re-establishment of passenger rail service to the Downtown. |
| **Policies** | |
| **ME-1.4 Street Connectivity.** Encourage short block spacing for new development consistent with the Land Use and Community Design Element to enhance connectivity to neighborhoods. In key areas of the City (e.g. the pedestrian-priority areas, Downtown, Midtown, and the Festival District), work with existing land owners to improve connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians. | **Consistent.** The historic block structure of the Downtown area is for the most part consistent with this policy. On selected blocks that exceed the ideal pedestrian perimeter dimension, pedestrian paseos may be constructed. |
| **ME-2.2: Pedestrian Priority Areas.** Monitor and work to transition areas shown on Figure 4-2 to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the future. This would include deemphasizing these corridors as vehicle thoroughfares and creating better pedestrian environments with fewer travel lanes, slower vehicle speeds, and buffers between the road and the pedestrian area. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan is consistent with this policy, as the entire Downtown Plan area is a Pedestrian-Priority area and the goals of the Specific Plan are to generate a pedestrian friendly environment and to create a future showcased example for the City's Pedestrian Priority Areas. |
| **Economic Development Element** | |
| **Goals** | |
| **ED-1: Vibrant Economy.** A vibrant economy that maintains existing businesses and attracts new development. | **Consistent.** The revitalization of the Downtown, as envisioned and implemented by the Downtown Plan, is intended to transform the business environment of the Downtown to support existing businesses and attract many new ones, while also enabling and encouraging the addition of hundreds of new residents and thousands of employees and visitors to further grow the Downtown market for goods, services, entertainment and events. |
| **ED-7: Retail and Services.** A City with the destination hospitality, retail, and entertainment opportunities to meet the needs of visitors and residents. | **Consistent.** The Downtown Specific Plan is aimed at creating a destination with hospitality, retail, and entertainment services and activities. The Specific Plan is crafted with goals and objectives to ensure that it becomes so. |
| **Policies** | |
| **ED-1.5: Financing Priorities.** Set public infrastructure financing priorities by key economic focus areas as identified in the City's Economic Development Action Plan as they are updated and revised over the life of the General Plan. | **Consistent.** The City and its former Redevelopment Agency have, over the past two decades, invested heavily and strategically in downtown properties, and have prioritized the Downtown for infrastructure reinvestment to build upon the value of those investments and support its physical and economic revitalization. |
| **ED-8.2: Employment Infill.** Allow employment generating land uses at infill sites and in development locations | **Consistent.** Retail, hospitality, educational and office uses are allowed and encouraged throughout the Downtown Plan Area. The Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with this policy. |
| Source: City of Indio General Plan Update 2019 | |

### City of Indio Municipal Code, Chapter 159, Zoning Regulations

The existing zoning regulations in the Downtown area are governed by the Old Town Specific Plan and the Downtown Commercial (DC) zoning designation. These designations would be replaced by the Interim Development Standards discussed in Chapter 3 of the Specific Plan and all existing zoning classifications in the Planning Area would be rezoned to either Downtown Core Zoning District (DT-C) or Downtown Neighborhood Zoning District (DT-N). The purpose of these two zones would be to allow for flexibility in future development and primarily describe street frontages that could provide "flex" or "retail-ready" ground floors which could be converted from commercial to residential uses, or vice-versa, depending on future market demand.

City policy makers would make the final interpretation of the Specific Plan's consistency with applicable regulations. Although a project may be inconsistent in some manner with certain policies in a zoning regulation, the inconsistency does not necessarily result in a significant environmental effect. In the context of land use and relevant planning, significant impacts would occur when a conflict with any applicable regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project results in an adverse physical environmental effect. While it is possible that certain design proposals may vary from the prescribed Development Standards and Guidelines, while still meeting the intent, the provisions of IMC §159.780-793 would apply to all parcels within the Plan area, which discuss procedures and allowances for variances and adjustments. Additionally, the City may allow deviations from the specified standards below without a variance, provided that a finding can be made where the allowance results in a project that still meets the intent of the standard being deviated from. For existing permitted structures and uses that do not conform to the Specific Plan's Development Standards would be deemed to be legal nonconforming. The provisions of IMC §159.805-819 (which discuss legal nonconformance guidelines) would apply to all parcels within the Planning Area.

The Specific Plan includes regulations that constitute the primary land use and development standards for the Specific Plan area, changing the allowable land uses, densities, heights, and development guidelines. The Specific Plan would emphasize a walkable and mixed-use environment that compliments the Specific Plan area's characteristics. The City Planning Division would review individual development application as projects under the Specific Plan are proposed. The City Planning Division or, when appropriate, the City's Planning Commission would issue a written decision on each application, to ensure that development proposals are consistent with the zoning and development code, and are consistent with the policies, codes, and standards contained in the Specific Plan.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Cumulative** | Contribute to cumulative land use and planning impacts? |

**Impact LU-2** **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IS ANTICIPATED TO OCCUR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY 2040 GENERAL PLAN, ZONING REGULATIONS, OR AS OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE CITY, AND AS SUCH, WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO CUMULATIVE EFFECTS RELATIVE TO LAND USE AND PLANNING.**

The study area for the assessment of cumulative land use impacts would be the City and neighboring jurisdictions. Cumulative land use impacts could result from changes to land use plans, which become incompatible and/or unsustainable. The City's General Plan was found to not conflict with any relevant

regional or local plans, or a habitat management plan. Specifically, the City's General Plan was found to be consistent with the Riverside County General Plan (once land is annexed to the City under a specific plan), SCAG RTP/SCS, and SCAG Sustainability Planning Grant Program. The General Plan is also consistent with state planning initiatives, such as SB 1000, SB 743 and the Complete Streets Act.

Adoption of the Specific Plan could contribute to cumulative impacts if growth would conflict with land use plans and/or policies, state planning initiatives, or created incompatible neighborhoods. The proposed Specific Plan would not change the land use designations for the Specific Plan area and would continue to provide for uses that currently exist today. The Specific Plan would provide a flexible plan that emphasizes a walkable and mixed-use environment while embracing newer development. The goal of the Specific Plan is to encourage and promote economic development and revitalization to enhance the City's attractiveness to the local and regional marketplace. The Specific Plan would facilitate the reuse of existing structures and promote infill development of currently vacant or underutilized properties, which would contribute to tying the community together, rather than dividing the community. The General Plan describes the City's vision to reestablish the Specific Plan area as a special place within the City and the Coachella Valley with enhanced commercial opportunities, public spaces, a pedestrian environment, and a multimodal transportation center. The Specific Plan, in combination with existing, present and future development projects within the Specific Plan area would be consistent with this vision.

Potential impacts resulting from future development in the area would require evaluation on a project-by-project basis. Any future development projects within the City of Indio and surrounding areas, would be required to comply with all applicable City, State, and federal regulations concerning land use and planning and would be required to show consistency with the Downtown Specific Plan and associated development regulations, the City's General Plan City's Municipal Code, Chapter 159, Zoning Regulations, and the Coachella Valley MSHCP, as well as other applicable plans and policies, such as the Specific Plan. The development regulations contained in the Specific Plan would further reduce the potential for future development to contribute to a cumulative effect on the City's goals and policies. The proposed Specific Plan provides design and development standards that address site planning, building design, public space amenities, and signage; these design guidelines complement the City's existing plans and policies.

Future development in the Specific Plan area is anticipated to occur in accordance with the General Plan, Zoning Regulations, or as otherwise approved by the City, and as such, would not contribute to cumulative effects relative to land use and planning. The Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

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# 4.9 NOISE

## *4.9.1 Introduction*

This section evaluates temporary and permanent noise and vibration impacts associated with the implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan and describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for noise. Mitigation measures are also included to avoid or lessen the Downtown Specific Plan's impacts. This section relies partially on the Noise Impact Analysis (Ambient Air Quality & Noise Consulting, November 2016; included as Appendix F).

## *4.9.2 Acoustical Terminology*

Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, or unexpected. Sound is mechanical energy transmitted in the form of a wave because of a disturbance or vibration. Sound levels are described in terms of both amplitude and frequency.

### Amplitude

Amplitude is defined as the difference between ambient air pressure and the peak pressure of the sound wave. Amplitude is measured in decibels (dB) on a logarithmic scale. For example, a 65 dB source of sound, such as a truck, when joined by another 65 dB source results in a sound amplitude of 68 dB, not 130 dB (i.e., doubling the source strength increases the sound pressure by 3 dB). Amplitude is interpreted by the ear as corresponding to different degrees of loudness. Laboratory measurements correlate a 10 dB increase in amplitude with a perceived doubling of loudness and establish a 3 dB change in amplitude as the minimum audible difference perceptible to the average person.

### Frequency

The frequency of a sound is defined as the number of fluctuations of the pressure wave per second. The unit of frequency is the Hertz (Hz). One Hz equals one cycle per second. The human ear is not equally sensitive to sound of different frequencies. For instance, the human ear is more sensitive to sound in the higher portion of this range than in the lower and sound waves below 16 Hz or above 20,000 Hz cannot be heard at all. To approximate the sensitivity of the human ear to changes in frequency, environmental sound is usually measured in what is referred to as "A-weighted decibels" (dBA). On this scale, the normal range of human hearing extends from about 10 dBA to about 140 dBA.

### Addition of Decibels

Because decibels are logarithmic units, sound levels cannot be added or subtracted through ordinary arithmetic. Under the decibel scale, a doubling of sound energy corresponds to a 3-dB increase. In other words, when two identical sources are each producing sound of the same loudness, the resulting sound level at a given distance would be 3 dB higher than one source under the same conditions. For example, if one automobile produces a sound level of 70 dB when it passes an observer, two cars passing simultaneously would not produce 140 dB; rather, they would combine to produce 73 dB. Under the decibel scale, three sources of equal loudness together would produce an increase of 5 dB.

## Sound Propagation and Attenuation

### Geometric Spreading

Noise sources are generally characterized as either a localized source (i.e., point source) or a line source. Examples of point sources include construction equipment, vehicle horns, alarms, and amplified sound systems. Examples of line sources include trains and on-road vehicular traffic. Sound from a point source propagates uniformly outward in a spherical pattern.

For a point source, sound levels generally decrease (attenuate) at a rate of approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance from the source, depending on ground surface characteristics. For acoustically hard sites (i.e., sites with a reflective surface between the source and the receiver), no excess ground attenuation is assumed. Parking lots and bodies of water are examples of hard surfaces which generally attenuate at this rate. For acoustically absorptive or soft sites (i.e., those sites with an absorptive ground surface between the source and the receiver, such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees), an excess ground-attenuation value of 1.5 dB per doubling of distance is normally assumed. When soft surfaces are present, the excess ground attenuation for soft surfaces generally results in an overall attenuation rate of approximately 7.5 dB per doubling of distance from the point source.

On-road vehicle traffic consists of several localized noise sources on a defined path, and hence can be treated as a line source, which approximates the effect of several point sources. Noise from a line source propagates outward in a cylindrical pattern, often referred to as cylindrical spreading. Sound levels for line sources attenuate at a rate of approximately 3 dB for each doubling of distance for hard sites and approximately 4.5 dB per doubling of distance for soft sites.

### Atmospheric Effects

Receptors located downwind from a source can be exposed to increased noise levels relative to calm conditions, whereas locations upwind can have lowered noise levels. Sound levels can be increased at large distances (e.g., more than 500 feet) from the highway due to atmospheric temperature inversion (i.e., increasing temperature with elevation). Other factors such as air temperature, humidity, and turbulence can also have significant effects.

### Shielding by Natural or Human-Made Features

A large object or barrier in the path between a noise source and a receiver can substantially attenuate noise levels at the receiver. The amount of attenuation provided by shielding depends on the size of the object and the frequency content of the noise source. Natural terrain features (e.g., hills and dense woods) and human-made features (e.g., buildings and walls) can substantially reduce noise levels. Walls are often constructed between a source and a receiver specifically to reduce noise. A barrier that breaks the line of sight between a source and a receiver will typically result in a minimum 5 dB of noise reduction. Taller barriers provide increased noise reduction.

Noise reductions afforded by building construction can vary depending on construction materials and techniques. Standard construction practices typically provide approximately 15 dBA exterior-to-interior noise reductions for building facades, with windows open, and approximately 20 to 25 dBA, with windows closed. With compliance with current building construction and insulation requirements, exterior-to-interior noise reductions typically average approximately 25 dBA. The absorptive characteristics of interior rooms, such as carpeted floors, draperies and furniture, can result in further reductions in interior noise.

### Human Response to Noise

The human response to environmental noise is subjective and varies considerably from individual to individual. Noise in the community has often been cited as a health problem, not in terms of actual physiological damage, such as hearing impairment, but in terms of inhibiting general well-being and contributing to undue stress and annoyance. The health effects of noise in the community arise from interference with human activities, including sleep, speech, recreation, and tasks that demand concentration or coordination. Hearing loss can occur at the highest noise intensity levels. When community noise interferes with human activities or contributes to stress, public annoyance with the noise source increases. The acceptability of noise and the threat to public well-being are the basis for land use planning policies preventing exposure to excessive community noise levels.

There is no completely satisfactory way to measure the subjective effects of noise or of the corresponding reactions of annoyance and dissatisfaction. This is primarily because of the wide variation in individual thresholds of annoyance and habituation to noise over differing individual experiences with noise. An important way of determining a person's subjective reaction to a new noise is the comparison of it to the existing environment to which one has adapted: the "ambient" environment. In general, the more a new noise exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise will be judged. Regarding increases in A-weighted noise levels, knowledge of the following relationships is provided:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1 dB cannot be perceived by humans;
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3-dB change is considered a barely perceivable difference;
- A change in level of at least 5 dB is required before any noticeable change in community response would be expected. An increase of 5 dB is typically considered substantial;
- A 10-dB change is subjectively heard as an approximate doubling in loudness and would almost certainly cause an adverse change in community response.

A limitation of using a single noise-level increase value to evaluate noise impacts, as discussed above, is that it fails to account for pre-development noise conditions. The Federal Interagency Committee on Noise (FICON) developed guidance to be used for the assessment of project-generated increases in noise levels that consider the ambient noise level. The FICON recommendations are based upon studies that relate aircraft noise levels to the percentage of persons highly annoyed by aircraft noise. Although the FICON recommendations were specifically developed to assess aircraft noise impacts, these recommendations are often used in environmental noise impact assessments involving the use of cumulative noise exposure metrics, such as the average-daily noise level (i.e., CNEL, $L_{dn}$). FICON-recommended noise evaluation criteria are summarized in Table 4.9-1 (Ambient 2016).

**Table 4.9-1 Federal Interagency Committee on Noise Recommended Criteria for Evaluation of Increases in Ambient Noise Levels**

| Ambient Noise Level Without Project | Increase Required for Significant Impact |
|---|---|
| < 60 dB | 5.0 dB, or greater |
| 60-65 dB | 3.0 dB, or greater |
| > 65 dB | 1.5 dB, or greater |
| Source: Ambient 2016. | |

As depicted in Table 4.9-1, an increase in the traffic noise level of 5.0 dB or greater would typically be considered to result in increased levels of annoyance where existing ambient noise levels are less than 60 dB. Within areas where the ambient noise level ranges from 60 to 65 dB, increased levels of annoyance would be anticipated at increases of 3 dB, or greater. Increases of 1.5 dB, or greater, could result in increased levels of annoyance in areas where the ambient noise level exceeds 65 dB. The rationale for the FICON-recommended criteria is that as ambient noise levels increase, a smaller increase in noise resulting from a project is sufficient to cause significant increases in annoyance (Ambient 2016). These criteria are commonly applied for analysis of environmental noise impacts.

#### Vibration

Vibration is defined as the mechanical motion of earth or ground, building, or other type of structure, induced by the operation of any mechanical device or equipment located upon or affixed thereto. Vibration generally results in an oscillatory motion in terms of the displacement, velocity, or acceleration of the ground- or structure(s) that causes a normal person to be aware of the vibration by means such as, but not limited to, sensation by touch or visual observation of moving objects.

The effects of groundborne vibration include movements of building floors, rattling of windows, and shaking of items on shelves or hangings on the walls. In extreme cases, vibration can cause damage to buildings. The noise radiated from the motion of the room surfaces is called ground-borne noise. The vibration motion normally does not provoke the same adverse human reactions as the noise unless there is an effect associated with the shaking of the building. In addition, the vibration noise can only occur inside buildings. Similar to the propagation of noise, vibration propagated from the source to the receptor depends on the receiving building (i.e., the weight of the building), soil conditions, layering of the soils, the depth of groundwater table, etc. Although the response of humans to vibration is complex, it is generally accepted that human response is best approximated by the vibration velocity level associated with the vibration occurrence.

Heavy equipment operation, including stationary equipment that produces substantial oscillation or construction equipment that causes percussive action against the ground surface, may be perceived by building occupants as perceptible vibration. It is also common for groundborne vibration to cause windows, pictures on walls, or items on shelves to rattle. Although the perceived vibration from such equipment operation can be intrusive to building occupants, the vibration is seldom of sufficient magnitude to cause even minor cosmetic damage to buildings. When evaluating human response, groundborne vibration is usually expressed in terms of root mean square (RMS) vibration velocity. RMS is defined as the average of the squared amplitude of the vibration signal. As for sound, it is common to express vibration amplitudes in terms of decibels. To avoid confusion with sound decibels, the abbreviation VdB is used for vibration decibels. The vibration threshold of perception for most people is around 65 VdB. Vibration levels in the 70 to 75 VdB range are often noticeable, but generally deemed acceptable and levels exceeding 80 VdB are often considered unacceptable.

### *4.9.3 Existing Conditions*

#### Noise Sensitive Land Uses

Noise sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses that would result in noise exposure that could cause health-related risks to individuals. Places where quiet is essential are also considered noise sensitive uses. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Other land uses

such as libraries, places of worship, and recreation areas are also considered noise sensitive land uses.

Noise sensitive land uses within the Specific Plan area consist predominantly of residential land uses. Other noise sensitive land uses located include the Coachella Valley History Museum, the Indio Branch Library, places of worship, and community parks.

### Existing Noise Environment

Short-term (10-minute) noise level measurements were conducted on August 31, 2015 to document and measure the existing noise environment at various locations throughout the Specific Plan area. Measured daytime noise levels along area roadways ranged from approximately 59 to 72 dBA $L_{eq}$. In general, nighttime noise levels are typically 5 to 10 dB lower than daytime noise levels. Ambient noise levels are largely influenced by vehicle traffic on area roadways. Areas located near the northern boundary of the Specific Plan area are also influenced by rail traffic along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), which generally extends in a northwest-southeast direction, north of and roughly parallel to Indio Boulevard. Noise levels near the UPRR mainline measured approximately 78 dBA $L_{eq}$ with instantaneous noise levels reaching 101 dBA $L_{max}$ at roughly 100 feet from the rail corridor centerline. To a lesser extent, aircraft overflights and other stationary and area noise sources within the community, including construction activities, also contribute to the ambient noise environment. Ambient noise measurement locations and corresponding measured values (i.e., $L_{eq}$ and $L_{max}$) are identified in Table 4.9-2.

**Table 4.9-2 Summary of Measured Ambient Noise Levels**

| | Location[1] | Monitoring Period (a.m.) | Primary Noise Sources | Noise Levels (dBA) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | $L_{eq}$ | $L_{max}$ |
| 1 | State Route 111 near Fargo St, approximately 40 feet from road centerline. | 0630-0643 | Vehicle Traffic | 67.3 | 85.6 |
| 2 | State Route 111 near Towne St, approximately 40 feet from road centerline. | 0650-0700 | Vehicle Traffic | 67.5 | 79.3 |
| | | 0700-0710 | Vehicle Traffic | 68.7 | 84.4 |
| 3 | Indio Blvd near Towne St, approximately 50 feet from road centerline. | 0715-0725 | Vehicle Traffic | 71.7 | 80.3 |
| 4 | Oasis St near Bliss Ave, approximately 50 feet from road centerline. | 0735-0740 | Vehicle Traffic | 59.3 | 68.9 |
| 5 | Jackson St near Civic Center Mall, approximately 50 feet from road centerline. | 0750-0800 | Vehicle Traffic | 67.6 | 81.0 |
| 6 | Indio Blvd near Grace St, approximately 50 feet from road centerline. | 0810-0820 | Vehicle Traffic | 72.1 | 80.4 |
| 7 | Greyhound Bus Terminal near Union Pacific Railroad, approximately 100 feet from rail corridor centerline. | 0825-0845 | Freight train pass by, train horns, train idling/track switching on spur line | 78.3 | 101.3 |

[1] Noise measurements were conducted on August 31, 2015 using a Larson Davis Model 820 Type I sound level meter.

Source: Ambient 2016.

## Noise Sources

### Surface Transportation Sources: Roadway Vehicular Traffic

As noted earlier in this report, noise from vehicular traffic on area roadways is a primarily source of ambient noise in the Specific Plan area. Traffic noise levels for area roadways were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Roadway Noise Prediction Model (FHWA RD-77-108) based on traffic volumes obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this Project and posted speed limits for the roadways. Predicted traffic noise levels and distances to projected traffic noise contours for major roadways are summarized in Table 4.9-3. It is important to note that projected traffic noise contours do not include attenuation or shielding provided by intervening structures. Based on the modeling conducted, existing traffic noise levels along area roadways range from approximately 53 to 67 dBA CNEL at 50 feet from the near-travel-lane centerline.

**Table 4.9-3 Existing Roadway Traffic Noise Levels and Contour Distances**

| Roadway Segment | Speed Limit (mph) | ADT Volumes | CNEL at 50 ft. from Near-travel-lane Centerline | Distance to CNEL Contour (Feet from Road Centerline) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 70 | 65 | 60 |
| Indio Blvd, West of Oasis St | 45 | 17,750 | 67.2 | 61 | 114 | 237 |
| Indio Blvd, East of Oasis St | 45 | 15,820 | 66.8 | WR | WR | 211 |
| Oasis St, South of Indio Blvd | 25 | 2,850 | 53.4 | WR | WR | WR |
| Oasis St, North of Requa Ave | 25 | 5,140 | 56.0 | WR | WR | WR |
| Oasis St, South of Requa Ave | 25 | 5,180 | 56.0 | WR | WR | WR |
| Requa Ave, East of Oasis St | 25 | 3,630 | 56.3 | WR | WR | WR |
| Jackson St, North of Requa Ave | 40 | 11,120 | 64.0 | WR | 74 | 145 |
| Jackson St, North of SR-111 | 40 | 8,680 | 62.9 | WR | 65 | 124 |
| SR-111, West of Jackson St | 35 | 8,320 | 61.5 | WR | WR | 98 |

Traffic noise levels for area roadways were calculated based on data obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project. Assumes peak-hour traffic volumes are roughly 10 percent of average-daily traffic volumes. Predicted noise contours do not include shielding by intervening structures.
mph = miles per hour, ADT = average daily trips
Source: Appendix F

### Surface Transportation Sources: Railroad Traffic

The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) main line is generally located along the northern boundary of the Specific Plan area, roughly parallel to and north of Indio Boulevard. Approximately forty-five (45) freight trains travel along this corridor over a twenty-four (24)-hour period (Ambient 2016). Freight trains average approximately four (4) engines and eighty (80) cars per train traveling at a speed of roughly fifty (50) miles per hour (Ambient 2016). Each freight car was assumed to be fifty (50) feet in length. The number of freight trains and hours of operation can vary depending on market demands. Approximately two (2) Amtrak trains also use this rail corridor daily (Ambient 2016). Average daily noise levels along this rail corridor are dominated by freight trains.

Existing train noise levels and corresponding distances to noise contours for the railroad corridor were calculated in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* guidance. Based on the volumes noted above and as identified in Table 4.9-4, average-daily train

noise levels along the railroad corridor would be approximately 77 dBA CNEL at roughly 100 feet from the rail corridor centerline. The existing 70 dBA CNEL train noise contour would extend to approximately 290 feet from the rail corridor centerline. The existing 65 CNEL and 60 CNEL train noise contours would extend to distances of approximately 630 and 1,350 feet, respectively; from the rail corridor. Train noise events can also be a source of intermittent noise, including noise generated by locomotive engines, wheel squeal, and warning horns. These instantaneous noise events can contribute to increased levels of annoyance to occupants of nearby noise sensitive land uses.

**Table 4.9-4 Existing Railroad Traffic Noise Levels**

| Trains | CNEL at 100 feet from Rail Corridor Centerline | Distance to CNEL Contours (feet) from Rail Corridor Centerline | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 70 | 65 | 60 |
| UPRR Freight & Amtrak Passenger | 77 | 290 | 630 | 1,350 |
| Assumes 45 freight trains and two Amtrak passenger trains distributed equally over a 24-hour period (Ambient 2016). Source: Appendix F | | | | |

### Aircraft Overflights

No airports or airfields are located near the Specific Plan area. The nearest airport is the Bermuda Dunes Airport located approximately three (3) miles to the northwest and the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport located approximately six (6) miles to the southeast. The Palm Springs International Airport is approximately seventeen (17) miles to the northwest. The Specific Plan area is not located within the projected noise contours of these airports. Therefore, aircraft operations do not contribute substantially to the average- daily noise environment within the Specific Plan area. However, although no airports or airfields are in the Specific Plan area, noise generated by aircraft overflights may be noticeable, particularly during the quieter nighttime hours. Helicopter overflights may also contribute to intermittent increases in ambient noise levels. Intermittent noise events associated with aircraft overflight may result in increases in annoyance and potential sleep disruption to occupants of nearby residential dwellings.

### Stationary Sources

Stationary source noise control issues focus on two goals: (1) preventing the introduction of new noise-producing uses in noise sensitive areas; and (2) preventing encroachment of noise sensitive uses upon existing noise-producing facilities. The first goal can be achieved by applying noise performance standards to proposed new noise-producing uses. The second goal can be met by requiring that new noise sensitive uses near noise-producing facilities include mitigation to ensure compliance with noise performance standards. These goals stress the importance of avoiding the location of new uses that may be incompatible with adjoining uses.

Within the Specific Plan area, non-transportation noise sources are predominantly associated with commercial use activities. Depending on the type of operation, noise sources associated with commercial activities may include mechanical equipment, loading and unloading of vehicles and trucks, and amplified or unamplified communications. To a lesser extent, stationary sources of noise may also include common building or home mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners and ventilation systems (HVAC). These noise sources can be continuous or intermittent and may contain tonal components that are annoying to individuals who live nearby. For instance, backup alarms are often considered nuisance noise sources but may not occur frequently enough to be considered incompatible with noise sensitive land uses. Noise generated by stationary sources are often directional and can vary depending on various factors including

site conditions, distance from source, shielding provided by intervening terrain and structures, and ground attenuation rates.

#### Construction Activities

Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending upon the nature or phase (e.g., demolition/land clearing, grading and excavation, erection) of construction. Noise generated by construction equipment, including pile drivers, pavers, jackhammers, and portable generators, can result in intermittent and prolonged increases in ambient noise levels. Although construction noise impacts are generally short-term, they can result in increased levels of annoyance to occupants of nearby residential dwellings. Noise-generating construction activities are regulated through the City's Noise Control Ordinance which generally limits these activities to the less noise sensitive daytime hours.

### *4.9.4 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

Several laws and guidelines at the Federal level direct the consideration of a broad range of noise and vibration issues. Because the Project does not require action by federal agencies, it is not directly subject to federal noise regulations other than those of the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

#### Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

The OSHA Occupational Noise Exposure: Hearing Conservation Amendment (Federal Register 48 [46], 9738–9785, 1983) stipulates that protection against the effects of noise exposure shall be provided for employees when sound levels exceed 90 dBA over an eight (8)-hour exposure period. Protection shall consist of feasible administrative or engineering controls. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels to acceptable levels, personal protective equipment shall be provided and used to reduce exposure of the employee. Additionally, a hearing conservation program must be instituted by the employers whenever employee noise exposure equals or exceeds the action level of an eight (8)-hour, time-weighted average sound level of eighty-five (85) dBA. The hearing conservation program requirements consider periodic area and personal noise monitoring, the performance and evaluation of audiograms, the provision of hearing protection, annual employee training, and record keeping.

#### State of California

#### California Division of OSHA

Occupational exposure to noise is regulated by the California Division of OSHA in Title 8, Group 15, Article 105, Sections 5095–5100. The agency's standards stipulate that protection against the effects of noise exposure shall be provided when sound levels exceed ninety (90) dBA over an eight (8)-hour exposure period. Protection consists of feasible administrative and/or engineering controls. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels to acceptable levels, personal protective equipment must be provided and used to reduce exposure of the employee. In addition, a hearing conservation program must be instituted by employers whenever employee noise exposure equals or exceeds the action level of an eight (8)-hour time-weighted average sound level of eighty-five (85) dBA.

#### California Noise Control Act of 1973

Sections 46000 through 46080 of the California Health and Safety Code, known as the California Noise

Control Act of 1973, declares that excessive noise is a serious hazard to the public health and welfare and that exposure to certain levels of noise can result in physiological, psychological, and economic damage. It also identifies a continuous and increasing bombardment of noise in the urban, suburban, and rural areas. The California Noise Control Act declares that the State of California has a responsibility to protect the health and welfare of its citizens by the control, prevention, and abatement of noise. It is the policy of the state to provide an environment for all Californians free from noise that jeopardizes their health or welfare.

### California Noise Insulation Standards

In 1974, the California Commission on Housing and Community Development adopted noise insulation standards for hotels, motels, dormitories, and multifamily residential buildings (Title 24, Part 2, California Code of Regulations [CCR]). Title 24 establishes standards for interior room noise (attributable to outside noise sources). The regulations also specify that acoustical studies must be prepared whenever a multi-family residential building or structure is proposed to be located near an existing or adopted freeway route, expressway, parkway, major street, thoroughfare, rail line, rapid transit line, or industrial noise source, and where such noise source(s) create an exterior CNEL (or $L_{dn}$) of sixty (60) dBA or greater. Such acoustical analysis must demonstrate that the residence has been designed to limit intruding noise to an interior CNEL (or $L_{dn}$) of at least forty-five (45) dBA (California's Title 24 Noise Standards, Chap. 2-35).

## Local

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

The City of Indio General Plan Noise Element contains policies that are intended to identify and minimize adverse effects related to noise. Policies applicable to the Specific Plan project are included below.

**Chapter 11 – Noise Element**

**Policies**

**NE-1.2 Noise Compatibility.** Apply the Noise Compatibility Matrix, shown in Table 11-1, as a guide for planning and development decisions. The City will require projects involving new development or modifications to existing development to implement mitigation measures, where necessary, to reduce noise levels to at least the normally compatible range shown in the City's Noise Compatibility Matrix shown in Table 11-1. Mitigation measures should focus on architectural features and building design and construction, rather than site design features, such as excessive setbacks, berms, and sound walls, to maintain compatibility with adjacent and surrounding uses.

**NE-2.1 Freeway Noise.** Work with Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration to reduce noise impacts to sensitive receptors along I-10.

**NE-2.2 Truck Routes.** Regulate traffic flow to enforce speed limits to reduce traffic noise. Periodically evaluate and enforce established truck and bus routes to avoid noise impacts on sensitive receptors.

**NE-2.4 Roadway Noise.** Implement the policies listed under Goal 1 to reduce the impacts of roadway noise on noise-sensitive receptors where roadway noise exceeds the normally compatible range shown in the City's Noise Compatibility Matrix shown in Table 11-1.

**NE-2.5 Traffic Calming.** Require the use of traffic calming measures such as reduced speed limits or roadway design features to reduce noise levels where roadway noise exceeds the normally compatible range shown in the City's Noise Compatibility Matrix shown in Table 11-1.

**NE-2.6 Noise-reducing Paving.** Encourage the use of noise-reducing paving materials, such as open-grade or rubberized asphalt, for public and private road surfacing projects in proximity to existing and proposed residential land uses.

**NE-2.7 City Fleet.** Consider the noise effects of City purchases and or leases of vehicles and other noise generating equipment. Take reasonable and feasible actions to reduce the noise generated from City-owned or leased vehicles and equipment, where possible.

### City of Indio Municipal Code

The City of Indio Municipal Code (Title IX, General Regulations, Chapter 95C, Noise Control) includes various provisions intended to protect community residents from prolonged unnecessary, excessive, and annoying sound levels that are detrimental to the public health, welfare, and safety, or are contrary to the public interest. Examples of noise sources subject to the Indio Municipal Code include, but are not limited to, industrial and commercial machinery and equipment, pumps, fans, compressors, generators, air conditioners and refrigeration equipment.

Section 159.107.H.1 (Exterior Noise Limits) of the Indio Municipal Code states that no person shall operate or cause to be operated any source of sound or allow the creation of sound or noise which causes the noise level measured on any other property to exceed 45 decibels, except that noise levels may range up to 65 decibels during the times set forth as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Pacific Standard Time: | Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM<br>Saturday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM<br>Sunday and Holidays, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM |
| Pacific Daylight Savings Time: | Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM<br>Saturday, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM<br>Sunday and Holidays, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM |

The Noise Ordinance does not identify noise level limit standards applicable to construction-related activities. However, the Noise Ordinance does establish hourly limitations for construction activities. In accordance with Section 95C.08.B, noise sources associated with construction-related activities are limited to the same hours noted above.

## *4.9.5 Significance Thresholds*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would result in:

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where

such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

As previously discussed in Section 1.6.1, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, the City has determined that the project would not have a significant impact pertaining to threshold c, as the Specific Plan area is not located in the fifty-five (55) to sixty-five (65)+ CNEL airport noise contours of the nearest airport (Bermuda Dunes Airport). All other thresholds are discussed in detail in this section.

CEQA does not define a quantitative threshold for "significant increase" with respect to noise exposure; however, based on human response and commonly applied industry standards, the following thresholds of significance would be applied to the Project, as set forth by the CEQA Guidelines:

- The project causes the ambient noise level measured at the property line of affected uses to increase by three (3) dBA in CNEL, to a level at or within the "normally unacceptable" or "clearly unacceptable" noise/land use compatibility category; or
- Significant increases are based on the following thresholds:
  - 5.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is less than 60 dBA
  - 3.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is 60-65 dBA
  - 1.5, or greater, where the existing noise level is greater than 65 dBA

The City has not codified noise level limits for short-term demolition and construction activities. However, the FTA has identified criteria that is considered reasonable for general noise assessment purposes. Based on these criteria, noise-generating construction activities would be considered to have a potentially significant short-term impact if average-hourly noise levels would exceed ninety (90) dBA $L_{eq}$ at residential uses or one-hundred (100) dBA $L_{eq}$ at commercial/industrial uses during the daytime hours.

### *4.9.6 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold a** | Result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? |

**Impact N-1** **CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA COULD RESULT IN NOISE LEVELS THAT EXCEED ESTABLISHED THRESHOLDS. MITIGATION MEASURES N-1 AND N-2 WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE CONSTRUCTION NOISE IMPACTS TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA MAY BE SUBJECTED TO TRAFFIC AND RAIL NOISE LEVELS THAT EXCEED NOISE LAND USE COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS. MITIGATION MEASURE N-3 WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE NOISE LAND USE COMPATIBILITY OF SPECIFIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT.**

#### Construction Noise Levels

While the Specific Plan area is predominately developed, future development in the Specific Plan area may include demolition and/or construction activities proximate to existing land uses. Demolition and construction-generated noise levels could adversely affect nearby land uses.

Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending upon the nature or phase (e.g., demolition/land clearing, grading and excavation, erection) of construction. Noise generated by construction equipment, including earth movers, material handlers, and portable generators, can reach high levels. Temporary increases in ambient noise levels, particularly during the nighttime hours, could result in increased levels of annoyance and potential sleep disruption. Although noise ranges were found

to be similar for all construction phases, the grading phase tends to involve the most equipment and resulted in slightly higher average-hourly noise levels.

Typical operating cycles may involve two minutes of full power, followed by three or four minutes at lower settings. Intermittent noise levels can range from approximately seventy-seven (77) to ninety-five (95) dBA $L_{max}$, the loudest of which include the use of pile drivers and impact devices (e.g., hoe rams, impact hammers). Assuming a construction noise level of eighty-eight (88) dBA $L_{eq}$ and an average attenuation rate of six (6) dBA per doubling of distance from the source, construction activities located within approximately 1,330 feet of noise sensitive receptors could reach levels of approximately sixty (60) dBA $L_{eq}$. Depending on distances from nearby noise sensitive land uses and the specific construction activities conducted, construction activities may result in temporary and periodic increases in ambient noise levels at nearby receptors.

Depending on the distance to nearby receptors, predicted demolition and construction noise levels could potentially exceed ninety (90) dBA $L_{eq}$ for residences or one-hundred (100) dBA $L_{eq}$ at commercial/industrial developments. In addition, construction activities that occur during the more noise sensitive nighttime hours may result in increased levels of annoyance and potential sleep disruption to occupants of nearby noise sensitive land uses. The implementation of mitigation measures would reduce construction-related impacts resulting from future projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Projects in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis and would be required to implement measures, as necessary, to reduce project-related impacts that exceed the City's noise standards for land use compatibility. Due to the short-term and intermittent frequency of construction noise and the required compliance with mitigation measures that would require compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance hourly restrictions, construction noise level increases would not result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels above levels existing without the project. With implementation of MM N-1 and MM N-2, the impact would be considered less than significant.

### Transportation Noise Levels

#### Roadway Noise Levels

The primary noise source in the Specific Plan is vehicle traffic on area roadways. Traffic noise levels were estimated using the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108) for existing and future cumulative (year 2035) conditions based on information contained in the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) prepared for the Downtown Specific Plan. As described in Section 4.10, *Transportation*, traffic modeling conducted for the TIA was based on an earlier iteration of the Downtown Specific Plan. As summarized in the project trip generation memorandum prepared by Fehr & Peers, forecast growth under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate an estimated 24,693 average daily trips (ADT), or an approximately twenty-five (25) percent reduction in trip generation compared to the development scenario analyzed in the TIA prepared in 2016. The previous iteration of the Downtown Specific Plan analyzed in the TIA also underestimated existing development in the Plan Area, thereby considering greater net growth under the Specific Plan than anticipated. As such, the estimated increase in traffic noise levels described below represents a conservative analysis. Predicted increases in existing traffic noise levels, with project implementation, are summarized in Table 4.9-5. Predicted future cumulative traffic noise contours, with project implementation, are summarized in Table 4.9-6. It is important to note that predicted noise contours are approximate and do not consider shielding or reflection of noise due to

intervening terrain or structures. Although these predicted noise contours are not considered site-specific, they are useful for determining potential land use conflicts.

**Table 4.9-5 Predicted Increase in Traffic Noise Levels: Existing Conditions**

| Roadway Segment | CNEL at 50 ft. from Near-travel-lane Centerline | | | Potentially Significant?[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Existing Without Project | Existing With Project | Increase | |
| Indio Blvd, West of Jackson St | 69.3 | 69.6 | 0.3 | No |
| Indio Blvd, East of Jackson St | 68.3 | 68.7 | 0.4 | No |
| Oasis St, North of SR-111 | 56.6 | 58.7 | 2.1 | No |
| Oasis St, South of SR-111 | 56.8 | 58.0 | 1.2 | No |
| Jackson St, North of SR-111 | 66.4 | 67.2 | 0.8 | No |
| Jackson St, South of SR-111 | 67.2 | 67.9 | 0.7 | No |
| SR-111, West of Oasis St | 67.2 | 67.6 | 0.4 | No |
| SR-111, Oasis St to Jackson St | 67.2 | 67.5 | 0.3 | No |
| SR-111, East of Jackson St | 64.8 | 65.3 | 0.5 | No |

Note: Traffic noise levels were calculated based on traffic volumes from the Project traffic analysis (Kimley-Horn 2016).
[1]Significant increases are based on the following thresholds:

- 5.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is less than 60 dBA
- 3.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is 60-65 dBA
- 1.5, or greater, where the existing noise level is greater than 65 dBA

Source: Ambient 2016.

**Table 4.9-6 Predicted Increases in Traffic Noise Levels: Horizon Year (2035)**

| Roadway Segment | CNEL at 50 ft. from Near-travel-lane Centerline | | | Potentially Significant?[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2035 Without Project | 2035 With Project | Increase | |
| Indio Blvd, West of Jackson St | 69.9 | 70.2 | 0.3 | No |
| Indio Blvd, East of Jackson St | 68.8 | 69.1 | 0.3 | No |
| Oasis St, North of SR-111[2] | 54.1 | 57.4 | 3.3 | No |
| Oasis St, South of SR-111[2] | 56.4 | 57.7 | 1.3 | No |
| Jackson St, North of SR-111 | 66.5 | 67.2 | 0.7 | No |
| Jackson St, South of SR-111 | 67.3 | 68.0 | 0.7 | No |
| SR-111, West of Oasis St | 67.6 | 68.0 | 0.4 | No |
| SR-111, Oasis St to Jackson St | 67.7 | 68.0 | 0.3 | No |
| SR-111, East of Jackson St | 65.2 | 65.6 | 0.4 | No |

Note: Traffic noise levels were calculated based on traffic volumes from the Downtown Specific Plan Traffic Impact Analysis (Kimley-Horn 2016).

[1]Significant increases are based on the following thresholds:

- 5.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is less than 60 dBA
- 3.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is 60-65 dBA
- 1.5, or greater, where the existing noise level is greater than 65 dBA

[2]Reductions in noise levels along Oasis St. under 2035 Without Project conditions compared to Existing conditions described in Table 4.9-5 are due to roadway traffic forecasts developed using the Indio Traffic Model, which show a reduction in average daily trips along Oasis St. in 2035.

Source: Ambient 2016.

In comparison to existing and future cumulative conditions, implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not result in significant increases in traffic noise. In comparison to existing traffic noise levels, predicted increases in traffic noise would be approximately 2.1 dB or less. In comparison to predicted future traffic noise levels, the Downtown Specific Plan would result in increases in traffic noise levels of approximately 3.3 dB, or less. As noted in Table 4.9-7 the projected future traffic noise contours for major roadways located in the Downtown Specific Plan area, such as Indio Boulevard, Jackson Street, and SR-111, would be projected to extend beyond the roadway right-of-way. Depending on the type of land uses, distances from area roadways, and site conditions, future development could be exposed to traffic noise exceeding the City's noise standards for land use compatibility. Future development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be analyzed on a project-by-project basis to ensure the compatibility of proposed land uses in comparison to applicable noise standards. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, this impact would be less than significant.

**Table 4.9-7 Traffic Noise Levels & Contour Distances: Horizon Year (2035) with Specific Plan**

| Roadway Segment | ADT Volumes | CNEL at 50 ft. from Near-travel-lane Centerline | Distance to CNEL Contour (Feet from Road Centerline) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 70 | 65 | 60 |
| Indio Blvd, West of Jackson St | 27,656 | 70.2 | 87 | 254 | 796 |
| Indio Blvd, East of Jackson St | 21,869 | 69.1 | 72 | 202 | 630 |
| Oasis St, North of SR-111 | 5,843 | 57.4 | WR | WR | WR |
| Oasis St, South of SR-111 | 6,198 | 57.7 | WR | WR | WR |
| Jackson St, North of SR-111 | 18,917 | 67.2 | WR | 133 | 408 |
| Jackson St, South of SR-111 | 22,425 | 68.0 | WR | 156 | 483 |
| SR-111, West of Oasis St | 30,224 | 68.0 | WR | 151 | 469 |
| SR-111, Oasis St to Jackson St | 30,224 | 68.0 | WR | 151 | 469 |
| SR-111, East of Jackson St | 17,519 | 65.6 | WR | 91 | 273 |

Note: Traffic noise levels were calculated based on traffic volumes from the Downtown Specific Plan Traffic Impact Analysis (Kimley-Horn 2016).

Source: Ambient 2016.

### Railroad Noise Levels

The UPRR main line is generally located along the northern boundary of the planning area, roughly parallel to and north of Indio Boulevard. Approximately forty-five (45) freight trains and two (2) passenger trains currently travel along this rail corridor daily. By 2035, freight trains traveling long this corridor are projected to increase to approximately ninety-three (93) per day (Ambient 2016). Although future passenger trains along this corridor would be anticipated to increase slightly in future years, the overall train noise levels would be dominated by freight train traffic. It was conservatively assumed that passenger trains would increase to four trains per day.

Projected future train noise levels and corresponding distance to projected noise contours are summarized in Table 4.9-8. As depicted, train noise levels are projected to reach levels of approximately seventy-five (75) dBA CNEL at approximately one hundred (100) feet from the rail corridor centerline. Under horizon year 2035 conditions, the projected seventy (70) CNEL contour would extend to approximately 465 feet from the centerline of the rail corridor. The projected sixty-five (65) and sixty (60) CNEL contours would extend to approximately 1,000 feet and 2,150 feet, respectively, from the rail corridor centerline.

**Table 4.9-8 Horizon Year (2035) Railroad Traffic Noise Levels**

| Trains | CNEL at 100 feet from Rail Corridor Centerline | Distance to CNEL Contours (feet) from Rail Corridor Centerline | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 70 | 65 | 60 |
| UPRR Freight & Amtrak Passenger | 80 | 465 | 1,000 | 2,150 |

Assumes 93 freight trains and 4 Amtrak passenger trains distributed equally over a 24-hour period. Predicted noise contours do not include shielding by intervening structures.

Source: Ambient 2016.

Although the proposed Specific Plan would not result in an increase in train traffic, future development associated with the implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan, particularly development located along the northern boundary of the Downtown Specific Plan area, could be exposed to train noise levels

exceeding applicable noise standards for land use compatibility. Train noise events can also be a source of instantaneous noise, including noise generated by locomotive engines, wheel squeal, and warning horns. These instantaneous noise events can contribute to increased levels of annoyance to occupants of nearby noise sensitive land uses. Future development within the Specific Plan area would be analyzed to ensure the compatibility of proposed land uses in comparison to applicable noise standards. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, this impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

### Non-Transportation Noise Levels

Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would result in the future development that may generate noise levels exceeding applicable City noise standards. In addition, new noise sensitive land uses could be in areas of existing stationary noise sources. Exposure of noise sensitive land uses to non-transportation noise levels could result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project and could result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels exceeding standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance or of applicable standards of other agencies. Future development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be analyzed to ensure the compatibility of proposed land uses in comparison to applicable noise standards. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, this impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts associated with construction noise (N-1 and N-2) and operational noise (N-3) from future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan.

**N-1** The City shall ensure that future demolition and construction activities occur in accordance with applicable regulations and, if necessary, shall require implementation of site-specific noise reduction measures to minimize impacts to nearby land uses. Mitigation measures typically implemented to reduce construction-related impacts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Utilize best available noise control techniques for construction equipment, including the use of intake silencers, mufflers, and engine shrouds.
- To the extent locally available, utilize quieter construction techniques and alternatively powered equipment, such as electrically powered equipment.
- Stationary construction equipment, such as power generators, should be located as far from adjacent sensitive receptors as possible.
- Use of portable barriers or other measures as determined by the City (or other appropriate government agency) when demolition or construction activities are expected to exceed 90 dBA $L_{eq}$ at nearby noise sensitive receptors.

**N-2** Noise-generating construction activities shall be limited to the hours set forth in Section 95C.08.B of the City's Municipal Code:

a. Pacific Standard Time.

Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM through 6:00 PM Saturday, 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM

Sunday, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM

Government Holidays, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM

b. Pacific Daylight Time.

Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM through 6:00 PM Saturday, 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM

Sunday, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM

Government Holidays, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM

**N-3** Future development projects undergoing discretionary review shall be required to analyze project-related noise impacts and incorporate necessary noise-reduction measures to ensure the compatibility of proposed land uses with applicable noise standards, including attainment of a 45 dBA CNEL interior noise level. Noise-reduction measures typically implemented to reduce traffic and rail noise include increased insulation, setbacks, and construction of sound barriers.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would reduce potential construction-related noise impacts by requiring projects to comply with all applicable City regulations and limiting construction to daytime hours specified in the City's Municipal Code. Mitigation Measure N-3 would require future projects to implement noise-reduction measures to meet land use compatibility standards, reducing potential operational noise impacts. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| **Threshold b** | Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? |
|---|---|

**Impact N-2** **CONSTRUCTION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA COULD RESULT IN POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT VIBRATION IMPACTS. MITIGATION MEASURES N-1 AND N-2 WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE VIBRATION IMPACTS TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.**

The effects of ground vibration can vary from no perceptible effects at the lowest levels, low rumbling sounds and detectable vibrations at moderate levels, and slight damage to nearby structures at the highest levels. At the highest levels of vibration, damage to structures is primarily architectural (e.g., loosening and cracking of plaster or stucco coatings) and rarely results in structural damage. The effects of ground vibration are influenced by the duration of the vibration and the distance from the vibration source.

There are no federal, State, or local regulatory standards for vibration. However, various criteria have been established to assist in the evaluation of vibration impacts. For instance, Caltrans has developed vibration criteria based on human perception and structural damage risks. For most structures, Caltrans considers a peak-particle velocity (ppv) threshold of 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) to be the level at which architectural damage (i.e., minor cracking of plaster walls and ceilings) to normal structures may occur. Below 0.10 in/sec there is "virtually no risk of 'architectural' damage to normal buildings." Damage to historic or ancient buildings could occur at levels of 0.08 in/sec ppv. In terms of human annoyance, continuous vibrations in excess of 0.1 in/sec ppv are identified by Caltrans as the minimum level perceptible level for ground vibration. Short periods of ground vibration in excess of 0.2 in/sec ppv can be expected to result in increased levels of annoyance to people within buildings (Ambient 2016).

Groundborne vibration sources located in the Specific Plan area would be primarily associated with construction activities and train traffic on the UPRR main line north of the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Locomotive powered passenger and freight trains moving at fifty (50) miles per hour (mph) generate groundborne vibration of approximately eighty-eight (88) VdB root mean squares velocity (RMS), or approximately 0.1 to 0.2 in/sec ppv, at a distance of thirty (30) feet from the centerline of the track (FTA 2018). The centerline of the UPRR main line passes approximately one-hundred and forty-five (145) feet north of property lines south of Indio Boulevard in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Given the distance to the mainline, attenuated vibration levels at the nearest property lines would be on the order of 0.01 to 0.04 in/sec ppv, below the potential to cause damage to structures or human annoyance.

With the exception of pavement breaking and pile driving, construction activities and related equipment typically generate groundborne vibration levels of less than 0.2 in/sec, which is the architectural damage risk threshold recommended by Caltrans. Based on Caltrans measurement data, use of off-road tractors, dozers, earthmovers, and haul trucks generates groundborne vibration levels of less than 0.10 in/sec, or one half of the architectural damage risk level, at ten feet. The highest vibration level associated with a pavement breaker was 2.88 in/sec at ten feet. During pile driving, vibration levels near the source depend mainly on the soil's penetration resistance as well as the type of pile driver used.

Impact pile drivers tend to generate higher vibration levels than vibratory or drilled piles. Groundborne vibration levels of pile drivers can range from approximately 0.17 to 1.5 in/sec ppv. Caltrans indicates that the distance to the 0.2 in/sec ppv criterion for pile driving activities would occur at approximately fifty (50) feet. However, as with construction-generated noise levels, pile driving can result in a high potential for human annoyance from vibrations, and pile-driving activities are typically considered as potentially significant if these activities are performed within two-hundred (200) feet of occupied structures (Ambient 2016).

Mitigation Measure N-1 includes requirements that would reduce potential impacts to nearby receptors, such as the use of alternatively powered construction equipment. Mitigation Measure N-2 would also limit demolition and construction activities to the less sensitive daytime hours. In addition, individual development projects undergoing discretionary review would be subject to site-specific environmental review, which would necessitate identification of site-specific mitigation in the event that significant impacts are identified. With mitigation, this impact would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2, described above, would apply.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would incorporate construction noise- and vibration-reduction requirements, including restricting construction hours to less sensitive daytime hours. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

| **Cumulative** | Contribute to cumulative noise levels? |
|---|---|

**Impact N-3** **DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA ALONG WITH OTHER PAST, PRESENT, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIO COULD RESULT IN POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES OF TRAFFIC NOISE. WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURE N-3, FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ANALYZE PROJECT-RELATED NOISE IMPACTS AND INCORPORATE NECESSARY NOISE-REDUCTION MEASURES SUFFICIENT TO ACHIEVE THE APPLICABLE NOISE STANDARDS, AND IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

### Cumulative Construction Noise Levels

The location of future development in the proposed Downtown Specific Plan area is currently not known. Development may also occur in other areas of the City associated with redevelopment of existing developed sites as well as new construction on undeveloped sites. Construction activities associated with citywide development would result in increased noise at discrete locations. However, because construction activities associated with development projects tend to be localized and of limited duration and intensity, construction-generated noise and vibration levels do not create cumulative impacts. In addition, construction activities would be subject to compliance with the City's Municipal Code requirements and would typically be limited to between the less noise sensitive daytime hours. For these reasons, cumulative short-term noise or vibration impacts would be considered less than significant.

### Cumulative Operational Noise Levels

As discussed above, the ambient noise environment is influenced primarily by vehicle traffic on area roadways. The cumulative noise setting is, therefore, predominantly associated with vehicle traffic generated by project-generated vehicle traffic, as well as development in surrounding areas of the City. Future development may also result in new noise generators and noise sensitive land uses and potentially increase land use conflicts and hazards associated with noise.

#### Roadway Traffic

In comparison to existing conditions, anticipated growth by 2035, in combination with the Specific Plan, would result in projected increases in traffic noise levels along some major roadway segments as identified in Table 4.9-9. Under future cumulative conditions with the growth forecast of the Downtown Specific Plan and, in comparison to existing conditions, the Downtown Specific Plan would contribute to a significant increase in traffic noise levels along Oasis Street north of SR-111. Furthermore, future development would potentially occur proximate to major roadways, which may exceed applicable noise standards. Therefore, cumulative noise impacts would be potentially significant. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan would be required to analyze project-related noise impacts and incorporate necessary noise-reduction measures sufficient to achieve the applicable noise standards, including a forty-five (45) dBA CNEL interior noise level. With implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3, the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to potentially significant noise impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

**Table 4.9-9 Predicted Increases in Traffic Noise Levels: Existing Conditions Compared to Horizon Year (2035) Cumulative Conditions**

| Roadway Segment | CNEL at 50 ft. from Near-travel-lane Centerline | | | Potentially Significant?[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Existing Without Project | 2035 With Project | Increase | |
| Indio Blvd, West of Jackson St | 69.3 | 70.2 | 0.9 | No |
| Indio Blvd, East of Jackson St | 68.3 | 69.1 | 0.8 | No |
| Oasis St, North of SR-111[2] | 54.1 | 57.4 | 3.3 | Yes |
| Oasis St, South of SR-111[2] | 56.4 | 57.7 | 1.3 | No |
| Jackson St, North of SR-111 | 66.4 | 67.2 | 0.8 | No |
| Jackson St, South of SR-111 | 67.2 | 68.0 | 0.8 | No |
| SR-111, West of Oasis St | 67.2 | 68.0 | 0.8 | No |
| SR-111, Oasis St to Jackson St | 67.2 | 68.0 | 0.8 | No |
| SR-111, East of Jackson St | 64.8 | 65.6 | 0.8 | No |

Note: Traffic noise levels were calculated based on traffic volumes from the Downtown Specific Plan Traffic Impact Analysis (Kimley-Horn 2016).

[1]Significant increases are based on the following thresholds:

- 5.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is less than 60 dBA
- 3.0, or greater, where the existing noise level is 60-65 dBA
- 1.5, or greater, where the existing noise level is greater than 65 dBA

[2]Based on modeling using the Indio Traffic Model, traffic volumes along Oasis St. under 2035 Without Project conditions are lower than under Existing Without Project conditions. Therefore, traffic noise levels under the 2035 Without Project conditions are provided to conservatively show the maximum potential increase in roadway noise.

Source: Ambient 2016.

### Non-Transportation Sources

Future development projects associated with implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan in combination with the General Plan are not anticipated to include the installation of major non-transportation sources of noise. In addition, no major non-transportation noise sources have been identified in the Downtown Specific Plan area that contribute substantially to the ambient noise environment. Furthermore, non-transportation noise sources would be subject to compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance which establishes acceptable noise levels to minimize potential impacts to nearby land uses. For these reasons, cumulative impacts related to non-transportation source noise exposure would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure N-3, described above, would apply.

### Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3 would reduce the Downtown Specific Plan's contribution to potential cumulative impacts associated with operational transportation noise such that it would not be cumulatively considerable. All other potential cumulative noise impacts would be less than significant.

# 4.10 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

## *4.10.1 Introduction*

This section of the Program EIR addresses potential impacts of implementing the Downtown Specific Plan on transportation and traffic, and describes the environmental and regulatory framework. If required, any mitigation measures that would reduce impacts are also discussed. Sources utilized for analysis, background information, and existing settings include the *City of Indio General Plan Update*, incorporated by reference herein, and the *Indio Education Center Traffic Impact Analysis and Parking Study* (Kunzman Associates, Inc., 2011).

A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for the Downtown Specific Plan was completed by Kimley-Horn and Associates in 2016 (Appendix G-1). Because recent updates to the Specific Plan have changed the proposed land uses, Fehr & Peers prepared a trip generation assessment to determine whether the proposed land use changes would result in a higher project trip generation and therefore affect findings documented in the Kimley-Horn TIA (Appendix G-2). Fehr & Peers' analysis concludes that the current Specific Plan would generate fewer vehicle trips than the version considered in 2016; therefore, it was determined that the evaluation of impacts contained in the 2016 TIA is conservative and that future traffic conditions did not to be re-modeled. In addition to a project trip generation memorandum, Fehr & Peers also prepared a VMT analysis, the findings of which are summarized in a memorandum (Appendix G-3).

## *4.10.2 Existing Conditions*

### Level of Service

The qualitative Level of Service (LOS) scale "A" through "F" is measured quantitatively using "measures of effectiveness". The measure used depends on the type of facility being assessed. Table 4.10-1 provides a description of the operating characteristics of each level of service (LOS) and Table 4.10-2 defines the level of service in terms of average seconds of delay for signalized and unsignalized intersections. Table 4.10-3 provides a summary of the theoretical daily traffic-carrying capacities and level of service thresholds for each of the roadway types.

The Mobility Element of the Indio General Plan Update has established that the Level of Service standard for intersection and roadway operation in the City is LOS D. LOS E is only acceptable when LOS D is neither reasonable nor feasible due to certain constraints

**Table 4.10-1 Level of Service Definitions**

| Level of Service | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| **A** | Primarily free-flow operation. Vehicles are completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream. Controlled delay at the boundary intersections is minimal. The travel speed exceeds 85% of the base free-flow speed. |
| **B** | Reasonably unimpeded operation. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted and control delay at the boundary intersections is not significant. The travel speed is between 67% and 85% of the base free-flow speed. |
| **C** | Stable operation. The ability to maneuver and change lanes at mid-segment locations may be more restricted than at LOS B. Longer queues at the boundary intersections may contribute to lower travel speeds. The travel speed is between 50% and 67% of the base free-flow speed. |
| **D** | Less stable condition in which small increases in flow may cause substantial increases in delay and decreases in travel speed. This operation may be due to adverse signal progression, high volume, or inappropriate signal timing at the boundary intersections. The travel speed is between 40% and 50% of the base free-flow speed. |
| **E** | Unstable operation and significant delay. Such operations may be due to some combination of adverse signal progression, high volume, and inappropriate signal timing at the boundary intersections. The travel speed is between 30% and 40% of the base free-flow speed. |
| **F** | Flow at extremely low speed. Congestion is likely occurring at the boundary intersections, as indicated by high delay and extensive queuing. The travel speed is 30% or less of the base free-flow speed. Also, LOS F is assigned to the subject direction of travel if the through movement at one or more boundary intersections have a volume-to-capacity ratio greater than 1.0. |
| Source: Highway Capacity Manual 2010 | |

**Table 4.10-2 Level of Service Criteria**

| Level of Service | Signalized Intersection (Average delay per vehicle, in seconds) | Unsignalized Intersections (Average delay per vehicle, in seconds) |
|---|---|---|
| A | ≤ 10 | 0 – 10 |
| B | > 10 – 20 | > 10 – 15 |
| C | > 20 – 35 | > 15 – 25 |
| D | > 35 – 55 | > 25 – 35 |
| E | > 55 – 80 | > 35 – 50 |
| F | > 80 | > 50 |
| Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1 | | |

**Table 4.10-3 Roadway Segment Capacity and Level of Service Thresholds**

| Facility Type | Lane Configuration | LOS A | LOS B | LOS C | LOS D | LOS E | LOS F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local | 2 lanes – Undivided | < 5,490 | 5,490 – 6,390 | 6,390 – 7,290 | 7,290 – 8,190 | 8,190 – 9,000 | > 9,000 |
| Collector | 2 lanes – Undivided | < 8,540 | 8,540 – 9,940 | 9,940 – 11,340 | 11,340 – 12,740 | 12,740 – 14,000 | > 14,000 |
| Modified Secondary | 2 lanes – Divided | < 11,590 | 11,590 – 13,490 | 13,490 – 15,390 | 15,390 – 17,290 | 17,290 – 19,000 | > 19,000 |
| Secondary | 4 lanes – Undivided | < 17,080 | 17,080 – 19,880 | 19,880 – 22,680 | 22,680 – 25,480 | 25,480 – 28,000 | > 28,000 |
| Primary | 4 lanes – Divided | < 25,560 | 25,560 – 29,800 | 29,800 – 34,080 | 34,080 – 38,340 | 38,340 – 42,600 | > 42,600 |
| Major | 6 lanes – divided | < 36,600 | 36,600 – 42,700 | 47,700 – 48,800 | 48,800 – 54,900 | 54,900 – 61,000 | > 61,000 |

Source: Kimley-Horn, 2016; Appendix G-1

## Existing Transportation System

Regional access to the Downtown Specific Plan area is provided by Interstate 10 (I-10) and SR-111. I-10 runs generally in an east-west orientation and is located just north of the Downtown Specific Plan area, and can be accessed from Jackson Street or Monroe Street to Indio Boulevard. SR-111 runs generally in an east-west orientation and along the south boundary of the Specific Plan area.

Local access is provided by several roadways leading to and from the Downtown Specific Plan area. The following is a description of the existing roadways.

***Oasis Street*** is a four-lane divided roadway that extends through the Specific Plan area, starting on the north at Indio Boulevard and ending at Avenue 48. Oasis Street is oriented in a north-south direction and provides connections to SR-111 and other east-west roadways in the City. Oasis Street is a City street, and all study intersections along Oasis Street are city-controlled intersections. The posted speed limit on Oasis Street is 25 miles per hour (mph) north of SR-111, and 40 mph south of SR-111.

***Jackson Street*** is a four-lane divided roadway that begins near the I-10 interchange in Indio and heads south to Avenue 66 near One Hundred Palms. Jackson Street is oriented in a north-south direction and provides connections to I-10 and other east-west roadways in the City of Indio and the surrounding areas. The posted speed limit on Jackson Boulevard through the Specific Plan area is 45 mph.

***Indio Boulevard*** is a four-to six-lane divided roadway that begins northwest at Bay Drive near Bermuda Dunes and heads southeast to connect with SR-111 in Indio. Indio Boulevard continues in a southeast direction until it becomes Old California 86. Indio Boulevard is oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, parallel to the rail corridor, and provides local access to major roadways in the City and the surrounding areas. The posted speed limit on Indio Boulevard through the Specific Plan area is 45 mph.

***Miles Avenue*** is a two-to four-lane roadway which starts from SR-111 in Indian Wells and heads east to terminate at Smurr Street in Indio. Miles Avenue is oriented in an east-west direction and provides local access to major roadways in the City and the surrounding areas. Miles Avenue is a four-lane roadway west of Monroe Street and changes to a two-lane roadway east of Monroe Street in Indio. The posted speed limit on Miles Avenue through the Specific Plan area is 25 mph.

***Requa Avenue*** is a two-lane undivided roadway that starts at Monroe Street in Indio and heads east to terminate at Indio Boulevard. Requa Avenue is oriented in an east-west direction and provides local access to roadways in the City. The posted speed limit on Requa Avenue through the Specific Plan area is 25 mph.

### Public Transportation Service

Local and regional bus service for the City is provided by SunLine Transit Agency. SunLine operates Routes 54, 80, 81, 91, 95 and 111 within or near the Specific Plan area.

***SunLine Route 54.*** Route 54 operates between the cities of Indio and Palm Desert via Fred Waring Drive and Indio Boulevard, and passes through downtown Indio via Indio Boulevard, Oasis Street, SR-111, and Requa Avenue. Route 54 starts in Indio at SR-111 and Flower Street and continues west through the cities of La Quinta, Indian Wells, and Palm Desert. Route 54 operates weekdays only, from 6:00 AM to 7:15 PM with 45-minute headways throughout the day.

The other bus routes previously noted pass through the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 (at the southeast corner of the Specific Plan area). A SunLine transfer center for all routes is located at the intersection of SR-111 and Flower Street, one quarter mile east of the Specific Plan area.

### Bicycle Facilities

Currently, there are no Class I or Class II bicycle facilities provided along roadways within the Downtown Specific Plan area. The nearest bicycle facility is a Class II bike lane along Jackson Street, starting south of SR-111 and turning eastward at Dr. Carreon Boulevard.

## *4.10.3 Traffic Study Area*

The study area was developed in consultation with the City of Indio staff. Traffic impact analyses were conducted for the following study intersections and roadway segments:

**Study Intersections**

- Oasis Street at Indio Boulevard
- Oasis Street at Miles Avenue
- Oasis Street at Requa Avenue
- Jackson Street at Requa Avenue
- Oasis Street at SR-111
- Jackson Street at SR-111

**Study Roadway Segments**

1. Indio Boulevard – Oasis Street to Civic Center Drive
2. Indio Boulevard – East of Civic Center Drive
3. Oasis Street – North of SR-111
4. Oasis Street – South of SR-111
5. SR-111 – West of Oasis Street
6. SR-111 – Oasis Street to Jackson Street

7. SR-111 – East of Jackson Street
8. Jackson Street – North of SR-111
9. Jackson Street – South of SR-111

The location of the study intersections and roadway segments and the existing lane configurations and traffic controls are identified in the Kimley-Horn TIA.

### Existing Traffic Conditions

Morning and evening peak hour traffic counts and existing daily roadway volumes were provided by the City or were obtained from previous traffic studies. Existing operating conditions at the study intersections during the morning and evening peak hours are summarized in Table 4.10-4. The table shows that all study intersections are currently operating at an acceptable LOS D or better in both the morning and evening peak hours. Roadway level of service analysis was conducted based on the roadway capacities (Table 4.10-3). The results of the roadway analysis for Existing Conditions are shown in Table 4.10-5. The table indicates that all study roadway segments are currently operating at LOS A.

**Table 4.10-4 Summary of Intersection Operation: Existing Conditions**

| Intersection | AM Peak Hour | | PM Peak Hour | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS |
| Oasis Street at Indio Blvd. | 11.8 | B | 12.6 | B |
| Oasis Street at Miles Avenue | 10.4 | B | 10.6 | B |
| Oasis Street at Requa Avenue | 23.3 | C | 24.3 | C |
| Jackson Street at Requa Avenue | 21.6 | C | 26.3 | C |
| Oasis Street at SR-111 | 19.4 | B | 17.3 | B |
| Jackson Street at SR-111 | 32.6 | C | 34.7 | C |

Notes:
**Bold** and shaded values indicate intersections operating at LOS E or F or significant impact to intersection per City standards.
Delay refers to the average control delay for the entire intersection, measured in seconds per vehicle. Delay values are based on the methodology outlined in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual.

Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

**Table 4.10-5 Summary of Roadway Segment Operation: Existing Conditions**

| Roadway | Segment | # of Lanes | Daily Traffic Volume[1] | V/C | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indio Boulevard | Oasis St to Civic Center Drive | 4D | 22,894 | 0.537 | A |
| | East of Civic Center Drive | 4D | 18,102 | 0.425 | A |
| Oasis Street | North of SR-111 | 4D | 4,837 | 0.114 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 2U | 5,130 | 0.366 | A |
| State Route 111 | West of Oasis Street | 4D | 25,018 | 0.587 | A |
| | Oasis St to Jackson Street | 4D | 25,018 | 0.587 | A |
| | East of Jackson Street | 4D | 14,501 | 0.340 | A |
| Jackson Street | North of SR-111 | 4D | 15,658 | 0.368 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 4D | 18,562 | 0.436 | A |

Notes:
[1] Daily Traffic Volume uses Seasonal Adjustment Factor, which is based on City of Indio Mobility Element Existing Conditions Report.
V/C = Volume-to-Capacity ratio; LOS = Level of Service
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

### *4.10.4 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### 2010 Highway Capacity Model (HCM)

The Transportation Research Board has previously prepared and issued the 2010 HCM that is a joint effort between the Transportation Research Board, FHWA, and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The 2010 HCM provides concepts, guidelines, and computational procedures for calculating capacity and quality of service for highway facilities, including freeways, intersections (signalized and unsignalized), and rural highways. In addition, the 2010 HCM addresses the effects of transit, pedestrians, and bicycles on transportation system performance.

#### State of California

##### California Department of Transportation

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has jurisdiction over State highways and sets maximum load limits for trucks and safety requirements for oversized vehicles that operate on State highways. The following Caltrans regulations apply to potential transportation and traffic impacts of the project:

**California Vehicle Code (CVC), Division 15, Chapters 1 through 5 (Size, Weight, and Load).** Includes regulations pertaining to licensing, size, weight, and load of vehicles operated on highways.

**California Street and Highway Code Sections 660-711, 670-695.** Requires permits from Caltrans for any roadway encroachment during truck transportation and delivery, includes regulations for the care and protection of State and county highways and provisions for the issuance of written permits, and requires permits for any load that exceeds Caltrans weight, length, or width standards for public roadways.

##### Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill 1358)

The Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill 1358) was passed in 2008. As required by this act, upon any

substantial revision to a General Plan, jurisdictions must incorporate revisions to the Circulation Element that plan for a balanced multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of public transportation. The act is intended to move the focus away from vehicular transportation to multimodal transportation, and, in part, to reduce GHG emissions and promote physical activity and public health. In July 2017 OPR refined its General Plan guidelines to provide direction on how local jurisdictions may prepare plans to safely and conveniently accommodate alternative modes of transportation in various urban and rural contexts.

#### California Environmental Quality Act Transportation Analysis Changes (SB 743)

SB 743 (2013) created a process to change the way projects analyze transportation impacts pursuant to CEQA. Currently, environmental review of transportation impacts focuses on the delay that vehicles experience at intersections and on roadway segments. That delay is often measured using LOS. Under SB 743, the focus of transportation analysis will shift from driver delay to reduction of vehicle miles traveled, and the associated reductions in GHG emissions, creation of multimodal networks and promotion of a mix of land uses. SB 743 requires the OPR to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts. According to the legislative intent contained in SB 743, these changes are meant to more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Senate Bill 375

California State Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) became law effective January 1, 2009 as implementing legislation of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), which requires the State to reduce GHG emissions across all industry sectors to 1990 levels. Both laws are administered and enforced through CARB. Please refer to the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Chapters of this Program EIR.

SB 375 provides guidance on how curbing emissions from cars and light trucks can help the State comply with AB 32. The law requires each of the State's 18 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (in this case, SCAG) to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) which would include specific strategies for improving land use and transportation efficiency. The most prominent strategy includes the identification and development of higher density, mixed-use projects around public transportation system stations. SB 375 also provides CEQA streamlining incentives for preferred development types. Residential or mixed-use projects qualify if they conform to the SCS. Transit-oriented developments also qualify if they: (1) are at least 50 percent residential; (2) meet density requirements; and (3) are within one-half mile of a transit stop. The degree of CEQA streamlining is based on the degree of compliance with these development preferences. Other supported strategies relate to the integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to improve circulation on freeways and arterials. Every SCS to be developed under SB 375 is required to be integrated into each MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to encourage local jurisdictions to comply. Transportation improvement projects not listed in the RTP become ineligible to receive funding from some State and federal programs.

### Regional

#### Riverside County Congestion Management Program

The Congestion Management Program (CMP) was first established in 1990 under Proposition 111 which established a process for each metropolitan county in California to designate a Congestion Management

Agency (CMA) that would be responsible for development and implementation of the CMP within county boundaries. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) was designated as the CMA in 1990. RCTC's adopted minimum Level of Service (LOS) threshold is LOS E. Therefore, when a CMP street or highway segment falls to LOS F, a deficiency plan is required. Preparation of a deficiency plan is the responsibility of the local agency where the deficiency is located. Within the Downtown Specific Plan area, SR-111 is a designated CMP highway.

### Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan

Under federal law, MPOs and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) are required to prepare a 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is updated every four years. In this region, SCAG is both the MPO and the RTPA. Only projects and programs included in the RTP are eligible for federal and State funding. The focus areas of the RTP are: Active Transportation; Aviation; Environmental Mitigation; Goods Movement; Growth Forecasts; Highways and Arterials; Land Use; Passenger Rail; Transit; Transportation Demand Management (TDM); Transportation Finance; and Transportation Safety and Security. The Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is a new element of the RTP that demonstrates the integration of land use, transportation strategies, and transportation investments within the RTP. This new requirement was put in place by the passage of SB 375 with the goal of ensuring that the SCAG region can meet its regional GHG reduction targets. On April 7, 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016- 2040 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS).

## Local

### City of Indio Municipal Code

The Indio Municipal Code, Chapter 70, Traffic Regulations, is known as Indio's Traffic Ordinance. This ordinance provides general provisions, administration and enforcement, traffic control devices and markings, speed, processions, vehicle size and weight, traffic on highways, transportation of hazardous materials, interstate trucks, off-road use of vehicles, and pedestrians (American Legal Publishing Corporation 2016).

The City of Indio's Public Works Department, Engineering Division has Engineering Standards relating to roadway design. These standards were adopted in May 2016 (City of Indio 2016). The design standards include specifications for minimum curve radii, sight lines, design speeds, maximum grades, subgrade base, pavement thickness, and other roadway features. Additionally, the design standards outline specific procedures for road trenching. Compliance with the City's roadway design standards is enforced by the City's traffic engineer and is intended to preclude traffic hazards.

### City of Indio General Plan (Adopted September 2019)

**Chapter 4 - Circulation**

**Goals**

**ME-1** **Complete Streets.** A City that embraces complete streets by providing streets that are safe and accessible by users of all ages and all abilities.

**ME-2** **Active Transportation.** A City that provides a first-rate network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

**ME-4** **Vehicle Circulation.** The City will provide appropriate vehicle circulation, especially along streets identified as priority-auto streets.

**ME-8 Parking.** Parking will be right sized within the City.

**Policies**

**ME-1.1 Vision.** Utilize the layered networks approach to provide enhanced mobility for prioritized modes along streets. This will guide investment along streets in the City.

**ME-1.2 Users.** Design and build streets that accommodate all users of all ages and all abilities. This includes utilizing the layered networks approach to identify key modes that shall be prioritized and enhanced along each street.

**ME-1.3 Projects and Phases.** Design, plan, maintain, and operate streets using complete streets principles for all types of transportation projects including design, planning, construction, maintenance, and operations of new and existing streets and facilities. This includes repurposing unneeded roadway pavement to implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements (e.g. road diets) when Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes are less than 20,000 vehicles.

**ME-1.4 Street Connectivity.** Encourage short block spacing for new development consistent with the Land Use and Community Design Element to enhance connectivity to neighborhoods. In key areas of the City (e.g. the pedestrian-priority areas, Downtown, Midtown, and the Festival District), work with existing land owners to improve connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians.

**ME-1.8 Performance Standards.** Monitor and evaluate multi-modal performance standards, such as Multi Modal Levels of Service (MMLOS), as a means to measure the service levels of prioritized modes based on the layered networks approach. When and if these methodologies are applied in the City, LOS D or better for prioritized modes and LOS E or better for non-prioritized travel modes will be maintained unless exempted from this requirement (see implementation policy PWD-2). Where modes conflict, e.g. when a bicycle-priority street intersects with an auto-priority street, the most vulnerable user shall dictate modal priority.

**ME-1.12 Traffic Calming Tools.** Use traffic-calming tools to assist in implementing complete streets principles. Traffic calming tools include roundabouts, curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, and separated bicycle infrastructure.

**ME-2.2 Pedestrian Priority Areas.** Monitor and work to transition areas shown on Figure 4-2 to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the future. This would include deemphasizing these corridors as vehicle thoroughfares and creating better pedestrian environments with fewer travel lanes, slower vehicle speeds, and buffers between the road and the pedestrian area.

**ME-2.3 Facility Enhancement.** Enhance the bike and pedestrian-preferred facilities as identified in Figure 4-1 as part of development, private grants, signing of shared routes, maintenance activities, etc. The City will also complete and continually update a Complete Streets Master Plan which will also assist in enhancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

**ME-2.5 Intersection and Signal Enhancements.** Enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossing efficiency and safety, including timing of signals, crosswalks, and intersection design features. Provide signal timing that allows intersection crossing according to California MUTCD guidelines.

**ME-3.2 Local Service.** Work with SunLine Transit to expand transit routes in the City and enhance bus stops in the City to provide shelters, secure bicycle parking, benches, and safe waiting areas at each stop.

**ME-3.3 Safe Linkages.** Encourage convenient and safe pedestrian linkages to and from transit service to provide better first-mile/last-mile connectivity. This includes connectivity to/from existing and new development and along streets providing access to the transit stop.

**ME-4.3 Highway 111.** Monitor traffic volumes along Highway 111, and work to transition areas shown on Figure 4-2 to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the future.

**ME-7.1 Transportation Demand Management.** Utilize Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures throughout the City, where appropriate, to discourage the single-occupant vehicle, particularly during the peak hours.

**ME-7.2 Transportation System Management.** Utilize Transportation System Management (TSM) measures throughout the City to ensure that the City's circulation system is as efficient and cost effective as possible and reflect the desire of the City to implement improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

**ME-8.1 Off-Street Parking.** Require new developments to provide sufficient off-street parking (or payment of in-lieu fees) to reduce on-street parking congestion and increase both auto and pedestrian safety. New development shall provide electric vehicle charging stations and preferential parking for carpools, vanpools, and alternative fuel vehicles.

**ME-8.2 Off-Street Parking Alternatives.** Allow developers to meet their minimum parking requirements via shared parking techniques that can leverage unused parking with nearby parcels, in-lieu fees, or on-street parking.

**ME-8.3 Managed Parking Supply.** Manage parking supply through implementation of time limits, pay parking, or permits, while ensuring the preservation of economic development goals.

**ME-8.4 Bicycle Parking.** Safe and secure bicycle parking facilities shall be provided with all new development.

**Chapter 2 - Land Use Element**

**Policies**

**LU-3.1 Streetscape Design.** Create pedestrian-oriented streetscapes by establishing a unified approach to street tree planting, sidewalk dimensions and maintenance, pedestrian amenities, and high-quality building frontages.

**LU-3.2 Pedestrian Focus on High Volume Streets.** Design the streetscape of high volume corridors to balance regional traffic flow with safe and convenient pedestrian movement.

### *4.10.5 Thresholds of Significance*

The following thresholds, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, have been utilized to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have an impact if it would:

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

### *4.10.6 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

The Kimley-Horn Traffic Impact Analysis was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the City of Indio. All study intersections are analyzed using the HCM 2010 methodology. The 2010 HCM methodology measures the average delay per vehicle based on several technical parameters, such as peak hourly traffic volumes, number of lanes, type of operation (signalized or unsignalized), and signal phasing in the calculations.

For purposes of the Program EIR, the target Level of Service for growth forecast conditions with the proposed Specific Plan is LOS D. If necessary, improvements to achieve LOS D are identified. Where the improvements needed to achieve LOS D exceed the General Plan designated roadway of intersection configuration, the exception to the LOS D standard may be invoked, at the discretion of the City.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold b** | Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? |

**Impact T-1** **ALTHOUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE VEHICLE TRIPS IN THE CITY, THE INCREASE IN VEHICLE TRIPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT DECREASE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE OF INTERSECTIONS OR ROADWAY SEGMENTS TO BELOW CITY ESTABLISHED STANDARDS UNDER EXISTING WITH PROJECT CONDITIONS. THE INTERSECTION OF JACKSON STREET AND HIGHWAY 111 IS PROJECTED TO OPERATE AT A DEFICIENT LOS (E) DURING PM PEAK HOURS UNDER BOTH THE FUTURE AND FUTURE WITH PROJECT TRAFFIC CONDITIONS. INCLUSION OF MITIGATION MEASURE T-1 WOULD ENSURE THAT THE INTERSECTION IS MONITORED BY THE CITY TO VERIFY WHEN THE INTERSECTION OPERATES DEFICIENTLY AND THAT THE IMPROVEMENT(S) IS IMPLEMENTED WHEN NECESSARY. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.**

#### Land Use Assumptions

As discussed in the Setting, the 2016 TIA analyzed a growth scenario based on different land use assumptions than currently proposed in the Downtown Specific Plan. A table illustrating the land use comparisons is shown below in Table 4.10-6.

**Table 4.10-6 Land Use Comparisons**

| Land Use | Units[1] | Kimley-Horn Study Land Use | Downtown Specific Plan Land Use | Change/Delta |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Retail[2] | KSF | -- | 30 | 30 |
| Hotel | Rooms | -- | 350 | 350 |
| Civic[3] | KSF | -- | 48.5 | 48.5 |
| Office | KSF | 326.9 | 282.5 | -44.4[4] |
| Retail | KSF | 420.3 | 122.4 | -297.9[4] |
| Multi-Family | DU | 500 | 1,114 | 615 |
| High Turnover Restaurant | KSF | 93.4 | 122.3 | 28.9 |
| Quality Restaurant | KSF | 93.4 | -- | -93.4[4] |

1. KSF = 1,000 square feet, DUs = Dwelling Units
2. Retail located within the hotel.
3. Civics included different land uses types including a City Hall buildings and Community College.
4. A negative delta indicates a lower intensity use than the analyzed land use.

Source: Fehr and Peers 2019; Appendix G-2

## Project Trip Generation

The trip generation totals from the 2016 TIA, based on the previous land use and growth assumptions, are shown below in Table 4.10-7.

**Table 4.10-7 Previously Analyzed Project Trip Generation**

| Land Use | Quantity | Trip Generation Estimates | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Daily | AM Peak Hour | | | PM Peak Hour | | |
| | | | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| Residential Condominium/Townhouse | 500 DU | 2,905 | 38 | 183 | 221 | 174 | 86 | 260 |
| Retail | 420.3 KSF | 17,947 | 250 | 153 | 403 | 749 | 811 | 1,560 |
| Quality Restaurant | 93.4 KSF | 8,401 | 62 | 14 | 76 | 469 | 231 | 700 |
| High-Turnover Restaurant | 93.4 KSF | 11,876 | 555 | 454 | 1,009 | 552 | 368 | 920 |
| General Office | 326.9 KSF | 3,606 | 449 | 61 | 510 | 83 | 404 | 487 |
| **Total Before Pass-by Reductions** | | **44,735** | **1,354** | **865** | **2,219** | **2,027** | **1,900** | **3,927** |
| **Pass-By Reduction for Retail (25%)** | | 4,487 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 187 | 203 | 390 |
| **Pass-By Reduction for Restaurant (36%)** | | 7,300 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 368 | 216 | 583 |
| **Total Project Trips** | | **32,949** | **1,354** | **865** | **2,219** | **1,472** | **1,482** | **2,954** |

KSF = thousand square feet; DU = dwelling unit

Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-2

The trip generation totals from the updated Downtown Specific Plan's land use and growth assumptions, as prepared by Fehr & Peers, are shown below in Table 4.10-8.

**Table 4.10-8 Downtown Specific Plan Proposed Trip Generation**

| Land Use | Quantity | Trip Generation Estimates | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | AM Peak Hour | | | PM Peak Hour | | |
| | | Daily | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| Retail[2] | 30 KSF | 1,133 | 17 | 11 | 28 | 55 | 59 | 114 |
| Hotel | 350 Rooms | 2,926 | 97 | 68 | 165 | 107 | 103 | 210 |
| Office | 282.5 KSF | 2,752 | 282 | 46 | 328 | 52 | 273 | 325 |
| Multi-Family | 1,114 DU | 6,060 | 104 | 297 | 401 | 299 | 191 | 490 |
| Retail | 122.4 KSF | 1,972 | 43 | 24 | 67 | 99 | 99 | 198 |
| High-Turnover Restaurant | 122.3 KSF | 13,720 | 669 | 547 | 1,216 | 741 | 454 | 1,195 |
| Community College | 52 KSF | 1,053 | 83 | 25 | 108 | 49 | 49 | 97 |
| Civic[3] | 3.5 KSF | -72 | -9 | -3 | -12 | -2 | -5 | -7 |
| **Net Raw Project Trips** | | 29,537 | 1,286 | 1,015 | 2,301 | 1,400 | 1,223 | 2,622 |
| ***Reductions*** | | | | | | | | |
| *Internal Capture* | | -2,658 | -154 | -122 | -276 | -157 | -137 | -294 |
| *External Walk, Bike, and Transit* | | -2,186 | -125 | -98 | -223 | -132 | -115 | -246 |
| ***Total Reductions*** | | -4,844 | -297 | -220 | -499 | -289 | -252 | -540 |
| **Total Project Trips** | | 24,693 | 1,077 | 795 | 1,802 | 1,111 | 971 | 2,082 |

KSF = thousand square feet; DU = dwelling unit
Source: Fehr & Peers 2019; Appendix G-2

With regard to trip-generating potential, one characteristic of multi-use developments is the potential for a number of beneficial interactions among a variety of uses in terms of walk trips or shared vehicular trips between land uses. These interactions represent the potential for a reduction in the number of trips assumed for the new development. For example:

- Workers in the proposed office space may also patronize the proposed new restaurants and shops on the same trip;
- The opportunity for patrons of each of the new businesses to interact on the same trip with the other already-existing downtown uses, including other retail, restaurant, and office uses; and
- In addition to the potential for shared trips between multiple existing and future uses, residents of both the new residential units and of the existing downtown and surrounding neighborhood will be able to walk or bicycle to the downtown, eliminating some vehicular trips altogether.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), has developed a methodology to more accurately calculate trip generation for mixed-use sites (Ewing et al. 2011). The methodology begins with the ITE's 10th Edition (2017) trip generation rates and develops trip internalization estimates. These internalization estimates are based on a series of factors related to built environment variables, including demographics, project specifics, and the projects ability to internally capture trips. This methodology was utilized to better assess the mixed-use nature of the development. As shown in Table 4.10-8, the Downtown Specific Plan is forecasted to generate approximately 24,693 trips per day, with 1,802 total trips in the morning peak hour, and 2,082 trips in the evening peak hour.

Table 4.10-9 compares the proposed Downtown Specific Plan to the Kimley-Horn Traffic Study. The Downtown Specific Plan produces approximately 25 percent fewer daily trips, 19 percent fewer AM peak hour trips, and 30 percent fewer PM peak hour trips when compared to the 2016 TIA.

**Table 4.10-9 Trip Generation Comparison**

| Scenario | Daily | AM Peak Hour | | | PM Peak Hour | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| 2016 TIA | 32,949 | 1,354 | 865 | 2,219 | 1,472 | 1,482 | 2,954 |
| Proposed Downtown Specific Plan | 24,693 | 1,007 | 795 | 1,802 | 1,111 | 971 | 2,082 |
| Change/Delta | -8,256 | -347 | -70 | -417 | -361 | -511 | -872 |
| Source: Fehr & Peers 2019; Appendix G-2 | | | | | | | |

The Downtown Specific Plan is anticipated to generate fewer trips than what was assumed in the 2016 TIA. As such, the intersection delay and level of services results in the 2016 TIA are a conservative representation of potential impacts associated with the Downtown Specific Plan Update. The analysis below relies on the analysis utilized in the 2016 TIA.

### Existing Plan Project Conditions

Future development under the Downtown Specific Plan would take place on sites throughout the Downtown area. Project traffic would approach and depart the Downtown area via the existing downtown grid street system, similar to current traffic patterns. Specific Plan trip distribution assumptions for the Specific Plan area were developed by reviewing existing travel patterns and taking into account the proposed mix of uses and the location of area trip producers, such as residential population, tourist population, and employment areas. Trip assignment was conducted using the multiple approach and departure opportunities provided by the downtown grid street system.

The traffic associated with the Downtown was added to the Existing Conditions base traffic volumes. The study intersections were analyzed for Existing Plus Project Conditions and the results are summarized in Table 4.10-10. The table shows that all study intersections would continue to operate at an acceptable LOS D or better in both peak hours. In addition, as mentioned above, this is a conservative maximum, as these projections are based on the higher trip generation contained in the Kimley-Horn Traffic Study.

**Table 4.10-10 Intersection Analysis: Existing Plus Project Scenario**

| Intersection | AM Peak Hour | | | | | PM Peak Hour | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Without Project | | With Project | | Project Impact | Without Project | | With Project | | Project Impact |
| | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | |
| Oasis St at Indio Blvd | 11.8 | B | 14.4 | B | 2.6 | 12.6 | B | 15.6 | B | 3.0 |
| Oasis St at Miles Ave | 10.4 | B | 16.4 | B | 6.0 | 10.6 | B | 22.4 | C | 11.8 |
| Oasis St at Requa Ave | 23.3 | C | 26.7 | C | 3.4 | 24.3 | C | 34.5 | C | 10.2 |
| Jackson St at Requa Ave | 21.6 | C | 27.3 | C | 5.7 | 26.3 | C | 41.0 | D | 14.7 |
| Oasis St at SR-111 | 19.4 | B | 20.8 | C | 1.4 | 17.3 | B | 21.2 | C | 3.9 |
| Jackson St at SR-111 | 32.6 | C | 34.4 | C | 1.8 | 34.7 | C | 38.7 | D | 4.0 |

Notes:
Delay refers to the average control delay for the entire intersection, measured in seconds per vehicle.
Delay values are based on the methodology outlined in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual.
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

Roadway level of service analysis was conducted based on the roadway capacities presented in Table 4.10-3. The results of the roadway analysis for Existing Plus Project Conditions are shown in Table 4.10-11. Review of the table indicates that all study roadway segments would continue to operate at LOS A. In addition, as mentioned above, this is a conservative maximum since these projections are based on the higher trip generation contained in the 2016 TIA.

**Table 4.10-11 Roadway Segment Analysis: Existing Plus Project Scenario**

| Roadway | Segment | Existing Conditions | | | | Existing Plus Project | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | LOS E Capacity | Traffic Volume | V/C | LOS | Project Traffic | Traffic Volume | V/C | LOS |
| Indio Boulevard | Oasis St to Civic Center Dr | 42,600 | 22,894 | 0.537 | A | 1,466 | 24,360 | 0.572 | A |
| | East of Civic Center Dr | 42,600 | 18,102 | 0.425 | A | 1,639 | 19,741 | 0.463 | A |
| Oasis Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 4,837 | 0.114 | A | 3,129 | 7,966 | 0.187 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 14,000 | 5,130 | 0.366 | A | 1,605 | 6,735 | 0.481 | A |
| SR-111 | West of Oasis St | 42,600 | 25,018 | 0.587 | A | 2,787 | 27,805 | 0.653 | B |
| | Oasis St to Jackson St | 42,600 | 25,018 | 0.587 | A | 2,121 | 27,139 | 0.637 | B |
| | East of Jackson St. | 42,600 | 14,501 | 0.340 | A | 1,606 | 16,107 | 0.378 | A |
| Jackson Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 15,658 | 0.368 | A | 3,051 | 18,709 | 0.439 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 42,600 | 18,562 | 0.436 | A | 3,294 | 21,856 | 0.513 | A |

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity ratio; LOS = Level of Service
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

### Horizon Year Traffic Conditions

As discussed in the 2016 TIA, the horizon year 2035 forecast peak hour volumes for the long-term future conditions were developed using the City of Indio Traffic Model. The Indio Traffic Model forecasts assume

development of City land uses in accordance with the previous General Plan, and improvements to the City's transportation network that reflect committed (funded) network improvements and forecasted development levels for Year 2035. The traffic forecasts for Year 2035 Base Case (without the Specific Plan development) utilize the previous land uses and densities for the Specific Plan area assumed in the previously adopted General Plan.

The study intersections were analyzed for Year 2035 without project conditions and the results are summarized in Table 4.10-12. The table shows that all study intersections would continue to operate at an acceptable LOS D or better in both peak hours, except for one intersection, Jackson Street at SR-111.

**Table 4.10-12 Intersection Analysis: Year 2035 Without Project Conditions**

| | AM Peak Hour | | PM Peak Hour | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intersection** | **Delay** | **LOS** | **Delay** | **LOS** |
| Oasis Street at Indio Blvd. | 14.3 | B | 16.9 | B |
| Oasis Street at Miles Avenue | 10.2 | B | 10.2 | B |
| Oasis Street at Requa Avenue | 19.3 | B | 21.8 | C |
| Jackson Street at Requa Avenue | 21.0 | C | 21.6 | C |
| Oasis Street at SR-111 | 20.8 | C | 28.3 | C |
| Jackson Street at SR-111 | 35.7 | D | **58.6** | **E** |

Notes:
**Bold** and shaded values indicate intersections operating at LOS E or F or significant impact to intersection per City standards.
Delay refers to the average control delay for the entire intersection, measured in seconds per vehicle. Delay values are based on the methodology outlined in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual.
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

Roadway level of service analysis was conducted based on the roadway capacities presented previously in Table 4.10-3. The results of the roadway analysis for Year 2035 without Project Conditions are shown in Table 4.10-13. As shown, all study roadway segments would continue at acceptable conditions of LOS A and B.

**Table 4.10-13 Roadway Segment Analysis: Year 2035 Without Project Conditions**

| Roadway | Segment | LOS E Capacity | Traffic Volume | V/C | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indio Boulevard | Oasis St to Civic Center Dr | 42,600 | 26,192 | 0.615 | B |
| | East of Civic Center Dr | 42,600 | 20,230 | 0.475 | A |
| Oasis Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 2,714 | 0.064 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 14,000 | 4,593 | 0.328 | A |
| SR-111 | West of Oasis St | 42,600 | 27,437 | 0.644 | B |
| | Oasis St to Jackson St | 42,600 | 28,103 | 0.660 | B |
| | East of Jackson St | 42,600 | 15,913 | 0.374 | A |
| Jackson Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 15,866 | 0.372 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 42,600 | 19,131 | 0.449 | A |

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity ratio; LOS = Level of Service
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

### Horizon Year 2035 with Project Conditions

As discussed in the 2016 TIA, Specific Plan generated traffic was added to the Year 2035 traffic volumes. The study intersections were analyzed for Year 2035 with Project conditions and the results are summarized in Table 4.10-14. The table shows that the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 would continue to operate at LOS E in the evening peak hour with the addition of Specific Plan generated traffic. All other study intersections would continue to operate at an acceptable LOS D or better in both peak hours.

**Table 4.10-14 Intersection Analysis: Year 2035 With Project Conditions**

| | AM Peak Hour | | | | | PM Peak Hour | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Without Project | | With Project | | Project Impact | Without Project | | With Project | | Project Impact |
| Intersection | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | |
| Oasis St at Indio Blvd | 14.3 | B | 17.6 | B | 3.3 | 16.9 | B | 20.9 | C | 4.0 |
| Oasis St at Miles Ave | 10.2 | B | 10.5 | B | 0.3 | 10.2 | B | 10.2 | B | 0.0 |
| Oasis St at Requa Ave | 19.3 | B | 24.3 | C | 5.0 | 21.8 | C | 24.6 | C | 2.8 |
| Jackson St at Requa Ave | 21.0 | C | 21.5 | C | 0.5 | 21.6 | C | 25.0 | C | 3.4 |
| Oasis St at SR-111 | 20.8 | C | 21.9 | C | 1.1 | 28.3 | C | 32.5 | C | 4.2 |
| Jackson St at SR-111 | 35.7 | D | 39.5 | D | 3.8 | 58.6 | **E** | 71.3 | **E** | 12.7 |

**Bold** and shaded values indicate intersections operating at LOS E or F or significant impact to intersection per City standards.
Delay refers to the average control delay for the entire intersection, measured in seconds per vehicle.
Delay values are based on the methodology outlined in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual.
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

Roadway level of service analysis was conducted based on the roadway capacities presented previously

Table 4.10-3. The results of the roadway analysis for Year 2035 with Project Conditions are shown in Table 4.10-15. As shown, all study roadway segments would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service with LOS A, B, and C conditions.

**Table 4.10-15 Roadway Segment Analysis: Year 2035 With Project Scenario**

| | | Opening Year Without Project | | | | Opening Year With Project | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roadway | Segment | LOS E Capacity | Traffic Volume | V/C | LOS | Project Traffic | Traffic Volume | V/C | LOS |
| Indio Blvd. | Oasis St. to Civic Center Dr. | 42,600 | 26,192 | 0.615 | B | 1,466 | 27,658 | 0.649 | B |
| | East of Civic Center Dr. | 42,600 | 20,230 | 0.475 | A | 1,639 | 21,869 | 0.513 | A |
| Oasis Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 2,714 | 0.064 | A | 3,129 | 5,843 | 0.137 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 14,000 | 4,593 | 0.328 | A | 1,605 | 6,198 | 0.443 | A |
| SR-111 | West of Oasis St. | 42,600 | 27,437 | 0.644 | B | 2,787 | 30,224 | 0.709 | C |
| | Oasis St. to Jackson St. | 42,600 | 28,103 | 0.660 | B | 2,121 | 30,224 | 0.709 | C |
| | East of Jackson St. | 42,600 | 15,913 | 0.374 | A | 1,606 | 17,519 | 0.411 | A |
| Jackson Street | North of SR-111 | 42,600 | 15,866 | 0.372 | A | 3,051 | 18,917 | 0.444 | A |
| | South of SR-111 | 42,600 | 19,131 | 0.449 | A | 3,294 | 22,425 | 0.526 | A |

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity ratio; LOS = Level of Service
**Bold V/C and LOS** values indicate a deficient Level of Service.
Source: Kimley-Horn 2016; Appendix G-1

As summarized in Tables 4.10-12 and 4.10-14, the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 would operate at LOS E in the evening peak hour under Year 2035 conditions, with and without the Downtown Specific Plan. As discussed in the 2016 TIA, adding a second eastbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 would improve the intersection level of service to LOS D. As discussed in the 2016 TIA, traffic volumes increase gradually increase over time, and the identified improvements would not be an immediate action the City would need to take, but rather when the intersection begins to operate deficiently. This improvement, included as Mitigation Measure T-1, would reduce impacts to the significantly impacted intersection to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measure

**T-1** The City of Indio shall monitor traffic growth at the intersection of Jackson Street and State Route 111, in order to identify when the intersection operates at or below Level of Service (LOS) "E" conditions. When LOS "E" conditions are identified, the City shall implement the necessary improvement(s) to improve the LOS at the intersection to acceptable conditions (LOS D or better), such as adding a second eastbound left-turn lane.

### Significance After Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1, the intersection of Jackson Street at SR-111 would operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS D).

### Public Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities

SunLine Transit Agency operates local and regional bus service for the City of Indio. Routes 54, 80, 81, 91, and 111 are located within or near the Downtown Specific Plan area. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit. The City of Indio does not have a formal bicycle or pedestrian master plan. There are no Class I or Class II bicycle facilities provided along roadways within the Specific Plan area. The nearest bicycle facility is a Class II bike lane along Jackson Street, starting south of SR-111 and turning eastward at Dr. Carreon Boulevard. The Specific Plan would encourage the development of a walkable mixed-use community. Therefore, the Specific Plan would have a less than significant impact on adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

**Threshold b** Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

**Impact T-2** **BY IMPLEMENTING THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN, THE VMT PER SERVICE POPULATION IN THE CITY OF INDIO WILL DECREASE, INDICATING A NET POSITIVE EFFECT ON VMT IN THE CITY. THE PROJECT WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SB 743 AND THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

As a result of SB 743, the new metric in the CEQA guidelines for transportation impacts is VMT. The legislative intent of SB 743 is to balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals for infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

VMT can be estimated for a project or region with a travel demand model that forecasts travel patterns by trip purpose on typical weekdays. Fehr & Peers utilized the Indio City Model to estimate VMT for the Specific Plan, the City, and the Coachella Valley Association of Government (CVAG) region. The Indio City Model was based on the Riverside County Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM), which is consistent with the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and includes updated City details that more accurately reflect travel in the region. Since the model was calibrated to 2013 traffic counts, it is referred to as a 2013 base year. The model was updated, in the City, with future land use information consistent with the City's 2040 General Plan. Outside of the City, the model was updated to be consistent with the SCAG 2040 land uses to represent a 2040 land use scenario.

The origin-destination (O-D) methodology and the boundary methodology was utilized for a more comprehensive analysis of the VMT and its effect on the region (Fehr & Peers 2019; Appendix G-3). The O-D VMT estimates incorporate the "full accounting" methodology, which accounts for the complete length of the trip from the origin transportation analysis zone (TAZ) to the destination TAZ and assigns 100% of that trip distance to the Project or region, as appropriate. To estimate potential VMT impacts, VMT were estimated for the following scenarios:

- Base Year (2019) No Project

- Base Year (2019) With Project
- Cumulative Year (2040) No Project
- Cumulative Year (2040) With Project

Base Year (2019) conditions were created by interpolating VMT results between the Base Year (2013) outputs and Future Year (2040) outputs. To compare scenarios with different land use totals, VMT is normalized by dividing it by the total service population (SP), which represents residential population plus employment in the study area.

Cumulative VMT (with and without the Specific Plan) was also evaluated using the boundary method, for addition evaluation of the Specific Plan's effect on VMT. The boundary method captures all VMT on the network within a defined area (in this case the City of Indio). This method captures traffic that travels through the city, regardless of origin or destination, and is used to determine if congestion caused by the Specific Plan diverts other traffic that would increase VMT from the new routing.

Table 4.10-16 summarizes the VMT/SP for the Specific Plan, the City of Indio, and CVAG region for Existing (2019) conditions and Future Year (2040) conditions.

**Table 4.10-16 VMT/SP Assessment Origin-Destination (Full Accounting) Method Estimates**

| Scenario | Specific Plan Influence Area | City of Indio | CVAG Region |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Existing (2019) Conditions** | | | |
| Existing | 37.3 | 24.4 | 41.4 |
| Existing Plus Project | 26.2 | 23.9 | 41.2 |
| **Delta** | **-11.1 (-30%)** | **-0.5 (-2%)** | **-0.2 (-0.05%)** |
| **Future Year (2040) Conditions** | | | |
| Future Year | 42.2 | 24.6 | 35.9 |
| Future Year Plus Project | 29.5 | 24.3 | 35.8 |
| **Delta** | **-12.7 (-30%)** | **-0.3 (-1%)** | **-0.1 (-3%)** |
| Source: Fehr & Peers 2019; Appendix G-3 | | | |

The Specific Plan is estimated to reduce the VMT/SP of the Specific Plan area by approximately 30 percent in both the Base Year and Future Year conditions. The City's VMT/SP is estimated to be reduced by 2 percent in the Base Year condition and 1 percent in the Future Year condition. The Specific Plan would also reduce VMT/SP for the CVAG region.

Table 4.10-17 summarizes the City of Indio VMT/SP for the Cumulative Year (2040) no project and with project conditions using the boundary method.

**Table 4.10-17: Cumulative City of Indio VMT Per Service Population Boundary Method**

| | Cumulative Year (2040) No Project | Cumulative Year (2040) With Project |
|---|---|---|
| **VMT** | 2,726,978 | 2,744,536 |
| **Service Population** | 142,608 | 147,167 |
| **VMT/Service Population** | 19.1 | 18.6 |
| Source: Fehr & Peers 2019; Appendix G-3 | | |

With the inclusion of the Indio Downtown Specific Plan Update, the VMT/SP in the City of Indio would decrease, indicating a net positive effect on VMT in the City by incorporating the Specific Plan.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold c** | Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? |

**Impact T-3** **NO INCOMPATIBLE USES OR HAZARDOUS DESIGN FEATURES, SUCH AS SHARP CURVES OR DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS, ARE PROPOSED AS PART OF THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN. ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REVIEWED BY THE CITY AND WOULD ADHERE TO THE CITY'S ROADWAY DESIGN STANDARDS AND ROADWAY ENGINEERING STANDARDS CONTAINED IN THE CITY MUNICIPAL CODE. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not result in inadequate features or incompatible uses. Through the City's design review process, future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permitting requirements and conditions of approval. All proposed developments would be subject to the City's roadway engineering standards and comply with the zoning code of the City. At a minimum, compliance with relevant Municipal Code standards would be required, such as those contained in Chapter 70 (speed limits, signals, lane markings, etc.). The City's roadway design standards include specifications for minimum curve radii, sight lines, design speeds, maximum grades, subgrade base, pavement thickness, and other roadway features. These safety checks in the planning process would avoid any design feature hazards and reject any incompatible uses without appropriate mitigation. Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not result in significant impacts involving insufficient design features or incompatible uses.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold d** | Would the project result in inadequate emergency access? |

**Impact T-4** **ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO APPLICABLE FIRE AND BUILDING CODES FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS, AS WELL AS ADHERE TO THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL CODE AND DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS, ENSURING THAT ADEQUATE EMERGENCY ACCESS IS MAINTAINED. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Inadequate emergency access can delay or prevent responders from arriving at an emergency location. The Downtown Specific Plan does not include policies that would change standards related to emergency access. Implementation of the Specific Plan is not anticipated to result in inadequate emergency access. Future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis to ensure that adequate access and circulation to and in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be maintained during construction and operation.

Access to a development site would be required to comply with all City design standards and would be reviewed by the City to ensure that insufficient design features and/or incompatible uses do not occur. The City would review future development proposals to ensure that structures are designed to meet adopted standards, such as applicable Fire and Building Codes for emergency vehicle access. The City's roadway

design standards and the 2019 California Fire Code emergency access requirements are adopted as a part of the Fire Code of the City of Indio (Municipal Code Chapter 93). This includes emergency access road dimensions, design, grades, gates, and other fire safety features. Additionally, the more stringent California Building Code access standards also have been adopted by the City to address potential emergency access issues associated with earthquakes, flooding, climate/strong winds, topography, and water shortages. This would ensure that new development in the Specific Plan area would provide adequate emergency access. Further, the City would review any modifications to existing roadways to ensure that adequate emergency access or emergency response would be maintained. Emergency response and evacuation procedures would be coordinated through the City in coordination with police and fire departments, resulting in less than significant impacts.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

# 4.11 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

### *4.11.1 Introduction*

This section of the Program EIR addresses potential impacts to Utilities and Service Systems. It is generally organized by Utility Type: Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Dry Utilities and Solid Waste.

#### Water

This section of the Program EIR addresses potential impacts of the project on water services and infrastructure within the City of Indio. More specifically, this section evaluates impacts associated with the Specific Plan that may potentially affect the regional and local water supply and water service system. Various federal, state, regional, and local programs and regulations related to anticipated water supply and demand impacts are also discussed in this section.

#### Wastewater and Stormwater

This section addresses the potential for the Specific Plan to impact wastewater systems operated and maintained by the Valley Sanitary District (VSD) and the local storm drain system maintained by the City of Indio ("City") Public Works Department.

#### Dry Utilities (electricity, natural gas and telecommunications)

This section addresses the potential for the Specific Plan to impact the local dry utilities (electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications). Dry utilities in this discussion are identified by agency facility maps and would require field verification upon future implementation of the Specific Plan.

Utilities and service systems are made available by a range of private companies, private enterprises acting as public utilities, and public agencies in the City of Indio (City). Major utilities and service systems providers in Indio include the following: the Indio Water Authority (IWA), Valley Sanitary District (VSD), Imperial Irrigation District (IID), the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), Frontier Communications (Frontier) and Spectrum.

#### Solid Waste

This section of the program EIR also addresses potential impacts relative to solid waste, including impacts to the capacity of local landfills and transfer stations as a result of the Specific Plan. This section describes active landfills, transfer stations, and diversion and recycling programs that currently serve solid waste disposal service needs in the City of Indio.

Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, Section 4.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, and Section 4.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality* of this Draft EIR provide greater detail for the environmental impacts associated with anticipated utility usage, rather than infrastructure. This section provides focused summaries of information found throughout this Draft EIR associated with the capacities of and anticipated project-generated demand on water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and solid waste infrastructure. Water and energy use reductions, and recycling can result in more efficient utilization of infrastructure; therefore, this topic is also discussed in this section.

### *4.11.2 Existing Conditions*

#### Water Supply/Service

As indicated by the Indio General Plan, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and the Indio Water Authority (IWA) provide water service to the City of Indio. The proposed Specific Plan is located within IWA's jurisdiction which is approximately 38 square miles; this covers much of the city and some of the unincorporated sphere of influence. The existing water distribution system used by IWA consists of 20 groundwater wells, seven storage reservoirs, one large main pressure zone, and two smaller development-based higher zones. These are served by 326 miles of distribution system pipes, ranging in diameter from two (2) to twenty-four (24) inches. CVWD covers the rest of Indio as a part of its approximately 1,000 square miles of service area spanning from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea.

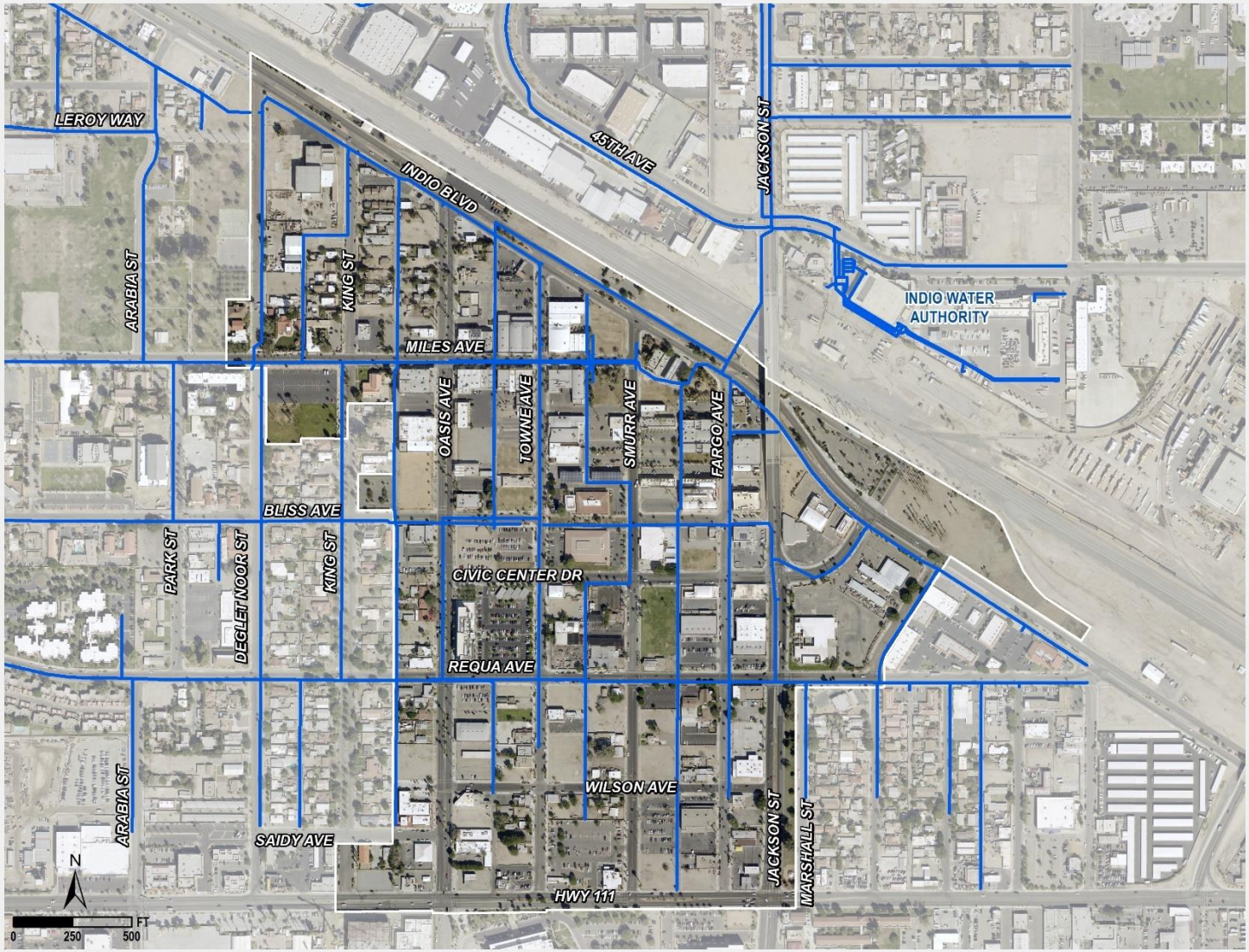
According to the Indio General Plan Update, the Whitewater River Subbasin has an estimated storage capacity of approximately thirty (30) million-acre feet. The current water supply is derived entirely from groundwater, primarily from the lower aquifer in the Lower Whitewater River Subbasin. Both IWA and CVWD pump groundwater from multiple wells spread across their service areas. Historically, groundwater levels have been declining in the basin as a result of overdraft since 1936. However, groundwater levels have stabilized in the last five years or so. In order to reduce demand for groundwater and allow water levels in the basin to increase, IWA is working with the Valley Sanitation District (VSD) on a recycled water plant to serve irrigation needs and a new surface water plant to treat Colorado River water for potable use and groundwater recharge.

Water suppliers are required to prepare an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) that ensures adequate water supplies are available to meet existing and future water demands. These plans must be updated every five years to support long-term resource planning. They include water demand projections and identify how those demands will be met. While IWA and CVWD are responsible for managing water supplies, the City of Indio has developed goals, policies, and programs that aim to facilitate the sustainable use of water resources.

To continue to meet the growing needs of the City of Indio, IWA and CVWD have partnered with the Coachella Water Authority, Desert Water Authority, and Mission Springs Water District to develop an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP). The IRWMP addresses the Coachella Valley's current and future water needs by paying specific attention to overdraft issues, water supply management, environmental and economic impacts, compliance with State and federal guidelines, and long-term sustainability.

According to the Indio General Plan, IWA's existing distribution system is sufficient to meet Indio's current and future demands, including for the project area. Additional pumping, booster systems, and pressure zones will continue to be implemented through Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) as needed to satisfy the system's performance criteria. See Figure 4.11-1 for a visual representation of the existing facilities within the Specific Plan area.

## Figure 4.11-1 Indio Water Authority Existing Facilities



### Wastewater

The Valley Sanitary District (VSD) oversees wastewater conveyance and treatment in the Project area and in the City of Indio. Two wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) provide, receive, and treat wastewater within the VSD service area. One WWTP is owned by VSD and the other is owned by the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). Most of the communities within the VSD service area receive sanitation service from one of these plants. The treatment plant owned by CVWD, CVWD WRP-7, only treats a small percentage of the City's wastewater. WRP-7, located at Avenue 38 and Madison Street, is a tertiary treatment facility that recycles the effluent it produces for non-potable uses for CVWD customers. VSD's WWTP serves 96 percent of the City of Indio's population. Most of the effluent from this WWTP is discharged to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) and a small percentage is sent to tribal lands for irrigation. VSD WWTP consists of an activated sludge treatment process which treats approximately 6.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of wastewater with a maximum capacity of 10 mgd, a biological treatment pond process which treats all waste solids and approximately .5 mgd of wastewater, and a constructed wetlands treatment process. Overall, VSD WWTP treats approximately 7 mgd of wastewater and has a maximum capacity of 12 mgd. The first part of a two-part expansion of this plant has been completed, increasing the capacity of the activated sludge treatment process to its current maximum. The second part of the expansion project will further increase the maximum capacity of the activated sludge process to 18 mgd alongside other improvements.

VSD is currently undergoing multiple projects to expand and improve various parts of its system. The Collection System Rehabilitation Program is a $60 million, ten-year project to repair and reconstruct approximately 100 miles of sewer collection system pipes. The design phase of this project began in 2019 and construction will begin in 2020. There is currently no recycled water system for wastewater from Indio. VSD and IWA are coordinating on a 2-phase construction of a recycled water plant. The first phase is planned on being developed by 2025 and the second phase would be developed by 2040. See Figure 4.11-2 for a diagram of existing facilities within the Specific Plan area.

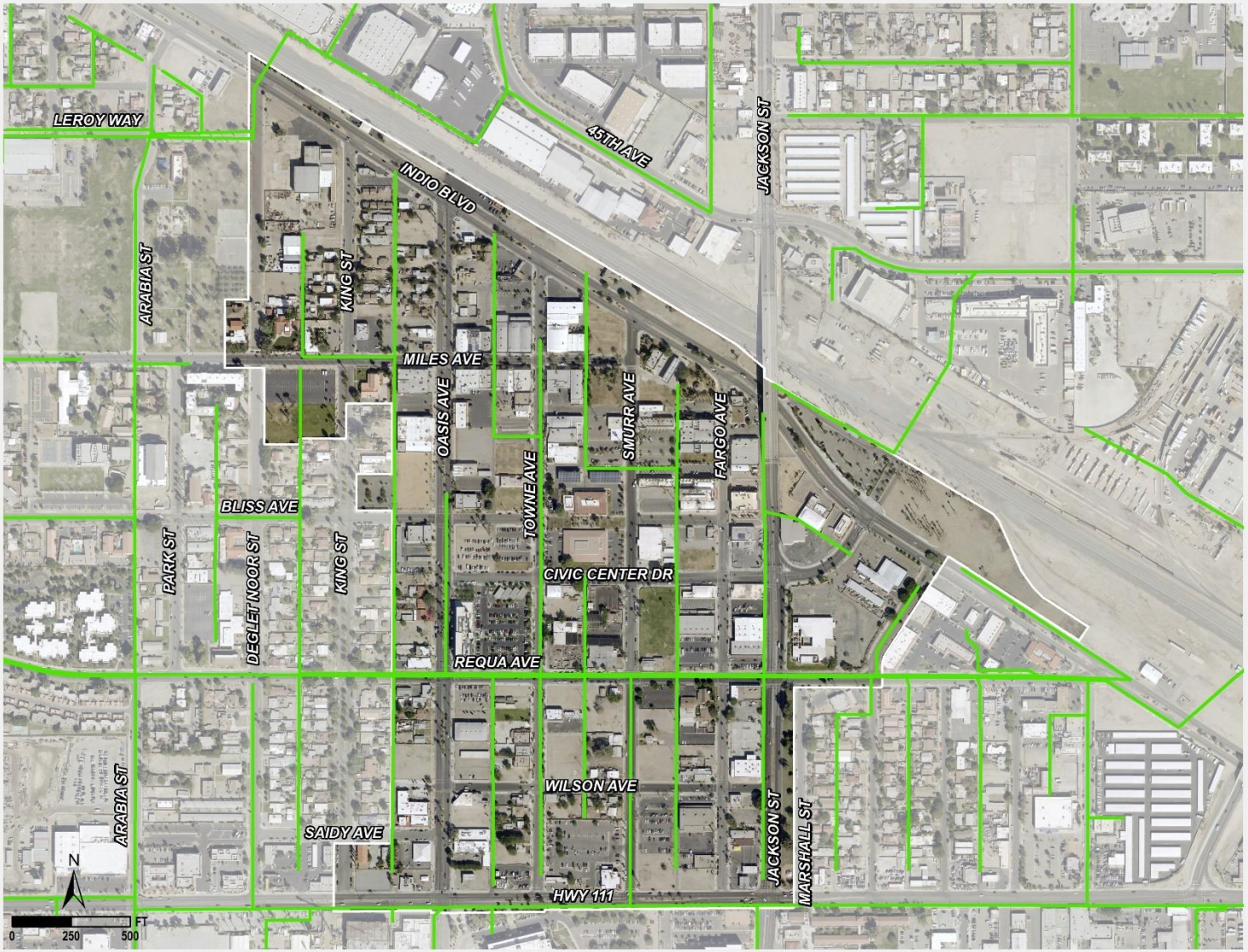
### Storm Drain Facilities

Flood control infrastructure in the Coachella Valley is maintained by CVWD and the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Within CVWD's boundaries are 16 stormwater protection channels; the entire system includes approximately 135 miles of channels built along the natural alignment of dry creeks that flow from the surrounding mountains into the Whitewater River.

According to the 2019 Draft Master Drainage Plan (MDP) for the City of Indio, the main regional flood control facility in the City of Indio is the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSWC). This channel is the main drainage course for the entire Coachella Valley region from north of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. This channel flows in a west to east direction, with a portion traveling alongside the Interstate 10 Freeway, and is maintained by CVWD. The East Side Dike located along the foothills of north Indio and Waste Way 3 are additional existing regional drainage facilities.

Recently, CVWD completed designs of the North Indio Regional Flood Control Channel. Phase I of the North Indio Channel is under construction and near completion. Phase II of the Channel is expected to be completed in 3-5 years.

## Figure 4.11-2 Valley Sanitary District Existing Wastewater Facilities



In 2004, Indio implemented a storm water policy, which required all new developments to retain the 100-year, 24-hour storm volume on-site. Since then, many residential developments have been established in the City. The new developments are primarily gated communities with either a golf course, on-site lakes or retention/infiltration basins. The majority of these developments are located north of the CVSWC, comprising approximately 3,280 acres, with the storm drain systems constructed on Monroe, Jackson, Calhoun and Aztec Streets.

The Specific Plan area covers approximately 140 acres and is a part of the Civic Center storm drain system. The area has very few existing storm drains and many of the streets have a slope less than the 0.5 percent typical of many municipalities. As a result, certain intersections have been identified as flood prone. On Oasis Street, between Highway 111 and Miles Avenue, there are four intersections that experience minor flooding and ponding. At the southeastern corner of the specific Plan Area on Highway 111, there is a larger area extending outside of the Specific Plan boundary that experiences more severe ponding and flooding. Additionally, east of the intersection of Bliss Avenue and Jackson St and west of Indio Boulevard there is another area that experiences more severe ponding and flooding.

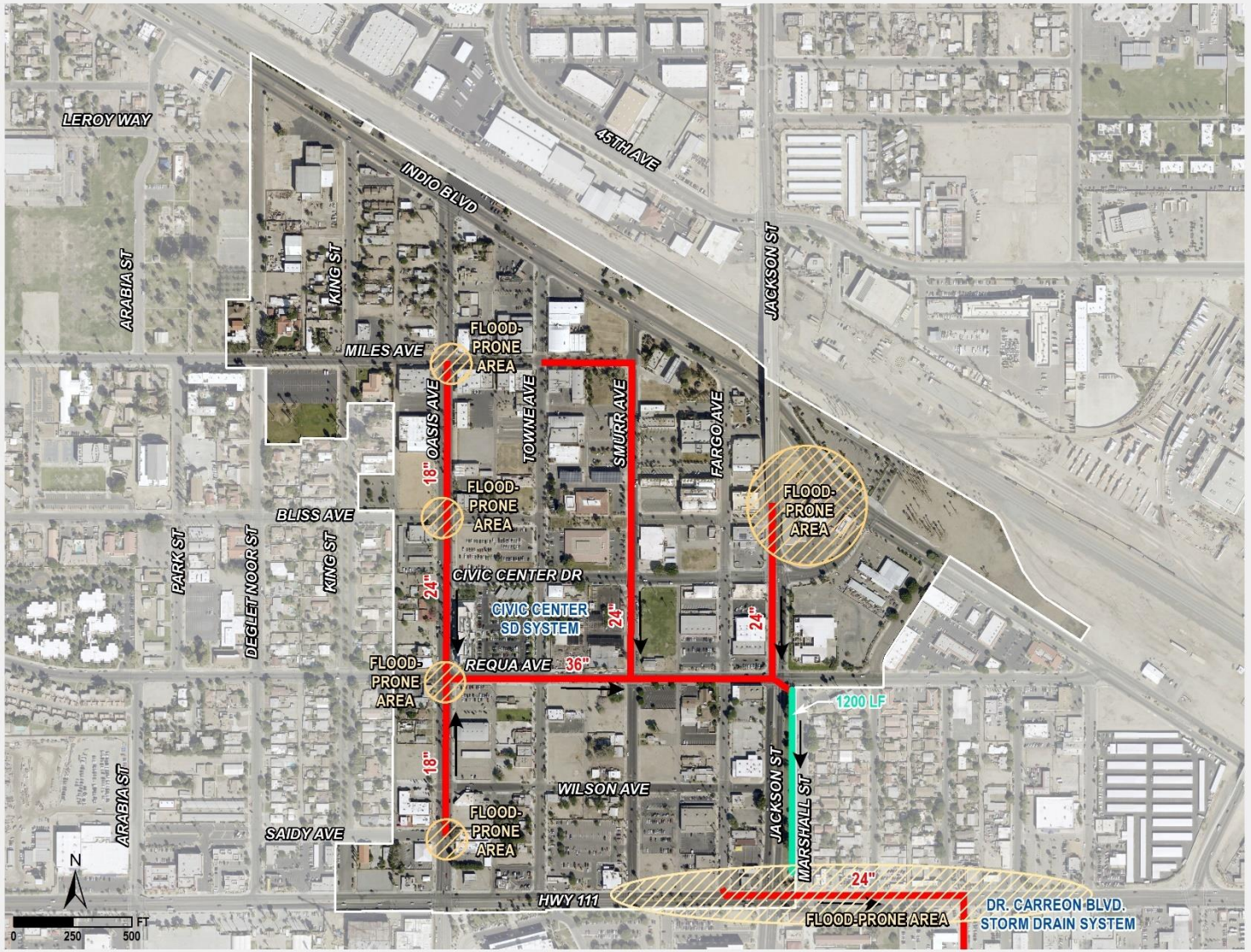
In 2008, drainage inlets with dry wells were installed at two intersections: Miles Avenue and Towne Street as well as Miles Avenue and Smurr Street, which removed ponding water from these two locations. The City of Indio has recently updated their Master Drainage Plan to continue to address these issues. The proposal for the Civic Center storm drain system includes a storm drain mainline on Requa Avenue from Oasis Street to Jackson Street. Proposed laterals and catch basins are located along Oasis Street, Miles Avenue, Smurr Street, and Jackson Street that connect to the mainline on Requa Avenue. The mainline will outlet into an infiltration trench in the area between Jackson Street and Marshall Street. These proposed drainage systems will improve street accessibility, roadway safety and water quality as the specific plan area develops. See Figure 4.11-3 for a diagram of proposed storm drain facilities within the Specific Plan area.

### Electric Power

The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) provides electric service to the City of Indio. This provider is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Electrical power is generated by a combined system of gas and coal production, oil, hydroelectricity, nuclear production, solar and wind technology, and energy purchase. The Specific Plan area is within the IID service area. There are a variety of existing electrical facilities located primarily in the roadway system found within the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan area contains and is surrounded by existing electrical infrastructure.

According to the City of Indio Climate Action Plan, GHG emissions from energy use represent the largest proportion of emissions in Indio. The residential sector represents a little over half of the emissions from energy use (56 percent). The commercial sector represents the remaining portion. Residential and Commercial electricity use account for 66 percent of the City's 2010 emissions. The Climate Action Plan indicates that in addition to the purchase of electricity from IID, electricity needs may be met through the local generation of renewable energy. As discussed throughout this section, the reduction of electricity use is one of the methodologies proposed to reduce GHG emissions. This reduction can also be expected to reduce impacts on existing and proposed electricity infrastructure.

## Figure 4.11-3 Planned Master Drainage Plan Storm Water Facilities



### Natural Gas

According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), approximately one third of energy consumed in California is natural gas. As of 2012, the latest year of publicly available date from the CEC, nearly 45 percent of the natural gas burned in California was used for electricity generation, and much of the remainder consumed in the residential (21 percent), industrial (25 percent) and commercial (9 percent) sectors (CEC 2019).

SoCalGas, a publicly regulated utility, is the natural gas service provider to the City of Indio. SoCalGas has regional and local distribution lines in the City and its SOI and provides natural gas for space heating, domestic and commercial hot water, cooking, and air conditioning applications. Together, CPUC and FERC regulate SoCalGas' natural gas distribution and conveyance activities. FERC is an independent federal agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. CPUC regulates natural gas rates and natural gas services, including in-state transportation over the utilities' transmission and distribution pipeline systems, storage, procurement, metering, and billing. The availability of natural gas services is dependent upon current conditions of gas supply and regulatory policies.

The Specific Plan area contains, and is surrounded by, existing natural gas infrastructure. General locations are illustrated in Figure 4.11-4. According to maps provided by Southern California Gas, infrastructure is generally sited in the following project locations:

East/West Streets

- One 3-inch line in Bliss Avenue

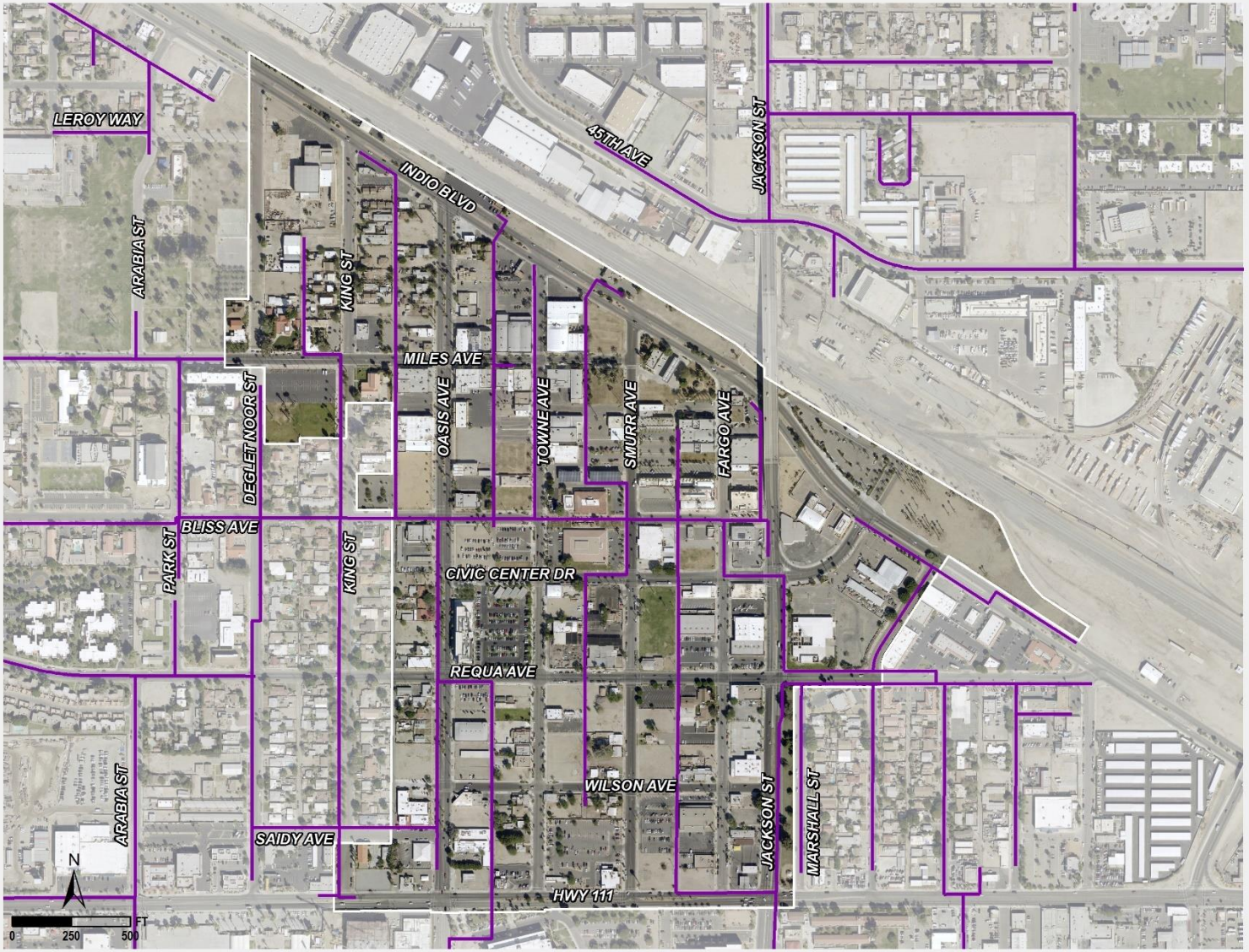
North/South Streets

- One 2-inch line along Deglet Noor Street; King Street; Oasis Street; Jackson Street
- One 2-inch line between Oasis Street and Towne Street; between Smurr Street and Fargo Street.
- One 4-inch line between Towne Street and Smurr Street

### Telecommunications

Telecommunications services in the City of Indio are provided by various companies, in addition to satellite connection options. Charter Spectrum provides telephone, cable and internet service. Telephone service, formerly provided by Verizon, is now offered by Frontier Communications. Both companies are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC.) A wide array of products and telecommunication services for residential and commercial uses are offered by both, including internet services, wireless services, television technology utilizing digital fiber optic technology, and satellite technology. A variety of telecommunication facilities exist along roadways included within the Specific Plan area.

## Figure 4.11-4 Southern California Gas Existing Facilities



### Solid Waste

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. The Department also oversees several transfer station leases, as well as a number of recycling and other special waste diversion programs.

All 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 waste collected in incorporated cities. In these cities, solid waste is either collected by the city as a municipal service or are 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 hauled directly to 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 Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services (Burrtec). Solid waste is transported to one of three landfills and/or the Edom Hills Transfer Station which are described below. The Edom Hills facility is closed for receiving solid waste but issued for transferring and processing of materials.

- **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. Located near the center of the highly populated western third of Riverside County, according to Waste Management, Inc., the landfill's operator, it processes approximately 43% of Riverside County's annual waste. This landfill is open 311 day out of the year, has a permitted capacity of 4,000 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 2045.
- **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 2021.
- **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 2024.

- **Edom Hill Transfer Station:** This transfer station processes a maximum permitted capacity of 3,500 tons per day.

### *4.11.3 Regulatory Setting*

#### Federal

##### Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act

In 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) was amended to prohibit the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States unless the discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The Clean Water Act focused on tracking point sources, primarily from wastewater treatment plants and industrial waste dischargers, and required implementation of control measures to minimize pollutant discharges. Under the CWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has implemented pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry. EPA has also developed national water quality criteria recommendations for pollutants in surface waters.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was established in 1974 to protect the quality of drinking water in the U.S. This law focuses on all waters actually or potentially designed for drinking use, whether from above ground or underground sources. The SDWA authorizes the EPA to establish minimum standards to protect water systems to comply with these primary (health related) standards. Under the Act, the EPA also establishes minimum standards for state programs to protect underground sources of drinking water from contamination by underground injection fluids.

##### Clean Water Act (wastewater/stormwater regulations)

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 regulates the discharges of pollutants into "waters of the US" from any point or non-point source.

The CWA was amended again in 1987 to provide a framework for regulating municipal and industrial stormwater discharges. In November 1990, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) published final regulations that establish application requirements for specific categories of industries, including construction projects that encompass greater than or equal to 5 acres of land. The Phase II Rule became final in December 1999, thus expanding regulated construction sites to those greater than or equal to 1 acre. The regulations require that stormwater and non-stormwater runoff associated with construction activity which discharges either directly to surface waters or indirectly through municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) must be regulated by an NPDES permit.

In the State of California, the program is administered by the local Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

##### The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. The FERC is an independent Agency. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 gave FERC additional responsibilities in its capacity. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable in all 50 states.

### 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, as long as 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 of California

### California Water Boards

California's Water Boards consist of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB). The mission of the Water Boards is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. Together they are authorized to implement the federal Clean Water Act in California. The Project Site is located in Region 7, the Colorado River Region.

### Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act established the principal State program for water quality control. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also authorized the SWRCB to implement the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act. The act divided the State into nine RWQCB areas. Each RWQCB implements and enforces provisions of the Porter-Cologne Act and the CWA subject to policy guidance and review by the SWRCB. The Porter-Cologne Act requires each RWQCB to develop a Basin Plan for all areas within its region. The Basin Plan is the basis for each RWQCB's regulatory programs.

### Urban Water Management Planning Act

The Urban Water Management Planning Act (UWMPA) requires urban water suppliers that provide water for municipal purposes to more than 3,000 customers, or more than 3,000 AFY of water, to prepare an UWMP. The intent of an UWMP is to assist water supply agencies in water resource planning given their existing and anticipated future demands. A UWMP must include a water supply and demand assessment comparing total water supply available to the water supplier with the total projected water use over a 20-year period. It is also mandatory that the management plans be updated every five years.

### Senate Bill 610 (Water Supply Assessments)

Requirements for the preparation of a WSA are set forth in Senate Bill 610 (SB 610), which was enacted in 2001 and became effective January 1, 2002. SB 610 amended Section 21151.9 of the Public Resources Code. It requires cities and counties and other CEQA lead agencies to request specific information on water supplies from the PWS that would serve any project that is subject to CEQA and is defined as a "Project" in Water Code Section 10912. This information is to be incorporated into the environmental review documents prepared pursuant to CEQA.

The Water Code requires a WSA be prepared for any project that consists of one or more of the following:

- A proposed residential development of more than 500 dwelling units
- A proposed shopping center or business establishment employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space
- A proposed commercial office building employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 250,000 square feet of floor space
- A proposed hotel or motel, or both, having more than 500 rooms
- A proposed industrial, manufacturing, or processing plant, or industrial park planned to house more than 1,000 persons, occupying more than 40 acres of land, or having more than 650,000 square feet of floor area
- A mixed-use project that includes one or more of the projects specified above
- A project that would demand an amount of water equivalent to, or greater than, the amount of water required by a 500-dwelling unit project
- For public water systems with fewer than 5,000 service connections, a project that meets the following criteria: any proposed residential, business, commercial, hotel or motel, or industrial development that would account for an increase of 10 percent or more in the number of public water system's existing service connections, or a mixed-use project that would demand an amount of water equivalent to, or greater than, the amount of water required by residential development that would represent an increase of 10 percent or more in the number of the public water system's existing service connections.

No development is currently proposed by the Specific Plan. Future development projects under the Downtown Specific Plan will be analyzed on a case by case basis. Effective January 1, 2017, SB 1262 amends Water Code Section 10910, the WSA statute, to require that SGMA-related information be included in a WSA if a water supply for a proposed project includes groundwater from a basin that in not adjudicated and is designated medium or high-priority. The Specific Plan will use groundwater from the Whitewater/Indio Subbasin, which is designated medium priority by DWR and is not adjudicated.

### Water Supply Verification

Senate Bill 221 (SB 221) was enacted in 2001 and became effective as of January 1, 2002. SB 221 amends Section 11010 of the Business and Professional Code, and Sections 66455.3 and 66473.7 and Section 65867.5 of the Government Code. SB 221 establishes the relationship between the WSA prepared for a project and the project approval under the Subdivision Map Act. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65865.5 and 66473.7, the approval of a development agreement or tentative map that includes a subdivision for a project including more than 500 units shall be conditioned to obtain a WSV.

The purpose of the WSV is to provide the legislative body of a city, county or the designated advisory agency with written verification from the applicable public water purveyor that a sufficient water supply is available or, in addition, a specified finding is made by the local agency that sufficient water supplies are, or will be, available prior to completion of the project. Currently there is no development proposed as part of this Specific Plan. Future projects will be analyzed on a case by case basis.

### California Water Quality Laws

Under State law, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and nine Regional Water Quality

Control Boards (RWQCB) are responsible for implementing the federal CWA and the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne Act). The Specific Plan area is located within the purview of the Colorado River RWQCB (Region 7).

### State Water Quality Control Board Order No. 2006-0003-DWQ

Order No. 2006-0003-DWQ was adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board on May 2, 2006. This order provides federal and State agencies, municipalities, counties, districts, and other public entities waste discharge requirements for sanitary sewer systems.

### California Water Code, Title 22

The California Water Code requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to establish water reclamation criteria. In 1975, the DHS prepared Title 22 to fulfill this requirement. Title 22 regulates production and use of recycled water in California by establishing three categories of recycled water:

- primary effluent, which typically includes grit removal and initial sedimentation or settling tanks;
- adequately disinfected, oxidized effluent (secondary effluent), which typically involves aeration and additional settling basins; and
- adequately disinfected, oxidized, coagulated, clarified, filtered effluent (tertiary effluent), which typically involves filtration and chlorination.

In addition to defining recycled water uses, Title 22 also defines requirements for sampling and analysis of effluent and requires specific design requirements for plants.

### Climate Change Scoping Plan

As required by AB 52, CARB approved a Climate Change Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan) on December 11, 2008. The Scoping Plan proposed a "comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall carbon GHG emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, create new jobs, and enhance public health." (CARB 2008). The Scoping Plan includes a range of GHG reduction actions, such as direct regulations; alternative compliance mechanisms; monetary and nonmonetary incentives; voluntary actions; market-based mechanisms, and an AB 32 implementation regulation to fund the program.

The Scoping Plan called for a "coordinated set of strategies" to address all major categories of GHG emissions (CARB 2008). Transportation emissions were to be addressed through a combination of higher standards including greater consideration in reducing trip length and generation through land use planning and transit-oriented development. Buildings, land use, and industrial operations were recommended and, sometimes, required to implement energy efficiency practices. Utility energy supplies were anticipated to continue to include more renewable energy sources through implementation of the Renewables Portfolio Standard.

The California Renewables Portfolio Standards (RPS) were established in 2002 under Senate Bill (SB) 1078 and accelerated in 2006 under SB 107, which required that, by 2010, at least 20 percent of electricity retail sales be composed of renewable sources. The California Energy Commission (CEC) updated the RPS in April of 2015, pursuant to SB 350, intended to set the new target 50 percent renewables by 2030 (CEC 2016). This will be supplemented with emphasis on local generation, including rooftop photovoltaics and solar hot water installations. The Scoping Plan also indicates that extensive

savings of electricity and natural gas would be accomplished through the improvement of energy efficiency.

CARB updated the Scoping Plan in May 2014 (2014 Scoping Plan). The 2014 Scoping Plan adjusted the 1990 GHG emissions levels to 431 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMTCO2e); the updated 2020 GHG emissions forecast is 509 MMTCO2e, which credited for certain GHG emission reduction measures already in place (e.g., the RPS). The 2014 Scoping Plan also recommended a 40 percent reduction in GH emissions from 1990 levels by 2030, and a 60 percent reduction in GHG emissions from 1990 levels by 2040.

The 2017 Scoping Plan outlines options to meet California's aggressive goals to reduce GHGs by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (CARB 2017). Additionally, the Scoping Plan integrates the State's updated RPS requiring utilities to obtain 50 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.

### California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates private and investor-owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, railroad, rail transit, and passenger transportation companies. This agency is responsible for regulating electric utility rates, electric power procurement and generation, some electric infrastructure, ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs, and other areas. It also evaluates the necessity for additional power generation by the regulated utilities in California in both the long and short term. CPUC has primary ratemaking jurisdiction over the funding of distribution related expenditures generally for power lines of 66 kV (kilovolts) or less. CPUC does not have ratemaking responsibility for transmission lines, however it does have a substantial role in permitting transmission and substation facilities.

CPUC regulates natural gas rates and natural gas services, including in-state transportation over the utilities' transmission and distribution pipeline systems, storage, procurement, metering, and billing. Additionally, CPUC regulates telecommunications and broadband operations and infrastructure in the State, being responsible for licensing, registration, and the processing of tariffs on local exchange carriers, competitive local carriers, and non-dominant interexchange carriers. It is also responsible for registration of wireless service providers and franchising of video service providers.

### Senate Bill 1368

SB 1368 prohibits purchase arrangements for energy for periods of longer than 5 years from resources that exceed the emissions of a relatively clean, combined cycle natural gas power plant. This is to limit carbon emissions associated with electrical energy consumed in California. Coal-fired plants cannot meet this standard because these plants emit roughly twice as much carbon as combined cycle natural gas power plants. SB 1368 effectively prevents California's utilities from investing in, financially supporting, or purchasing power from new coal plants located in or out of the State.

### CalRecycle

This state agency performs a variety of regulatory functions pursuant to CCR Title 27 and other regulations. 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.

### California Integrated Waste Management Act (IWMA), AB 939

This act, 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 Goal

Approved in 2011, this act amended the California Public Resources Code (Section 42649 et seq.) to address solid waste diversion (i.e., recycling) targets to decrease the amount of waste going to landfills and thus extend their usable lives. AB 341 requires cities and counties, including Riverside County, to include source reduction, recycling and composting in their integrated waste management plans (IWMP). In addition, under AB 341 counties are required to "divert 50 percent 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 percent of solid waste."

## Regional and Local

### 2010 Coachella Valley Water Management Plan Update

The 2010 Coachella Valley Water Management Plan (CVWMP) is an update to the 2002 CVWMP, which notes the changes in internal and external factors that mandate new activities and increased levels of current activities to eliminate overdraft and assure reliable long-term water supplies to the Valley. New features in the areas of water conservation, source substitution, new supplies, and groundwater recharge, are included in the 2010 CVWMP Update. In order to achieve their goal to reliably meet current and future water demands in a cost-effective and sustainable manner, the 2010 CVWMP Update provides five key elements within the Update. These elements include water conservation, increasing surface water supplies for the Valley from outside sources, substitution of surface water supplies for groundwater (source substitution), groundwater recharge, and monitoring and evaluation of subsidence and groundwater levels and quality to provide the information needed to manage the Valley's groundwater resources.

The 2010 CVWMP Update identifies several water conservation measures with the goal to reduce overall water consumption by 20 percent by 2020, and the goal to maintain this level of reduction through 2045. These measures included water efficient landscaping and irrigation controls, water efficient plumbing, tiered or seasonal water pricing, public information and education programs, alternative water supplies, water restrictive municipal development policies, appointing a conservation coordinator and refining the maximum water allowance budget for landscaped and recreational areas. The 2010 CVWMP Update reduces reliance on groundwater sources by utilizing more Colorado River water, SWP water and recycled water over the long term.

The 2010 CVWMP Update emphasizes cooperation with municipalities, local water agencies, and tribes

in regional planning and implementation. The following are among some of the recommended activities outlined in the update over the next 35 years.

- Provide incentives and support to agricultural customers to conserve water, such as through converting from flood/sprinkler irrigation to more efficient micro-sprinkler/drip systems.
- Encourage existing golf courses to convert landscaping to meet the most current landscape ordinance, requiring no more than 4 acres of grass per hole and 10 acres of grass per practice area.
- Expand landscape conversion rebates for domestic customers to encourage less grass and more desert appropriate landscaping.
- Complete construction of subsequent phases of the Mid-Valley Pipeline system to provide a blend of recycled and Colorado River water for up to 50 golf courses in lieu of groundwater.

The 2010 CVWMP Update recognizes that groundwater storage makes up the difference between demand and supply. Other than canal water for irrigation and groundwater recharge, and recycled water, all water delivered to the end users is obtained from the Coachella Valley groundwater basin. The Coachella Valley groundwater basin has a capacity of approximately 39. 2 million acre-feet. It is capable of meeting the water demands of the Coachella Valley for extended periods.

The 2010 CVWMP Update discusses many programs to maximize the water resources available including:

- Recharge of Colorado River and SWP supplies
- Recycled wastewater, desalinated agricultural drain water, conversion of groundwater uses to canal water; and
- Water conservation including tiered water rates, landscaping ordinance, outreach and education.

The 2010 CVWMP Update and participating water districts' Replenishment Assessment Program establishes a comprehensive and managed effort to eliminate overdraft. These programs allow water districts to maintain the groundwater basin as its primary water supply and to recharge the groundwater basin as other supplies become available.

The 2014 and 2017 CVWMP Status Reports were prepared to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2010 CVWMP Update, including progress on eliminating overdraft. Both Status Reports demonstrated that the 2010 CVWMP Update is working and that continued implementation ensures that overdraft will be eliminated within 10 years. The status of the Annual Change in Storage is updated annually. Over the ten-year period preceding 2014, there was no overdraft mainly as a result of increases in urban conservation and increases in imported water deliveries to the Coachella Valley. Between 2014 and 2017, imported water deliveries were significantly reduced as a result of the Statewide Drought, However, groundwater pumping was also significantly reduced due to the Governor's drought restrictions.

Groundwater levels have increased in the Palm Springs area and in the East Valley. However, water levels are still declining in the Mid-Valley areas near Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Indian Wells. Groundwater levels in this area will continue to decline until full implementation of Mid-Valley (between Eastern and Western Coachella Valley) programs that reduce pumping take effect. These Mid-Valley

Programs include urban conservation; source substitution programs including non-potable water system expansion to golf courses, Colorado River water treatment for municipal use; and additional recharge. The 2014 and 2017 CVWMP Status Reports are publicly available at www.cvwd.org. The CVWD Landscape Ordinances required reduction in outdoor water use for new development. Future urban water use is further reduced with the implementation of following Landscape Ordinances to an average of 800 gpd/conn. Consequently, the water demand factor used to calculate urban demands within the Whitewater River Subbasin boundary associated with growth is estimated to be 800 gpd/conn, according to the 2010 CVWMP.

### 2015 Urban Water Management Plan

The 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), prepared by MWH for IWA, was finalized in 2016 in response to the requirements of the Urban Water Management Planning Act, California Water Codes Sections 10610 through 10656. The Urban Water Management Planning Act was established in 1983 and most recently updated by Senate Bill x7-7, which requires a 20 percent reduction in per-capita water use by 2020. This report was prepared to comply with the requirements of the UWMP Act and is based on the recommended organization in the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The 2015 UWMP supports long-term water resources planning and ensures adequate water supplies are available to meet existing and future urban water demands. The UWMP accomplishes water supply planning over a 25-year period in five-year increments, identifies and quantifies adequate water supplies, including recycled water, for existing and future demands, in normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry years, and implements conservation and efficient use of urban water supplies.

The primary method for implementing water use reduction is through the water budget-based tiered rates and structures and drought penalty charges for use in excess of the required reductions.

### Valley Sanitary District

VSD is the wastewater (sanitation) service provider for a large portion of the Coachella Valley. VSD provides domestic water, wastewater (sanitation), non-potable water (recycled wastewater and Colorado River water), irrigation/drainage, and stormwater and groundwater management services to the large portion of the Coachella Valley within its service area. VSD's service area is within the City if Indio and its sphere of influence. It serves 98% of Indio's population. VSD is a California Special District governed by a locally elected Board of Directors and regulated by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Colorado region and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

### Sanitary Sewer Management Plan

The Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (SSMP) describes the management of service providers' sewer collection systems and minimizes the number of sanitary sewer overflows. The SSMP is required by the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2006-0003, Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems (WDR 2006-0003) enacted May 2, 2006. The purpose of WDR 2006-0003 is to reduce sanitary sewer overflows. Local service providers' sanitary sewer overflows are not unusual or above average compared to other agencies in the State.

The SSMP will provide for a properly managed, operated and maintained sanitary sewer system. All portions of local service providers' wastewater collection systems will be managed, operated and maintained to provide adequate capacity to convey the peak wastewater flows, to minimize the frequency of SSOs, mitigate the impacts that are associated with any SSO that may occur, meet all

applicable regulatory notifications and reporting requirements, provide exceptional customer service to the residents and businesses served.

The SSMP is organized in ten chapters that covers items such as operation and maintenance programs, design and performance provisions, Overflow Emergency Response Plan, Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Control Plan, System Evaluation and Capacity Assurance Plan, monitoring, measurement and program modification, audits, and communications programs.

### VSD Standards and Guidelines

VSD developed standards and design guidelines, which include the VSD Development Design Manual (DDM). The DDM provides comprehensive procedural and technical requirements for the planning, design, and construction of VSD service infrastructure required for new development. VSD Sanitation and Irrigation and Drainage Rules and Regulations are incorporated into the DDM, and they provide general provisions and standards for the development of wastewater systems in VSD. These also provide specification standards for the development of new wastewater systems within the VSD service area. Additionally, construction methods, materials and disposal of products would also be subject to current standards established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Regional Water Quality Control Board and any other local, State, or federal agencies having authority in their respective jurisdictions.

### Valley-Wide Voluntary Green Building Program

The Voluntary Green Building Program is administered by CVAG. It was developed to help builders, developers, and homeowners meet and exceed California's Energy Code in terms of energy efficiency. Several cities have committed to making it easier to process their plans through the planning and building departments for those voluntarily participating in the program. The Voluntary Program and the California Building Code are based upon standards and measurements; the Voluntary Program includes an extensive checklist of specific actions and explanation of how they are counted toward more energy efficient buildings.

### City of Indio Climate Action Plan

The City of Indio adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in September 2019. The Plan is a framework for the development and implementation of policies and programs that will reduce the City's emissions, working towards the Statewide targets of 2020 and 2030. The path to compliance includes strategies for improving connectivity and land use patterns, improving transportation modes and systems, incorporating energy efficiency standards, increasing the City's renewable energy supply, and reducing solid waste. As an active member of the Desert Cities Energy Partnership (DCEP) managed by CVAG, the City has received assistance in identifying opportunities to improve energy efficiency both in municipal facilities and communitywide. Some recent GHG reductions programs associated with electricity/energy are listed below:

- Solar installation at the City of Indio Water Authority at Plant 1 and City Hall;
- Energy efficiency upgrades to municipal facilities including high-efficiency light fixtures, heating ventilation and cooling (HVAC) upgrades, and occupancy sensors that automatically turn off lights;
- Upgrading select traffic signals to LED light fixtures;

- PACE financing programs for energy efficiencies upgrades including Indio's Green and HERO programs.
- Rebate and incentive programs offered by Imperial Irrigation District and Southern California Gas Company.

### City of Indio General Plan – Infrastructure and Public Facilities Element

The 2019 General Plan Infrastructure and Public Facilities Element addresses water, sewer and utility facilities that are utilized by the City. The purpose of the Infrastructure and Public Facilities Element is to establish City policy that provides for a coordinated system of the services to adequately serve Indio at full buildout. The Element also identifies standards for infrastructure relative to population or land use intensity and identifies courses of action and programs that provide the means to implement the goals and policies of the element. The Element lists goals, policies and programs regarding public utilities in the City. These goals policies and programs include:

Goals for wastewater management include:

- Coordination between VSD, CVWD, and IWA to ensure wastewater capacity is available to serve current and future demands,
- Conservation of water by making reclaimed water available where appropriate and disseminating information about water conservation measures,
- Encouraging new residential development to implement greywater systems that redirect water used water for non-potable uses,
- Continuing to use sustainable wastewater systems that treat wastewater and provide a habitat for wildlife i.e. the biological wetlands
- Ensuring adequate funding is available to maintain and improve existing infrastructure as well as build new infrastructure as necessary.

Goals for storm drain and flood control include:

- Ensure that local facilities are designed with sufficient capacity to prevent stormwater damage
- Ensure adequate funding is available to maintain and improve existing stormwater facilities
- Periodically review and update the Storm Drain Master Plan and Hydraulics Analysis to determine necessary actions for existing and future demands
- Promote multiple use of flood control facilities where feasible
- Coordinate with CVWD when regional facility projects are planned in or adjacent to Indio
- Design storm drain facilities to allow infiltration, evapotranspiration, or reuse of stormwater on the site it is generated when practical
- Restrict or require mitigation measures for development of habitable structures within watercourses or other stormwater facilities
- Allow flood control facilities to be developed in conjunction with recreational facilities or land uses that are not susceptible to flood damage

- Construct and maintain storm drains and flood control facilities in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines

The General Plan Update describes the City's support of the initiatives being led by Burrtec, the solid waste services provider for the City. These initiatives aim to meet California's 75 percent solid waste reduction goals by 2020 by Converting green waste and food waste into compost, implementing food waste programs, offering educational community workshops on composting, recycling, and relevant City ordinances, and also providing food establishments with biodegradable bags. The goals of the City outlined in the General Plan for solid waste disposal include:

- Divert a minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of solid waste generated from landfills by utilizing various methods
- Expand residential and commercial waste collection services to include food waste
- Recycling, green waste, and solid waste, provide information to the public on composting, recycling, and "green purchasing"
- Continue to provide free waste audits to commercial customers
- Model best practices in solid waste management by striving for zero waste government operations
- Encourage the use of recycled building materials in new development
- Reduce paper waste and encourage the use of recycled paper in city operations
- Encourage neighborhood cleanup events
- Continue to provide regular street sweeping

The City supports a more diverse portfolio of energy sources, particularly as renewable sources of energy, such as biomethane, solar, and wind power. The City will also ensure that electricity and natural gas services are available to the community. To attract business, institutional uses, and industry, Indio will support high quality telecommunication services and utilities. The Infrastructure and Public Facilities Section of the GP identifies programs, policy updates, planning efforts, coordination efforts, and other actions that will help implement the General Plan's infrastructure and public facilities policies. Programs are consistent with this chapter's goals and policies.

#### Riverside County Integrated Waste Management Plan (RCWMD)

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 each provides information with regard to solid waste and hazardous waste disposal and recycling.

### *4.11.4 Thresholds of Significance*

The City of Indio identifies the following criteria, as established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, to determine if a project could potentially have a significant impact. A project would have a significant impact if it would:

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

### *4.11.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold a** | Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? |

**Impact UTIL-1** **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WOULD INCREASE DEMAND FOR WATER, WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER FACILITIES, ELECTRICITY, NATURAL GAS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS. BECAUSE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE IS AVAILABLE, AND THROUGH REQUIRED ADHERENCE TO EXISTING UTILITY REQUIREMENTS AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW, IMPACTS RELATED TO REQUIRING WASTEWATER, NATURAL GAS AND TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES, IMPACTS RELATED TO REQUIRING NEW WATER AND ELECTRICAL FACILITIES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

#### Water

Development under the proposed Specific Plan would increase demand for water services from the IWA. As a result, additional water system infrastructure would be required to accommodate the demand of the Specific Plan that exceed the existing systems capacity. All future development projects would require review and approval by IWA and the Riverside County Fire Department. Future development projects whose water demands exceed the system's capacity would require additional water system infrastructure to be extended to the development.

According to the Downtown Indio Specific Plan, IWA currently supplies water to the Downtown area through a network of transmission and distribution pipelines that are mostly 6-inch diameter pipes. There are twelve (12)-inch diameter transmission pipelines located on Jackson Street, Fargo Street, Miles Avenue, and Highway 111, and upgraded eight (8)-inch diameter pipes around the Civic Center area. A single twelve (12)-inch diameter pipes can supply approximately 2,400 gallons per minute (gpm) at a velocity of seven (7) feet per second (fps), a single six (6)-inch diameter pipes and a single eight (8)-

inch diameter pipes can supply approximately 600 gpm and 1,000 gpm, respectively. While the six (6)-inch pipes can supply sufficient water for domestic use, fire flow would be difficult. The current minimum commercial fire flow, as established by California Fire Code, is 1,500 gpm and can be as high as 4,000 gpm. The required fire flow is determined based the proposed project building construction material and building size. The larger the building the larger the fire flow requirement gets.

Generally, meeting fire flow requirements would require an evaluation of the water distribution system. Generally, a distribution system consisting of eight (8)-inch diameter pipelines could provide the minimum fire flow; however, as building size increases, the fire flow and the automatic fire suppression system flow may increase to the point the existing water distribution system would need to be replaced with larger diameter pipelines. It is anticipated that as future development is proposed, upgrades to the water distribution system would be required.

Future developments in the project area would have to be evaluated individually for their impacts to the existing infrastructure. Review and approval by IWA and the Riverside County Fire Department of any future development would be required. Adherence to the following regulatory compliances would be required when implementing the Specific Plan:

- All connections of the Project water lines to the existing water lines shall be consistent with the IWA Development Services Procedural Guidelines.
- All proposed water wells to be constructed within the Project Site shall be consistent with the IWA Development Services Procedural Guidelines.
- Application of Low Impact Design (LID) standards to all interior and exterior plumbing features, including low-flow toilets, low-gpm plumbing fixtures, and tankless water heaters.

Required adherence to these regulatory compliances would reduce water demands to the extent feasible. To ensure that the Specific Plan employs strategies to reduce water demand associated with development under the Specific Plan, Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 are required. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6 are required to reduce water related demands associated with the Specific Plan through strategies such as native plantings, high-efficiency irrigation systems, minimization of turf, and reducing fire flow.

**UTIL-1** Individual project developers shall utilize xeriscape planting principles and use of native and/or drought-tolerant plant materials that require little or no irrigation. Plants with similar water requirements shall be grouped together, a technique known as hydro zoning. Decorative water features shall be designed to minimize water consumption and evaporation.

**UTIL-2** Automated, high-efficiency irrigation systems (such as bubbler irrigation and low-angle, low-flow spray heads) shall be installed to reduce water demand and use. Moisture sensors and other similar irrigation technology shall be utilized to ensure that landscaping is watered only as needed.

**UTIL-3** Individual project developers shall minimize use of turf except within active outdoor recreation uses.

**UTIL-4** When possible, individual project developers shall utilize the building construction class that minimizes the amount of fire flow required.

**UTIL-5** If necessary, individual project developers shall incorporate fire wall(s) to allow a single structure to be essentially classified as two smaller buildings and reduce the fire flow.

**UTIL-6** Individual project developers shall incorporate automatic fire suppression systems components that reduce the flow and pressure requirements.

#### Significance after Mitigation

With incorporation of Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-6, future development projects under the Specific Plan would be required to employ strategies to reduce water demand associated with landscaping and building construction. Residual impacts would be less than significant.

### Wastewater

The sewage collection system in the Downtown area is operated and maintained by the Valley Sanitary District (VSD). Collector sewers are minimum eight 8-inch diameter pipes leading to a major 36-inch interceptor main along Requa Street. These sewer mains are sufficient to handle the anticipated increases in flow resulting from future developments projected in the City's General Plan Densities. VSD is currently analyzing some of the lines in the Downtown Area as part of their ongoing maintenance and operations program to identify infrastructure that could require improvement. Future development flows would be required to be reviewed with the system's conveyance capacity by VSD. All connections of the Specific Plan's sewer lines to the existing sewer lines would be required to be consistent with the design standards of the Valley Sanitary District Development Design Manual. Development impact fees may be required if the projected flows exceed the flows projected by the City's General Plan density. Because the Downtown Specific Plan is within the General Plan's density, implementation of the Specific Plan is not anticipated to result in new significant impacts.

### Storm Drain

The Specific Plan area is currently lacking an adequate storm drain system. However, as mentioned previously, the City's Master Drainage Plan addresses these issues with significant proposed improvements to the Civic Center storm drain system which covers the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan also states that storm drainage improvements for individual developments that complement the storm drains recommended in the City Storm Drain Master Plan will be part of the review of any proposed development in the Specific Plan area. Therefore, there will be no new impacts that were not already addressed in the Master Drainage Plan and the Downtown Indio Specific Plan. Any impacts caused by individual developments will be addressed in that project's development plan and reviewed and approved by the City of Indio Engineering Department. Impacts related to relocation or construction of stormwater facilities are less than significant.

### Electricity

The CalEEMod results completed for the Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Vehicle Miles Travelled Discussions were utilized to quantify estimated energy consumption factors. Table 4.11-1 lists following energy consumption values anticipated for the Specific Plan:

**Table 4.11-1 Electricity and Natural Gas Consumption**

| Land Use | Electricity kWh/year | Natural Gas (kBTU/year) |
|---|---|---|
| Apartments Mid Rise | 4,871,040 | 13,225,900 |
| Condo/Townhouse | 1,141,860 | 5,529,900 |
| General Office Building | 3,005,000 | 1,735,000 |
| Government (Civic Center) | 174,290 | 100,630 |
| Government (Office Building) | 210,350 | 121,450 |
| High Turnover (Sit Down Restaurant) | 4,825,620 | 33,469,100 |
| Hotel | 2,177,000 | 10,501,800 |
| Junior College (Two Year) | 660,000 | 2,074,500 |
| Regional Shopping Center | 2,430,430 | 66,600 |
| Regional Shopping Center | 218,400 | 741,147 |
| Single Family Housing | 435,824 | 1,529,810 |
| **Total** | **20,149,814** | **69,095,837** |
| Source: CalEEMod Annual Totals, Appendix D | | |

The following information was obtained in a meeting with Enrique De Leon at IID, July 30th, 2019. The Downtown Specific Plan falls within IID's N86 Mapping Area, with rough boundaries of Indio Boulevard to the north, Jackson Street to the east, Highway 111 to the south, and Oasis Street to the west.

This area has a fully functional system of Above-Ground and Below-Ground facilities, primarily found along area roadways, to serve the existing uses in the Downtown Specific Plan area. The Downtown Specific Plan area is served primarily by the Dr. Carreon IID Substation, which is located east of Monroe Street between John Nobles Avenue and Dr. Carreon Boulevard. The Carreon Substation is currently a one (1) bank substation. A typical substation with one bank is sized at 5 MW or 5,000 KW. For design purposes, available power is assumed to be fifty (50) percent of full capacity or 2,500 KW. In this case, the Dr. Carreon substation currently has a connected load of 2,360 KW. Limited additional power is available for some new construction and backup power to supplement other substations in an emergency. The remaining capacity at the Carreon Substation is approximately 114 KW or 1.14 MWA.

The Dr. Carreon IID Substation has limited available power to serve future development proposed in the Specific Plan area. and Per a comment letter from the IID dated February 10, 2020, IID anticipates that the additional power load requirements in the Specific Plan area would require the construction of an additional distribution substation bank at the IID Carreon Substation (see Appendix I). In addition, IID states that several distribution feeders may be required, including the associated distribution feeder getaways and backbones, conduit systems and distribution line extensions from the Carreon Substation to individual projects in the Specific Plan area. If construction of an additional substation becomes necessary, future developers would be responsible for construction costs and property purchase. All costs, including land and construction, are a Developer responsibility. The majority of the Specific Plan area is developed with existing electrical infrastructure and the Dr. Carreon IID Substation is an existing land use with built electrical infrastructure. While the anticipated improvements and upgrades may require new construction with potential ground disturbance, analysis of the environmental impacts of the aforementioned electrical upgrades and improvements would be speculative given that the exact size, location, and nature of such improvements are not currently known. Nevertheless, construction-

related impacts would be similar to the construction impacts discussed throughout this EIR and are not expected to disturb sensitive environmental resources based on the generally urbanized nature of the area. Thus, environmental impacts associated with IID improvements are not expected to be significant.

To obtain future project specific information, connected load and peak demand quantities will be required, along with construction timelines. A capacity study will be required at the time of future construction to obtain specific information from IID. This study is estimated to take ninety (90) days to complete and is subject to a fee. As discussed in this section, the Specific Plan area contains, and is surrounded by existing electrical infrastructure. Any further need for infrastructure upgrades would be accomplished through the required design review and approval of electricity plans for the Specific Plan through the City and IID. The project will require submittal to the appropriate agencies discussed in this section for review and approval of connection plans. However, to ensure that the Specific Plan reduces its electricity related demands, the following Mitigation Measures have been incorporated related to electricity consumption.

### Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measures UTIL-7 through UTIL-11 are required to reduce electricity related demands associated with the Specific Plan.

**UTIL-7** "Dark Sky-Friendly" lighting shall be designed to protect the beauty of the desert sky and shall respect the requirements and guidelines of the Mount Palomar restricted nighttime light zone, as identified in Riverside County's Ordinance No. 655. Up-lighting is discouraged except for well-shielded landscape accent lighting. Maximum lamp wattage requirements shall be established for different lighting types to minimize obtrusive and unnecessary lighting and conserve energy resources to the greatest extent possible.

**UTIL-8** Automatic timers shall be programmed to maximize personal safety at night while conserving energy.

**UTIL-9** Buildings shall be sited and designed to maximize the use of sunlight and shade for energy savings and respect the right to solar access of nearby and adjacent buildings. Whenever appropriate, buildings shall be oriented so that the long axis of the building is oriented east–west to maximize the opportunity for north- and south facing windows, which receive indirect, diffused light with low heat gain for the building, reducing cooling costs during summer months.

**UTIL-10** The pursuit of already established sustainable best management practices, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, ComfortWise and EnergyStar Home shall be utilized throughout the Specific Plan. For maximum flexibility, however, developers and builders shall implement sustainable building and development practices identified within the Voluntary Green Building Program and the Voluntary Green Building Manual.

**UTIL-11** Individual project developers shall participate in programs offered or sponsored by local utilities such as California EnergyStar New Homes Program, Residential Property Development Program, California Home Energy Efficiency Rating System (CHEERS) Program, and Savings by Design Program.

### Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures UTIL-7 through UTIL-11, the Specific Plan would incorporate numerous energy efficiency measures and design features to enhance efficiency in all aspects of a building's life-cycle. These designs would increase a structure's energy efficiency, and overall sustainability. The Specific Plan would also exceed Title 24 energy requirements by 15 percent, consistent with the Voluntary Green Building Program. Residual impacts would be less than significant.

## Natural Gas

Existing natural gas infrastructure is shown in Figure 4.11-4. Exact locations of natural gas infrastructure should be confirmed by future development projects during the design and review process. Any further need for infrastructure upgrades would be accomplished through the required design review and approval of natural gas plans for the Specific Plan through the City and the Southern California Gas Company.

Based on consultation with the Southern California Gas Company, there are no current plans to upgrade Gas Company facilities in the Downtown Specific Plan area. In addition, through consultation, Southern California Gas indicated that current infrastructure is adequate for any potential growth in the area, however if there are improvements to existing streets and/or other infrastructure there could be potential conflicts. These potential conflicts are outlined below with the appropriate, required procedures:

> **MINOR STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: (**chip seal, slurry seal, grind & overlay**)**
>
> Please notify Southern California Gas Company 3 months prior to start of pavement projects for the gas company to complete leak survey & repair leaks if found.
>
> **MAJOR STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:** (projects requiring excavations greater than 9 inches, widening of existing streets, installing new curbs & gutters, bus pads, traffic signals, realignment, grade separation, etc.) And pipeline projects: (storm drain, waterline, water, sewer, electrical, Telecommunications, etc.)
>
> Please provide Southern California Gas Company with your signed designed plans with gas company facilities posted 3-4 months prior to start of construction for possible relocation of gas company medium pressure facilities and 8-12 months for possible relocation of gas company high pressure facilities.

Because these are standard regulatory requirements, they are not considered mitigation measures. Impacts relative to natural gas infrastructure would be less than significant following implementation of Standard Conditions and Regulatory Requirements. The Specific Plan is not anticipated to require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded natural gas facilities of which would cause significant environmental effects, and impacts would be less than significant.

## Telecommunications

According to consultation and maps provided by Frontier, the Specific Plan area contains, and is surrounded by, existing above ground and below ground telecommunications infrastructure. According to Email Consultation with Larry Moore, OSP Engineering and Network Engineering of Frontier, July 3, 2019, there are currently no "major" planned improvements in the area that would result in significant environmental impacts.

According to consultation and maps provided by Charter Communications, there is a variety of existing infrastructure, both aerial or underground facilities, available within the Specific Plan area. Any further need for infrastructure upgrades would be accomplished through the required design review and approval of telecommunication plans for the Specific Plan through the City and Charter Communications and/or Frontier Communications. To avoid conflict during construction, as a best practice, future project developers should contact the Charter Construction Manager for exact location information. The Specific Plan is not anticipated to require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded telecommunications facilities that would cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Threshold b** Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

**Impact UTIL-2** **BECAUSE OF THE LARGE STORAGE CAPACITY OF THE GROUNDWATER BASIN, THE WATER SUPPLY WOULD BE SUFFICIENT EVEN DURING DRY AND MULTIPLE DRY YEARS. FOLLOWING REQUIRED REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FUTURE PROJECTS WITHIN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA, IMPACTS RELATED TO WATER SUPPLIES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Development of the Specific Plan is expected to result in an increased demand for water services within IWA's boundaries. Existing and projected future water use, based on land uses proposed by the Specific Plan, are shown in Table 4.11-2.

**Table 4.11-2 Existing and Estimated Future Water Use**

| Land Use | Existing Indoor/Outdoor Use (AFY) | | Future Indoor/Outdoor Use (AFY) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regional Shopping Center | 48 | 29 | 83 | 51 |
| General Office Building | 135 | 84 | 273 | 167 |
| Government Office Building | 23 | 14 | 21 | 13 |
| Government (Civic Center) | 18 | 11 | 18 | 11 |
| Junior College (2 Yr) | 15 | 23 | 23 | 35 |
| Single Family Housing | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Apartments Low Rise | 6 | 4 | | |
| Apartments Mid Rise | | | 179 | 113 |
| Condo/Townhouse | | | 49 | 31 |
| High Turnover (Sit Down Restaurant) | | | 114 | 7 |
| Hotel | | | 27 | 3 |
| **Totals** | **255** | **172** | **797** | **437** |
| | **427** | | **1,234** | |
| Source: CalEEMod Annual Totals, Appendix D | | | | |

As a result, additional water supplies would be required to accommodate the demand of the Specific Plan. During normal years, IWA would use groundwater as well as imported water from the Colorado River and SWP to meet water supply needs. IWA's goal is to reduce groundwater pumping in order to minimize overdraft from the Whitewater basin. Reduction of pumping in addition to a ground water replenishment program is expected to eliminate long-term overdraft over the next decade. During dry

years and multiple dry years, if SWP water deliveries are reduced due to drought, continued groundwater pumping would result in short-term overdraft. As mentioned previously, the groundwater basin has an estimated storage capacity of thirty (30) million acre-feet. The estimated demand generated by this project of approximately 1,200 acre-feet in addition to the approximately 20,000 acre-feet delivered by IWA in 2018 fall well below the storage capacity of the groundwater basin. Growth forecasted by the Specific Plan is anticipated in the City's General Plan Update. According to the Indio General Plan Update, IWA's existing distribution system is sufficient to meet Indio's current and future demands, including for the project area. Because forecasted water demands of the Specific Plan have been accounted for in regional water supply and demand projections for the City, the Specific Plan would not place additional demand on water supplies that have not been accounted for. Additional pumping, booster systems, and pressure zones would continue to be implemented through Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) as needed to satisfy the system's performance criteria. This ensures that the water supply would be sufficient even during dry and multiple dry years. Following review and approval of future projects, impacts related to water supplies would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold c** | Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? |

**Impact UTIL-3** **ALTHOUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF WASTEWATER GENERATED IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA, ADEQUATE WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE IS AVAILABLE TO SERVICE THE AREA. IN ADDITION, GROWTH ANTICIPATED BY THE SPECIFIC PLAN IS WITHIN DENSITIES PROPOSED BY THE GENERAL PLAN, WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT EXISTING AND PLANNED FACILITIES CAN ACCOMMODATE PROPOSED GROWTH. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

As mentioned previously, Valley Sanitary District currently operates a WWTP with a twelve (12) mgd maximum capacity and only treats approximately seven (7) mgd of wastewater. Implementation of the Specific Plan would generate increased demand for wastewater treatment compared to existing conditions. Existing and projected future wastewater generation is shown in Table 4.11-3.

**Table 4.11-3 Existing and Estimated Future Wastewater Generation**

| Land Use | Existing Use (gal/yr) | Future Use (gal/yr) |
|---|---|---|
| Regional Shopping Center | 15,673,476 | 26,951,461 |
| General Office Building | 44,701,800 | 88,867,000 |
| Government Office Building | 7,549,080 | 6,953,100 |
| Government (Civic Center) | 5,860,470 | 5,761,140 |
| Junior College (2 Yr) | 4,806,802 | 7,357,350 |
| Single Family Housing | 3,257,700 | 3,257,700 |
| Apartments Low Rise | 2,084,930 | |
| Apartments Mid Rise | | 58,247,676 |
| Condo/Townhouse | | 15,897,576 |
| High Turnover (Sit Down Restaurant) | | 37,152,562 |
| Hotel | | 8,878,450 |
| **Total** | **83,934,258** | **259,324,015** |
| Source: CalEEMod Annual Totals, Appendix D | | |

As shown in Table 4.11-3, the estimated wastewater generated by Specific Plan is 259,324,015 gallons per year or approximately 0.7 mgd. This is significantly less than the available capacity of approximately 5 mgd at VSD's WWTP. Therefore, the existing capacity, in addition to previously mentioned planned improvements to this WWTP, is expected to provide more than adequate capacity to serve the Specific Plan's demands.

To further ensure that there would be adequate capacity, future development would be required to incorporate water conservation measures and to use recycled water whenever feasible. The City and VSD would ensure that there is adequate treatment capacity at the time individual development projects are proposed, in accordance with the Specific Plan and the General Plan. Future development flows would be required to be reviewed with the system's conveyance capacity by VSD. Because the Downtown Specific Plan is within the General Plan's density and adequate infrastructure would accommodate the Specific Plan, impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold d** | 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? |

**Impact UTIL-4 ALTHOUGH DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF SOLID WASTE SENT TO LOCAL TRANSFER STATIONS AND LANDFILLS IN THE REGION, FACILITIES HAVE ADEQUATE CAPACITY TO SERVICE THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S DEMAND. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

As discussed, 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 Specific Plan. Solid waste generation rates from CalEEMod were used to determine the generation of solid waste by the Specific Plan, as shown in Table 4.11-4.

**Table 4.11-4 Solid Waste Disposal Rates[1]**

| Uses | Size | Rate | Solid Waste (tons/year) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Residential | | | |
| Retail | 426,250 sf | 1.05 | 448 |
| Office | 500,000 sf | 0.93 | 465 |
| Hotel | 205,000 sf | 10.8 | 2,214 |
| Civic: | 214,000 sf | | |
| City Hall/Library: | 35,000 sf | 0.93 | 3 |
| Museum/IPAC** | 29,000 sf | 5.7 | 165 |
| COD/Loma Linda: | 150,000 sf | 1.3 | 195 |
| Residential* | | | |
| Studios | 312 du | 0.46 | 144 |
| Small Apartments | 304 du | 0.46 | 140 |
| Medium Two-bedroom Apartments | 278 du | 0.46 | 128 |
| Condominiums | 139 du | 0.46 | 64 |
| Townhouses | 105 du | 0.46 | 48 |
| Single Family Detached | 50 du | 0.41 | 21 |
| **TOTAL** | | | **4,063** |

[1]All of the solid waste disposal rates used in this table are from California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Appendix D, Table 10.1 Solid Waste Disposal Rates. Additionally, when applicable the rates apply to the Salton Sea Air Basin, otherwise the rates are statewide.
*For residential uses, size was considered the number of dwelling units. For non-residential, gross square footage was used.
**A solid waste disposal rate of 5.7 was utilized for analysis of the museum/IPAC due to similarities to both a civic center and a movie theater, which both use the same rate of 5.7. Additionally, this rate was considered a conservative estimate for the type of land use
Abbreviations: du = dwelling units, sq ft = square feet

Growth under the Specific Plan is expected to generate 4,063 tons of solid waste per year, as identified in Table 4.11-4. Solid waste disposal and recycling services for Indio is provided by Burrtec. Solid waste and recycling from the Specific Plan would be hauled to the Edom Hill Transfer Station or would directly be delivered to the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill. Waste from the transfer station is then sent to the permitted landfill or recycling facility. Prior to development or building permits, proposed individual projects within the specific plan area 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.

The area of the Specific Plan generates approximately 1,400 tons of solid waste per year under existing conditions. Therefore, the amount of solid waste would increase by 2,664 tons per year as a result of growth under the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan would contribute 7.3 tons of solid waste per day, or less than one percent of remaining daily capacity, to the Edom Hills Transfer Station, which averages 1,500 tons per day of solid waste. The 7.3 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 Specific Plan would contribute approximately less than one percent of the remaining daily intake permitted at El Sobrante Landfill.

Because existing facilities have capacity sufficient to accommodate the proposed Specific Plan, impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold e** | Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? |

**Impact UTIL-5** **WITH ADHERENCE TO STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS, THE SPECIFIC PLAN 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.**

Individual development proponents would be required to implement a waste diversion program in effort to reduce solid waste impacts on existing landfill capacities. Individual projects will be required to comply with the States waste diversion goal of seventy-five (75) percent. Additionally, individual projects within the Specific Plan Area would be required to address any impacts caused by developments in that project's development plan. With adherence to State and local regulations, the Specific Plan 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.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Cumulative** | Would the project contribute to cumulative utilities and service system impacts? |

**Impact UTIL-6** **ALTHOUGH THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO CUMULATIVE IMPACTS BY REQUIRING SERVICES BY UTILITY PROVIDERS, THE SPECIFIC PLAN'S CONTRIBUTION, THROUGH STANDARD REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND MITIGATION MEASURES, WOULD NOT BE CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE.**

Development in the City would continue to require water, stormwater, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and solid waste services. Development projects would continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis, ensuring that development projects have sufficient utilities and service systems available to accommodate proposed demand. Through payment of development impact fees and required review during the design process, the City would ensure that adequate services are available.

The Downtown Specific Plan consists of approximately 140 acres situated in the City of Indio, Riverside County, California. The Specific Plan area is generally bordered by Indio Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the north; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; Jackson Street and Grace Street to the east; and Deglet Noor and King Street to the west. It is in an urbanized area, containing existing infrastructure. As discussed previously, the Specific Plan contains and is surrounded by existing water, wastewater, stormwater, electrical, natural gas, telecommunications and solid waste infrastructure and services. Any further need for infrastructure upgrades would be accomplished through the required design review and approval of water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication plans for the Specific Plan through the City and the appropriate regulatory agencies and utility providers. Similarly, related projects would also be anticipated to comply with these requirements in an area that is largely built out. Although the Specific Plan would contribute to cumulative impacts by requiring services by utility providers, the Specific Plan's contribution, through standard regulatory compliance and mitigation measures, would not be cumulatively considerable.

### Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures UTIL-1 through UTIL-11 to reduce impacts related to water and electricity demands.

### Significance After Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures, standard conditions, regulatory requirements and the review and approval process of the applicable agencies, impacts associated with Specific Plan's contribution to utilities and services system infrastructure would be less than significant.

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# 5.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS/OTHER CEQA

## 5.1 Significant Environmental Effects Which Cannot Be Mitigated

Section 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to less than significant levels. Potential environmental effects of the Downtown Specific Plan and proposed mitigation measures are discussed in detail in Section 4 of this EIR. Table 5-1 summarizes the following environmental impacts which were determined to be significant and unavoidable.

**Table 5-1 Summary of Significant Impacts of the Specific Plan**

| Resource | Impact |
|---|---|
| **Air Quality – Construction and Operational Emissions** | **Impact AQ-2.** Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate construction-related and operational emissions of criteria pollutants. While Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce emissions associated with construction and operation of anticipated developments, individual projects would have the potential to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds. As such, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. |
| **Air Quality - Cumulative** | **Impact AQ-5.** Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce potential construction and operational air quality emissions associated with future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, individual projects would still have the potential to exceed applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and therefore, cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable. |
| **Historic Resources** | **Impact CUL-1.** Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR, in combination with Mitigation Measure CR-1, would reduce the potential for impacts to historic resources to the degree feasible through identification of historic resources and, as feasible, avoidance of adverse effects to such resources. Nevertheless, because future Specific Plan Area development could still involve permanent alterations to or demolition of historic resources, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. |
| **Historic Resources – (Cumulative)** | **Impact CUL-4.** Development under the Specific Plan may result in significant and unavoidable impacts to historic resources in the Downtown Area. Because these sites are resources that hold historical value to the City and the Downtown area, cumulative impacts from the Specific Plan on historic resources would be cumulatively considerable. |

## 5.2 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes if Implemented

Section 15126.2(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines defines an irreversible impact as an impact that uses nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project. Irreversible impacts can also result from damage caused by environmental accidents associated with the Specific Plan. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to ensure that such consumption is justified. Individual projects that are implemented in the Specific Plan area would commit nonrenewable resources during construction and ongoing utility services during operations. During operations for individual projects developed under the Downtown Specific Plan, oil, natural gas and other nonrenewable resources would

be consumed. Therefore, an irreversible commitment of nonrenewable resources would occur as a result of long-term project operations. However, assuming that those commitments occur in accordance with the adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Indio General Plan Update, as a matter of public policy, those commitments have been determined to be acceptable. The Indio General Plan Update ensures that any irreversible environmental changes and new growth associated with those commitments will be minimized.

## 5.3 Growth Inducement

The City's General Plan Update recognizes that certain forms of growth are beneficial, both economically and socially. Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines provides the following guidance on growth-inducing impacts: a project is identified as growth inducing if it "could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment." Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when the development of a project imposes new burdens on a community by directly inducing population growth, or by leading to the construction of additional developments in the same area. Also included in this category are projects that remove physical obstacles to population growth, such as extension of utilities or roadways to undeveloped areas. The provision of such services to a site and the subsequent development that occurs can serve to induce other landowners in the area to similarly convert their property to urban uses. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts, consist of secondary effects of development, such as the additional demand for housing, goods, or services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project. Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines further states "[i]t must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment." This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which the Specific Plan could contribute to significant changes in the environment, beyond the direct consequences of developing the land use concept examined in Section 4.0 of this Program EIR.

The proposed Downtown Specific Plan describes the goals and policies, development standards, design guidelines, infrastructure improvements, and implementation strategies for the Specific Plan area. The regulations contained in the Downtown Specific Plan constitute the primary land use and development standards for the area. The standards and provisions contained in the Downtown Specific Plan constitute the primary land use and development guidance for the area. The Downtown Specific Plan's standards and provisions would be applied in addition to applicable provisions contained in the City of Indio Municipal Code. As part of the implementation of the project, the Interim Development Standards for the Downtown Specific Plan would be incorporated into the City Zoning Code.

The City's General Plan Update would be amended to replace the boundaries of the 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan and establish the proposed Downtown Specific Plan boundaries. The Specific Plan's development potential would accommodate approximately 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential uses and 1,188 dwelling units.

The California Department of Finance (DOF) estimates that as of January 1, 2019, the County of Riverside has a population of approximately 2,440,124 persons, with a population of 394,200 persons living in unincorporated Riverside County. Comparatively, in April 2010, the County had a population of approximately 2,189,641 persons, with a population of 504,398 persons living in unincorporated Riverside County. This represents an increase of 250,483 persons countywide, with a decrease of 110,198 persons in unincorporated Riverside County. The DOF estimates that as of January 1, 2019, the population of the City

of Indio was approximately 89,406 persons. Comparatively, in April 2010, the City had a population of 76,036 persons. This represents an increase of 13,370 persons. As discussed in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, the Downtown Specific Plan would result in a net increase of approximately 5,494 people. When considering Indio's 2019 population of 89,406 people, anticipated population growth would remain within SCAG's projected 2040 population increase and the Specific Plan would not cause Indio to exceed official regional population projections.

In 2010, the number of housing units in Riverside County were estimated to be 800,707, with 125,053 dwelling units in the unincorporated areas of Riverside County. By January 1, 2019, the estimated number of housing units for Riverside County was 847,851 with 140,890 dwelling units in the unincorporated areas of the County. This is a county-wide increase of 47,144 dwelling units, and an increase of 15,837 dwelling units in unincorporated Riverside County. The City of Indio had 28,971 dwelling units in 2010 with a vacancy rate of 19.3 percent. As discussed in the 2040 General Plan, the City of Indio had 25,973 housing units in 2018, with forecasted growth of up to 38,144 units by 2040. The Specific Plan, although growth would be primarily contingent upon market conditions and timing of buildout is currently unknown, would result in 1,106 new units, which is well within the growth assumptions of the General Plan Update. The purpose of the Specific Plan is to concentrate a portion of the forecasted growth into the Downtown area, without inducing growth elsewhere.

The unemployment rate for California was 4.1 percent in June 2019; the unemployment rate for Riverside County was 4.4 percent (EDD 2019). The County's labor force in February 2017 was 1,085,300 persons with approximately 47,500 persons unemployed. The City of Indio's labor force in June 2019 was 40,200 persons, with approximately 2,100 people unemployed. The unadjusted unemployment rate for the City was 5.3 percent. As discussed in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, growth forecast under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate approximately 1,722 employees. The estimated 1,722 employees generated by forecast growth under the Downtown Specific Plan would remain within SCAG's projected 2040 employment projections for the city. The Downtown Specific Plan is intended to concentrate forecasted employment growth into the Downtown area instead of inducing growth elsewhere.

### *5.3.1 Remove Obstacles to Growth*

The proposed Downtown Specific Plan does not include extension or construction of any major infrastructure to support proposed land uses. The Downtown Specific Plan area is developed with existing infrastructure including roadways, sidewalks, utilities and service systems. The Specific Plan does not propose land use regulations or other changes that would induce growth beyond the development forecasts anticipated in the City or region. Amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Map are limited to changes to the proposed Downtown Specific Plan boundaries; General Plan land use designations would not change. Approval of the Specific Plan would not remove an existing regulatory obstacle to growth but would redefine the nature of future growth in the Specific Plan area by providing goals and policies, development standards, design guidelines, infrastructure improvements, and implementation strategies for area. The Specific Plan's estimated growth forecast, which includes existing development, is 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential development and 1,188 dwelling units totaling 1,113,074 gsf. The Specific Plan's objectives and goals are to promote growth consistent with City and regional forecasts in the Downtown area, therefore, the Specific Plan is not considered to be removing obstacles to growth.

### *5.3.2 Require Expansions of One or More Public Services*

The Specific Plan area has been developed to guide downtown growth and development over several

decades. The Downtown Specific Plan would provide a flexible plan that emphasizes a walkable and mixed-use environment while embracing newer development. One of the primary goals of the Specific Plan is to encourage and promote economic development and revitalization to enhance the City's attractiveness to the local and regional marketplace. The Specific Plan would facilitate the reuse of existing structures and promote infill development of currently vacant or underutilized properties, which would contribute to tying the community together, rather than dividing the community.

The City of Indio General Plan describes the City's vision to reestablish the Downtown area as a special place in the City and the Coachella Valley with enhanced commercial opportunities, public spaces, a pedestrian environment, and a multimodal transportation center. Public services are currently provided to the Downtown Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan would not result in the immediate expansion of public services. The Downtown Specific Plan area is served by the Indio Water Authority, Imperial Irrigation District, Southern California Gas Company, Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services, Valley Sanitary District (wastewater), Indio Police Department, Riverside County Fire/Indio Division, Indio Library (Riverside County Library System), and the Desert Sands Unified School District, as well as by three major medical facilities (Eisenhower Medical Center, Desert Regional Medical Center, and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital). The Specific Plan's estimated growth forecast, including existing development, is 1,375,250 gsf of non-residential development and 1,188 dwelling units totaling 1,113,074 gsf. As discussed in Sections 4.7, *Hydrology and Water Quality* and 4.11, *Utilities and Service Systems*, implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would not result in increased need for water or wastewater treatment facilities, landfills, or other solid waste facilities beyond that previously anticipated in the City's General Plan As discussed in Section 1.6 of the *Executive Summary*, the Specific Plan would not result in increased need for public services, such as fire, police, schools, and libraries, beyond that anticipated in the General Plan.

Future development projects in the Specific Plan area would be constructed on previously disturbed and developed land, and also would be required to comply with the Downtown Specific Plan and associated development regulations, City of Indio General Plan and applicable chapters and sections of the Indio Municipal Code, as well as submit development applications and engineering plans, to obtain building and grading permits. Additionally, development in the Downtown Specific Plan area would be required to comply with applicable City, State, and federal regulations concerning public services and utilities and to undergo site and project-specific environmental review.

### *5.3.3 Encourage or Facilitate Economic Activities*

The proposed Downtown Specific Plan would provide a flexible guide that emphasizes a walkable and mixed-use environment. One of the goals of the Specific Plan is to encourage and promote economic development and revitalization to enhance the City's attractiveness to the local and regional marketplace. The Downtown Specific Plan would facilitate the re-use of existing structures and promote infill development of currently vacant or underutilized properties, which would contribute to tying the community together, rather than dividing the community.

Any future individual development project resulting from the implementation of the proposed Downtown Specific Plan would create construction-related jobs in the fields of design, engineering and construction. Although construction jobs are temporary in nature, new development can also provide long-term employment opportunities. As new residential units are developed and occupied, residents in the Downtown Specific Plan area would seek shopping, entertainment, employment, home improvement, auto maintenance and other economic opportunities in Coachella Valley area, including the Downtown

Specific Plan area. Additionally, businesses and services would serve residents, employees, and visitors in the Downtown area, as well as the City of Indio and the Coachella Valley as a whole.

### *5.3.4 Involve a Precedent Setting Action*

The Downtown Specific Plan would not involve any precedent-setting changes in land use regulations. The Specific Plan would require discretionary approvals by the City, including approval of the Indio Downtown Specific Plan, approval of the changes in the Specific Plan boundaries on the General Plan Land Use Map, adoption of interim development standards and approval of the changes to the Specific Plan boundaries on the Zoning Map to include the Specific Plan area zoning designation. The proposed Downtown Specific Plan describes the goals and policies, development standards, streetscape improvements, and implementation strategies for the Downtown Specific Plan area. The standards and provisions contained in the Downtown Specific Plan constitute the primary land use and development standards for the area. The Plan's standards and provisions would be applied in addition to applicable provisions in the City of Indio Municipal Code.

The Specific Plan would change existing zoning designations in the Specific Plan area but would not alter or change any of the City's building safety standards. Mitigation measures have been identified requiring subsequent site-specific development projects to comply with all applicable federal, State, and City regulations, plans, policies, and ordinances such that there are no conflicts with adopted development regulations and that environmental impacts are minimized as the Downtown Specific Plan is implemented.

Pressures to develop other land in the surrounding area are associated with regional economic conditions and market demands for development of vacant lands, infill development, and redevelopment of vacant buildings within the City. Approval of the Specific Plan would not involve a precedent setting action that could be applied to other properties and thereby encourage or facilitate growth that would not otherwise occur. However, it is noted that the successful establishment of new residential and non-residential development within the Specific Plan area may encourage continued development and reuse of existing properties consistent with the City's desire to facilitate and reestablish the community with a diverse economic foundation. It would be speculative to forecast the indirect effect of the Downtown Specific Plan on development in other areas of the City. As noted for future projects within the Downtown Specific Plan area, the City would be responsible for the review of other development projects in the City including the evaluation of potential environmental effects. Such effects may include but are not limited to traffic, biological resources, utilities (e.g., water supply), air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Implementation of the Downtown Specific Plan would allow for and guide development projects in the Downtown area. The Specific Plan would provide a framework for future development to provide a cohesiveness and sense of place in the Downtown area, which could not be accomplished at the General Plan level. This would not create precedent for other areas of the City or region. Rather, it reacts to and implements policy direction contained in the General Plan.

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# 6.0 ALTERNATIVES

## 6.1 Introduction

CEQA requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to a project or to the location of a project site that could feasibly avoid or lessen any significant environmental impacts of the project while attaining most of the project's basic objectives. An EIR also must compare and evaluate the environmental effects and comparative merits of the alternatives.

This chapter identifies the Specific Plan objectives, lists the resource areas that would have significant and unavoidable impacts resulting from the implementation of the Specific Plan, discusses alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration, and compares the environmental impacts of the alternatives retained with those of the Specific Plan.

The following are key provisions of the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6:

- The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.
- The No Project Alternative shall be evaluated, along with its impacts. The No Project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation was published, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.
- The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason;" therefore, the EIR must evaluate only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.
- For alternative locations, only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.
- An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative.
- The range of feasible alternatives is selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision-making. Among the factors that may be considered when addressing the feasibility of alternatives, as described in Section 15126.6(f)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, are environmental impacts, site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, regulatory limitations, and jurisdictional boundaries. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects could not be reasonably identified, whose implementation is remote or speculative, and that would not achieve the basic project objectives.

## 6.2 Specific Plan Objectives

The proposed Specific Plan has been developed to be an extension of the 2040 General Plan, accomplishing the same goals and objectives but tailored to the Downtown area. These objectives and key outcomes are outlined below:

- Quality of Life: A high quality of life for all residents.

- One of the main missing pieces in Indio's generally high quality of life offerings is a lack of places for family outings, evenings with friends, weekends with out-of-town guests, and living environments within a comfortable walk of commercial amenities, jobs and transit. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to increase these types of uses.

- Night Life, Entertainment, and Recreation: A lively Downtown Indio, exceptional city-wide events, and regional parks and trails that will attract visitors and residents alike.
  - The Downtown is envisioned to fill a void of community gathering places suitable for public events that are not best accommodated in regional parks. As passenger rail service is reestablished to Downtown Indio, the Downtown has an opportunity to create a fun, activity-rich destination for visitors, as a place to stay and spend time and money, and not just a pass through place.
- Multi-Modal Transportation Network: An interconnected transportation network that serves all users and modes in a healthy, equitable manner.
  - With a strong focus on pedestrian safety and comfort, the Downtown is envisioned as the most complete multi-modal, human scale environment in Indio.
- Sustainable Community: An efficient community that can persist for generations.
  - Envisioned as the most walkable (least auto-dependent), mixed-use, urban environment of the City, Downtown is expected to set the standard for this goal, not only citywide, but regionally, and the Specific Plan is provides the vision, development standards, and implementation processes to accomplish this goal.
- Range of Housing Options: A wide variety of housing types to serve a broad and diverse community of new and existing residents, providing housing opportunities for households of all ages, types, incomes, and lifestyles.
  - The Downtown is an ideal place to diversify Indio's housing stock, which is currently skewed heavily to households seeking single-family detached suburban homes or garden apartments, to include housing types in an amenity-rich urban environment, targeting students, young professionals, families, and older residents seeking active, healthy outdoor lifestyles.
- Exceptional Educational Opportunities: Extensive educational and vocational training opportunities that help develop a diverse and well-trained workforce.
  - With the expanding College of the Desert campus and Loma Linda Health campus, the Downtown is ideally positioned to link education, culture and employment.
- Expanded Employment: A strong, resilient economy that offers opportunities for entry level, service, technology, and entrepreneurial employment to meet the needs of Indio's residents and to attract future residents to the region.
  - Located between a significant employment district to the north and the growing Riverside County Justice Center to the south, Downtown is ideally positioned as a prime location for new offices and housing.
- City of Festivals: Indio's internationally-known festivals will continue to attract and support

entertainment and hospitality that enhance Indio as the City of Festivals.

- The large music festivals with national and international patronage bring large amounts of visitors to Indio annually. The high-quality streetscapes, plazas and parks envisioned in Downtown will provide additional venues for festivals, the arts, entertainment and special community events related to the large festivals and also throughout the year.

- Compelling Retail and Commercial Uses: A retail sector that fully serves the needs of all Indio residents, offering both quality every-day and specialty retail uses at locations throughout the City.
  - While Indio's numerous shopping centers offer a wide range of retail and commercial businesses typical of most California cities, the Downtown offers a distinctive setting for unique retail shops, restaurants, art galleries and entertainment venues that define the culture and character of Indio for local and regional shoppers and international visitors. The Downtown Specific Plan proposes to accommodate and grow these uses.
- Efficient Use of Infrastructure: A well-planned and smartly-developed City that grows in concert with its ability to provide services.
  - Downtown is where Indio was established, as a small rural town centered on a railroad depot. With its original block structure and most of its street network still intact, and in need of refreshing/landscaping, it represents a unique opportunity to restore and update Indio's oldest and most elegant core of sustainable infrastructure.

## 6.3 Impacts of the Specific Plan

### *6.5.2 Significant Unavoidable Impacts*

An impact that remains significant after including all feasible mitigation measures is considered a significant and unavoidable impact. The impacts discussed below have been identified as significant and unavoidable as a result of implementing the Specific Plan. Even with the mitigation measures, impacts in these issue areas would be significant and unavoidable. Therefore, per the State CEQA Guidelines, only those impacts found significant and unavoidable are relevant in making the final determination of whether an alternative is environmentally superior or inferior to the Project.

#### Air Quality: Construction and Operational Emissions

Development anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan would generate construction-related and operational emissions of criteria pollutants. While Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce emissions associated with construction and operation of anticipated developments, individual projects would have the potential to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds. As such, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Air Quality: Cumulative

Future development associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan could result in increased emissions of regional criteria air pollutants and precursors that would be projected to exceed SCAQMD's project-level significance thresholds. Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would reduce potential construction and operational air quality emissions associated with future projects anticipated under the Downtown Specific Plan. However, individual projects would still have the potential to exceed applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and therefore, cumulative impacts related to increased emissions of

criteria pollutants would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Historic Resources

Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the City of Indio General Plan Final EIR, in combination with Mitigation Measure CR-1, would reduce the potential for impacts to historic resources to the degree feasible through identification of historic resources and, as feasible, avoidance of adverse effects to such resources. Nevertheless, because future Specific Plan Area development could still involve permanent alterations to or demolition of historic resources, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

#### Historic Resources: Cumulative

Development under the Specific Plan may result in significant and unavoidable impacts to historic resources in the Downtown Area. Because these sites are resources that hold significant historical value to the City and the Downtown area, cumulative impacts from the Specific Plan on historic resources would be cumulatively considerable.

### *6.5.3 Other Impacts*

Impacts of the Specific Plan on the other resources evaluated in the Program EIR were found to be either less than significant or less than significant after mitigation. Therefore, consideration of alternatives that would further reduce impacts on these resources is not required by CEQA. Only alternatives that reduce or substantially lessen the Specific Plan's unavoidable impacts are evaluated. If one of the alternatives would cause a greater adverse impact on another resource, these impacts are identified.

## 6.4 Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration

Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in an EIR if they fail to meet most of the project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental effects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[c]). Alternatives that are remote or speculative, or the effects of which cannot be reasonable predicted, also do not need to be considered (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126[f][2]). Per CEQA, the lead agency may make an initial determination as to which alternatives are feasible and warrant further consideration and which are infeasible. The following alternatives were initially considered but were eliminated from further consideration in this EIR because they do not meet project objectives and/or were infeasible.

***Alternative Site:*** The Alternative Site scenario would provide a specific plan that promotes and encourages economic development and revitalization to enhance the City, but not in the Downtown Area. This alternative would not meet the primary basic project goals of promoting the revitalization and enhancement of Downtown, increasing housing opportunities within the Downtown area, or facilitating increases in transit options within the Downtown area. Because this Alternative would not redevelop and enhance the City's Downtown, consideration of an alternative site was rejected.

***Alternative Land Uses:*** The Alternative Use scenario would allow for different uses within the Specific Plan area, either all residential or all commercial uses. An All Residential Alternative would not provide a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, recreational, manufacturing, and transit-oriented development; would not promote the revitalization and enhancement with the Downtown area; would not increase transit options within the Specific Plan area; and would not promote pedestrian-friendly

integrated mixed use environments in the Specific Plan area. An All Commercial Alternative would not deliver a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, recreational, manufacturing, and transit-oriented development; would not increase housing opportunities within the Specific Plan area; would not facilitate increases in transit options within the Specific Plan area; and would not promote pedestrian-friendly integrated mixed use environments in the Specific Plan area. Both Alternative Use Alternatives would have similar project approvals as the proposed Specific Plan and similar physical impacts to the environment. The Alternative Use Alternative would increase vehicle miles traveled as the would include only one type of land use, resulting in the population to live in one area and commute to jobs, shopping, and services in a different area of the City. This could ultimately impact traffic and circulation, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise impacts.

***Develop under General Plan/No Specific Plan Alternative:*** This Alternative would not provide for a Specific Plan for the Specific Plan area and future development projects would be developed per the General Plan Update only. While the General Plan land use designations would not differ from those currently shown, the development guidelines in the General Plan are city-wide and do not designate individual guidelines for different planning areas. The General Plan identifies 14 planning subareas of the City and the "Downtown and Neighborhoods" subarea is a focal and historic center of the City of Indio as well as the entire Coachella Valley." These planning subareas have unique needs that could not be addressed in enough detail in the General Plan and zoning code. With respect to Specific Plan, the General Plan directed that a specific plan be prepared that would better direct the revitalization of the area. This alternative would develop the Specific Plan geographical area per the general city-wide guidance General Plan and would not have subarea specific development guidelines. It would conflict with the General Plan's direction to prepare a Specific Plan to better direct revitalization in the Specific Plan area. Therefore, this alternative was rejected from further consideration.

## 6.5 Alternatives Analyzed in this Program EIR

Alternatives that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Specific Plan and that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives are analyzed below. Each alternative is discussed with respect to its relationship to the Specific Plan objectives. The City has considered the following alternatives: Alternative A: No Project/ Existing Specific Plan, Alternative B: No Project/No Development, Alternative C: Reduced Density. These alternatives are discussed in further detail below:

### *6.5.1 Alternative A: No Project/Existing Specific Plan*

Alternative A would not change the existing policy documents that govern the Specific Plan area. The City's existing 1997 Old Town Indio Specific Plan and General Plan would remain the guiding documents. The 1997 Old Town Specific Plan area would remain generally bound by Indio Boulevard, Leroy Way, and the railroad tracks on the north; Arabia Street, Park Street, Palm Street to the west; SR-111 and Requa Avenue to the south; and Marshall Street and Flower Street to the east. This area is larger than the proposed Specific Plan area.

Under Alternative A, no changes to the Zoning Map would occur to identify the "Downtown Indio Specific Plan" and no change would occur to the Specific Plan boundaries within the General Plan Land Use Map. Land use designations and zoning classifications would remain the same. In addition, there are no estimated growth forecasts under Alternative A, as no forecasts were projected for the number of dwelling units or non-residential square footage in the 1997 Old Town Specific Plan boundaries. Due to the larger planning area of the 1997 Old Town Specific Plan compared to the proposed, the amount of potential development

under this alternative could be greater than the proposed Specific Plan.

#### Impact Comparison to the Proposed Specific Plan

##### Air Quality

While the proposed Specific Plan has a growth forecast for residential and non-residential development, Alternative A has no anticipated forecast, and due to the larger planning area, more development could occur under this Alternative. As such, the total number of dwelling units and non-residential square footage could be greater than under the Specific Plan. Because more development could occur within the Specific Plan area when compared to the proposed Specific Plan, both construction-related and operational air quality emissions associated with future development projects could be greater. While mitigation is available to reduce air quality emissions, the impacts would be significant and unavoidable for both Alternative A and the proposed Specific Plan.

##### Cultural Resources - Historic

The 1997 Specific Plan has a larger planning area than the proposed Specific Plan, which extends further into the Gillette Park Residential Historic District and includes more potentially historic parcels westward of boundary of the proposed Specific Plan. Because the larger planning area under Alternative A includes an increased number of potentially historic resources, Alternative A would therefore have the potential to alter, change, or result in demolition activities of greater numbers of potential historic resources. In addition, the Mitigation Measures as proposed in this EIR would not apply. Potential impacts to historic resources could be greater under Alterative A than those assumed under the proposed Specific Plan, in addition to Alternative A resulting in a greater potential to contribute, in combination with impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, to result in a cumulative impact to historic resources. Impacts would be slightly greater than those of the proposed Specific Plan, and remain significant and unavoidable.

#### Conclusion and Relationship to Specific Plan Objectives

Alternative A would not reduce significant impacts associated with the Specific Plan and would result in slightly greater impacts relative to air pollutant emissions and historic resources. If the proposed Specific Plan is not implemented, the Specific Plan area would be developed under the guidelines of the existing Old Town Specific Plan and the General Plan. Impacts under Alternative A would remain significant and unavoidable similar to the proposed Specific Plan. Alternative A would not achieve most of the Specific Plan Project objectives, such as creating a policy and regulatory document to promote the revitalization and enhancement of Specific Plan area by providing a pedestrian-friendly urban environment, and facilitating increases in transit options within the area, and would not implement the City's vision for the Downtown area to the degree that the currently proposed Specific Plan would.

### *6.5.2 Alternative B: No Project/No Development*

The No Project Alternative assumes that existing conditions in the Specific Plan area would remain unchanged and the City would suspend any further actions related to infill development projects in the Specific Plan area. Land uses within the Specific Plan area would remain the same as the existing conditions. The Specific Plan area would continue to have an estimated 102 dwelling units, 799,232 sf of commercial, manufacturing and public/institutional development, and approximately 22 acres of vacant property. Development in other parts of the City would continue.

### Impact Comparison to the Proposed Specific Plan

#### Air Quality

Under Alternative B, no additional development would occur in the Specific Plan area, but development could continue to occur in other parts of the City and the region. Alternative B would not result in an increase in construction-related and operational air quality emissions beyond that currently and previously generated in the Specific Plan area. Because additional development or construction would occur, construction related pollutants would not be generated. As such, significant and unavoidable construction related criteria pollutant emissions would be reduced, and there would be no impact. Operational emissions under Alternative B would be similar to existing conditions, as no development would occur. As a result, no impact would occur under this Alternative. Alternative B would not result in either project specific air quality impacts or cumulatively contribute to cumulative air quality impacts.

#### Cultural Resources - Historic

Under Alternative B, no additional development would occur in the Specific Plan area but could continue to occur in other parts of the City and the region. The previously identified historic sites/resources and potential historic districts/local conservation zones would remain as they are. Because no development would occur in these areas, impacts to potential historic resources would be reduced entirely. No alterations, changes, or demolition activities as a result of Specific Plan growth would occur, thereby reducing the significant and unavoidable impact. In addition, since no impact would occur to historical resources in the Downtown area, this Alternative would not contribute to cumulative historic resource impacts, as the Downtown area would remain in its current condition.

### Conclusion and Relationship to Specific Plan Objectives

Under this Alternative, the Specific Plan would not be implemented and no additional development would occur. This alternative would eliminate the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed Specific Plan, which are due to growth and construction/development. Although the significant and unavoidable air quality and historic resource impacts would be eliminated by this Alternative, Alternative B would not achieve any of the Specific Plan's objectives, such as revitalization and enhancement of the Specific Plan area, establishment of a pedestrian-friendly urban environment, and facilitation of increased transit options in the area.

## *6.5.3 Alternative C: Reduced Density*

The Reduced Density Alternative would reduce the amount of allowable development in the Specific Plan area. Under this Reduced Density Alternative, the Specific Plan would allow for and accommodate a growth forecast of around 650,000 square feet of net new non-residential uses and approximately 750 total dwelling units. The purpose of this Reduced Density Alternative is to accommodate and allow new growth that would meet the basic project objectives while reducing the proposed project's unavoidably significant impacts. The 1,106 new units forecasted in the proposed Specific Plan is aspirational, but can be accommodated in the building volumes envisioned for the Downtown area. The previously analyzed and proposed 500 units in the original Draft EIR may not realize the Downtown potential for becoming and maintaining a growing commercial, entertainment, and employment success. Therefore, a median value of 750 units is proposed under this Alternative, between 500 and 1,106 units. Similarly, for non-residential square footage growth forecasts, a median value of 650,000 net new non-residential is considered under this Alternative, which reflects a balance of maintaining new growth while understanding potential market condition limitations.

### Impact Comparison to the Specific Plan

#### Air Quality

Under Alternative C, the total number of dwelling units and non-residential square footage would be reduced compared to the proposed Specific Plan. Because less development could occur in the Specific Plan area when compared to the proposed Specific Plan, both construction-related and operational air pollutant emissions associated with future development would be lower. While mitigation is available to reduce air quality emissions to the extent feasible, both construction and operational emissions with growth forecasts of 650,000 net new non-residential square footage and 750 units would still result in exceedances of SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, although impacts would be slightly less than under the proposed, impacts associated with this Alternative would be significant and unavoidable. In addition, due to exceedances of SCAQMD thresholds, this Alternative would also make a substantial contribution to cumulative air quality impacts.

#### Cultural Resources - Historic

Under Alternative C, the total number of dwelling units and non-residential square footage would be reduced compared to the proposed Specific Plan. Although Alternative C would not result in growth at the same scale and magnitude as the proposed Specific Plan, development in the Downtown would still occur in select areas where potential historical resources are located and therefore have the potential to alter, change, or result in demolition activities of potential historic resources. The Mitigation Measures as proposed in this EIR would apply to this Alternative; nevertheless, as with the proposed project, the potential permanent alterations or loss of historic resources would be significant and unavoidable. Although potential impacts to historic resources could be slightly less under Alternative C than under the proposed Specific Plan, this Alternative would still result in a significant cumulative impact to historic resources due to potential loss of historic City resources.

### Conclusion and Relationship to Specific Plan Objectives

With implementation of Alternative C, significant and unavoidable impacts would be reduced, but not avoided when compared to the proposed Specific Plan. Although this alternative would fulfill most of the Specific Plan's objectives by focusing on revitalization and enhancement of the Specific Plan area, establishing a pedestrian-friendly urban environment, and facilitating increased transit options within the area, it would not fully realize the objective of increasing housing opportunities in the Specific Plan area or increasing vibrancy in the Specific Plan area.

## 6.6 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR must identify the environmentally superior alternative to the project. Table 6-1 illustrates the environmental impacts of each Specific Plan alternative. Alternative B: No Project / No Development would be environmentally superior to the proposed Specific Plan because it would avoid the project's physical environmental impacts related to air quality and historical resources. Although Alternative B is the environmentally superior alternative, it would not meet the objectives of the Specific Plan, including providing a wide variety of housing types to serve a broad and diverse community of new and existing residents; providing housing opportunities for households of all ages, types, incomes, and lifestyles; establishing an efficient community that can persist for generations; and establishing a strong, resilient economy that offers opportunities for entry level, service, technology, and entrepreneurial employment to meet the needs of Indio's residents and to attract future residents to the region.

Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines states that if the no project alternative is found to be environmentally superior, "the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives." Alternative C slightly reduces the significant and unavoidable impacts of the Specific Plan related to air quality and historical resources due to reduced development. Therefore, although Alternative C's impacts to air quality and historic resources would be significant and unavoidable, Alternative C is considered to be the environmentally superior alternative.

**Table 6-1 Comparison of Alternatives**

| Environmental Resource | Proposed Specific Plan | Alternative A | Alternative B | Alternative C |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Air Quality: Construction and Operational Emissions | Significant/ Unavoidable | Slightly Greater; Significant / Unavoidable | Reduced No Impact | Slightly Reduced; Significant / Unavoidable |
| Air Quality: Cumulative | Significant/ Unavoidable | Slightly Greater; Significant / Unavoidable | Reduced No Impact | Slightly Reduced; Significant / Unavoidable |
| Cultural Resources - Historic | Significant/ Unavoidable | Slightly Greater; Significant / Unavoidable | Reduced No Impact | Slightly Reduced; Significant / Unavoidable |
| Cultural Resources : Cumulative | Significant/ Unavoidable | Slightly Greater; Significant / Unavoidable | Reduced No Impact | Slightly Reduced; Significant / Unavoidable |

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# 9.0 ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| °C | Celsius |
| °F | Fahrenheit |
| AB | Assembly Bill |
| ACHP | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation |
| AFY | Acre-feet per year |
| APZ | Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone |
| BGS | Below ground surface |
| BMPs | Best Management Practices |
| BSA | Biological study area |
| Caltrans | California Department of Transportation |
| CARB | California Air Resources Board |
| CBC | California Building Code |
| CCR | California Code of Regulations |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| CECs | Constituents of Emerging Concern |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| CESA | California Endangered Species Act |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CGS | California Geological Survey |
| CHL | California Historical Landmarks |
| CIP | Capital Improvement Program |
| CMA | Congestion Management Agency |
| CMP | Congestion Management Program |
| CNDDB | California Natural Diversity Database |
| CRHR | California Register of Historical Resources |
| CSP | California State Parks |
| CVAG | Coachella Valley Association of Governments |
| CVCC | Coachella Valley Conservation Commission |
| CVSC | Coachella Valley Storm Channel |
| CVWD | Coachella Valley Water District |
| CWA | Clean Water Act |
| DDT | Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane |
| DOF | Department of Finance |
| DTSC | California Department of Toxic Substances Control |
| DU | Dwelling units |

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|---|---|
| DWR | Department of Water Resources |
| EIR | Environmental Impact Report |
| ELGs | Effluent Limitation Guidelines |
| EOs | Executive Orders |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FESA | Federal Endangered Species Act |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| FIRM | Flood Insurance Rate Map |
| GHG | Greenhouse gases |
| I- | Interstate |
| ICPP | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| ITS | Intelligent Transportation Systems |
| IWA | Indio Water Authority |
| K-8 | Kindergarten through 8$^{th}$ grade |
| KSF | Thousand square feet |
| LID | Low Impact Development |
| LOS | Level of Service |
| MBTA | Migratory Bird Treaty Act |
| mgd | Million gallons per day |
| MLD | Most Likely Descendant |
| MM | Mitigation measure |
| MOU | Memorandum of understanding |
| mph | Miles per hour |
| MPO | Metropolitan Planning Organizations |
| MSHCP | Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan |
| NAGPRA | Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act |
| NAHC | Native American Heritage Commission |
| NCCP | Natural Community Conservation Plan |
| NFIP | National Flood Insurance Program |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| NMFS | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NOI | Notice of Intent |
| NOP | Notice of Preparation |
| NPDES | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System |
| NPPA | Native Plant Protection Act |
| NRCS | Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| NPS | National Park Service |

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|---|---|
| NRHP | National Register of Historic Places |
| NSPS | New Source Performance Standards |
| OHP | State Office of Historic Preservation |
| OHWM | Ordinary high water mark |
| OPR | Office of Planning and Research |
| PAHs | Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons |
| PCD | Polychlorinated biphenyls |
| PRC | Public Resources Code |
| RCTC | Riverside County Transportation Commission |
| RTP | Regional Transportation Plan |
| RTPAs | Regional Transportation Planning Agencies |
| RWMP | Regional Water Management Plan |
| RWQCB | Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| SAFZ | San Andreas Fault Zone |
| SB | Senate Bill |
| SCAG | Southern California Association of Governments |
| SCCWRP | Southern California Coastal Water Resource Project |
| SCS | Sustainable Communities Strategy |
| SHPO | State Historic Preservation Officer |
| SHMA | Seismic Hazards Mapping Act |
| SHZP | Seismic Hazard Zonation Program |
| SR- | State Route |
| SSO | Sanitary Sewer Overflows |
| SWPPP | Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan |
| SWRCB | State Water Resources Control Board |
| TDM | Transportation Demand Management |
| TDS | Total dissolved solids |
| TMDL | Total Maximum Daily Loads |
| TPH | Total petroleum hydrocarbons |
| UBC | Uniform Building Code |
| USACE | United States Army Corps of Engineers |
| USBR | United State Bureau of Reclamation |
| USC | United State Code |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| U.S. EPA | United States Environmental Protection Agency |
| USFS | United States Forest Service |
| USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service |
| USGS | United States Geological Survey |

| | |
|---|---|
| V/C | Volume-to-Capacity ratio |
| WDRs | Waste Discharge Requirements |
| WQMP | Water Quality Management Plan |