

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM**

This form and the descriptive information in the application package constitute the contents of Initial Study pursuant to County Guidelines under Ordinance 3040 and Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT LABEL:

APNs:	0599-191-49	USGS Quad:	USGS 7.5' Joshua Tree North.
Applicant:	JT304 LLC 18340 Ventura Blvd., Suite 218 Tarzana, CA 91356	T, R, Section:	Township 1 North, Range 6 East, a portion of the Eastern ½ of Section 11, S.B.B.&M.
Location	0 Aberdeen Drive, Yucca Valley CA, within the Joshua Tree Area.	Thomas Bros	
Project No:	PROJ-2022-00194	Community Plan:	Countywide Plan Designation Rural Living (RL)
Rep		LUZD:	Rural Living (RL)
Proposal:	A tentative tract map (20584) to subdivide one parcel into 23 parcels ranging from 5 acres to 58.4 acres in size on a parcel totaling 304 acres.	Overlays:	n/a

PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lead agency: County of San Bernardino
Land Use Services Department
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

Contact person: Luis Rodriguez, Planner
Phone No: (909) 387-4106 **Fax No:** (909) 387-3223
E-mail: Luis.Rodriguez@lus.sbcounty.gov

Project Sponsor JT304LLC
18340 Ventura Blvd Suite 218
Tarzana CA, 91356
jt304llc@gmail.com

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Summary

The Project site, comprised of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 0599-191-49, is 304±-acres and configured in a roughly rectangular shape. The Project proposes the subdivision of the subject site into 23 parcels. The parcels are intended for individual sale and development as single-family residential properties. The proposed parcels range from 5 acres to 58.4 acres in size. The proposed tentative tract map (No. 20584) could, at maximum density, be built out to 23 single-family detached units.

Project Site Location, Existing Site Land Uses and Conditions

The Project site is in the community of Joshua Tree, within unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. The site is located on the south side of Aberdeen Drive, between Outpost Road and Avenida Del Sol.

Elevations on the property range from approximately 3,070 feet at the southwestern corner to 2,940 feet at the northeastern corner. The terrain varies from flat in the northern half to hilly on the southern half. A wide wash extends roughly east-west in the southern third of the site. Mountainous areas occur in the southwestern corner which are part of the Bartlett Mountains. Existing vegetation on the site includes beavertail cactus, cholla cactus, cotton cactus, desert trumpet, creosote, ephedra, yucca, and Joshua Trees.

As shown in Exhibit 1, the site is designated under the Countywide Plan for Rural Living (RL) and zoned for Rural Living (RL). The subject site is currently vacant and undeveloped. There is some evidence of previous disturbance on the site, including dirt roads and illegally dumped trash.

The subject site will be provided with domestic water from the Joshua Basin Water District. Wastewater will be managed via on-site septic tanks. Southern California Edison will provide electricity. Frontier Communications and Spectrum will provide telecommunications and cable.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

Existing Land Use and Land Use Zoning Districts		
Location	Existing Land Use	Land Use Zoning District
Project Site	Vacant and undeveloped.	Rural Living (RL)
North	Aberdeen Drive, then single family dwellings and vacant lots.	Rural Living (RL)
South	Slope and dry wash, water reservoirs, then single family dwellings, vacant lots, and a rocky slope.	Rural Living (RL) to the southeast, Resource Conservation (RC) to the southwest.
East	Avenida Del Sol, then single family dwellings and vacant lots.	Rural Living (RL)
West	Outpost Road, then vacant, undeveloped land and one single family dwelling at the northwestern corner.	Rural Living (RL)

ADDITIONAL APPROVAL REQUIRED BY OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

Federal: None.

State of California: None.

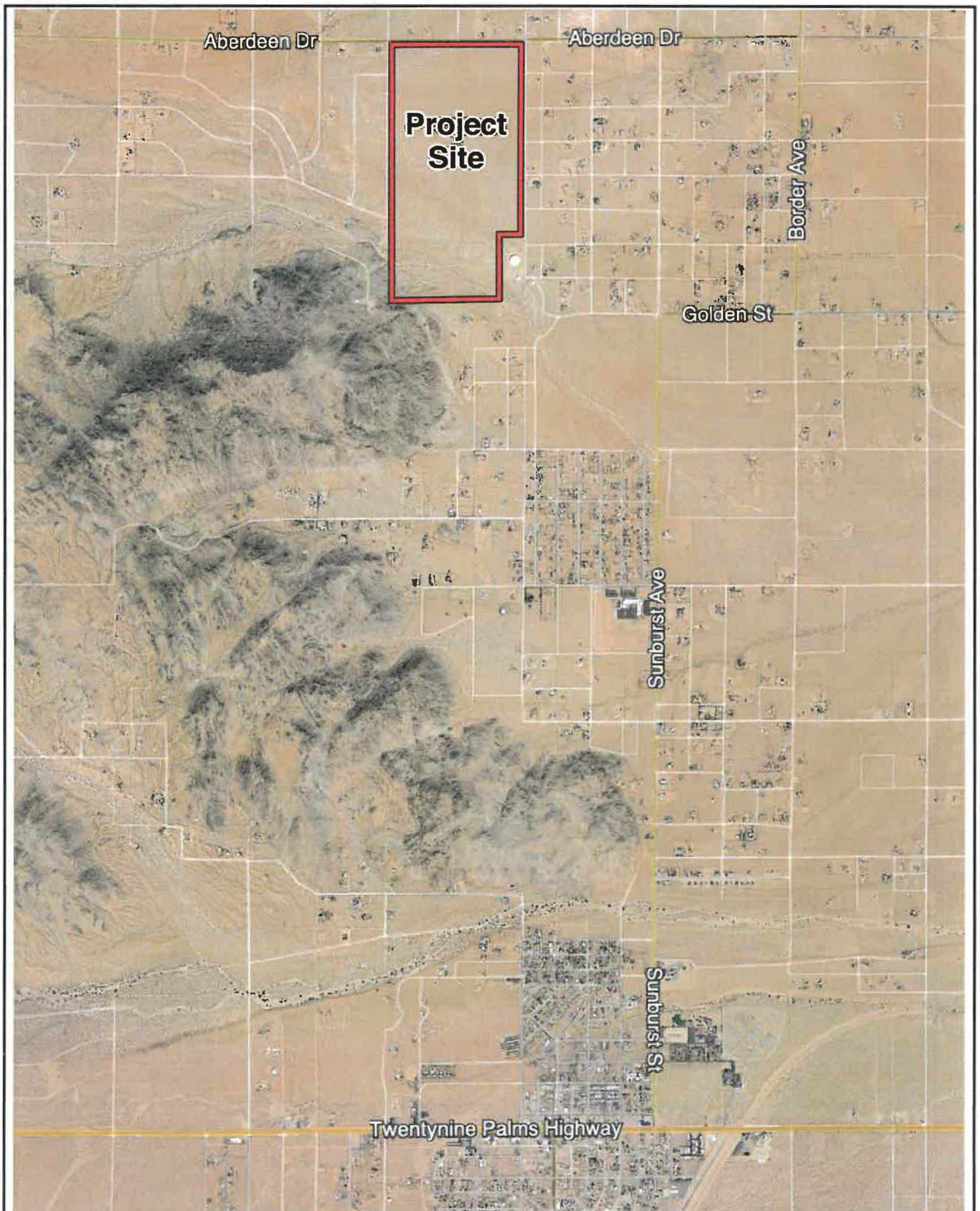
County of San Bernardino: Land Use Services Department-Building and Safety, Public Health-Environmental Health Services, Special Districts, and Public Works.

Regional: Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (dust control)

Local: None

Source: County of San Bernardino Land Use Plan, October, 2020





Source: Google Earth, 03.24.2023

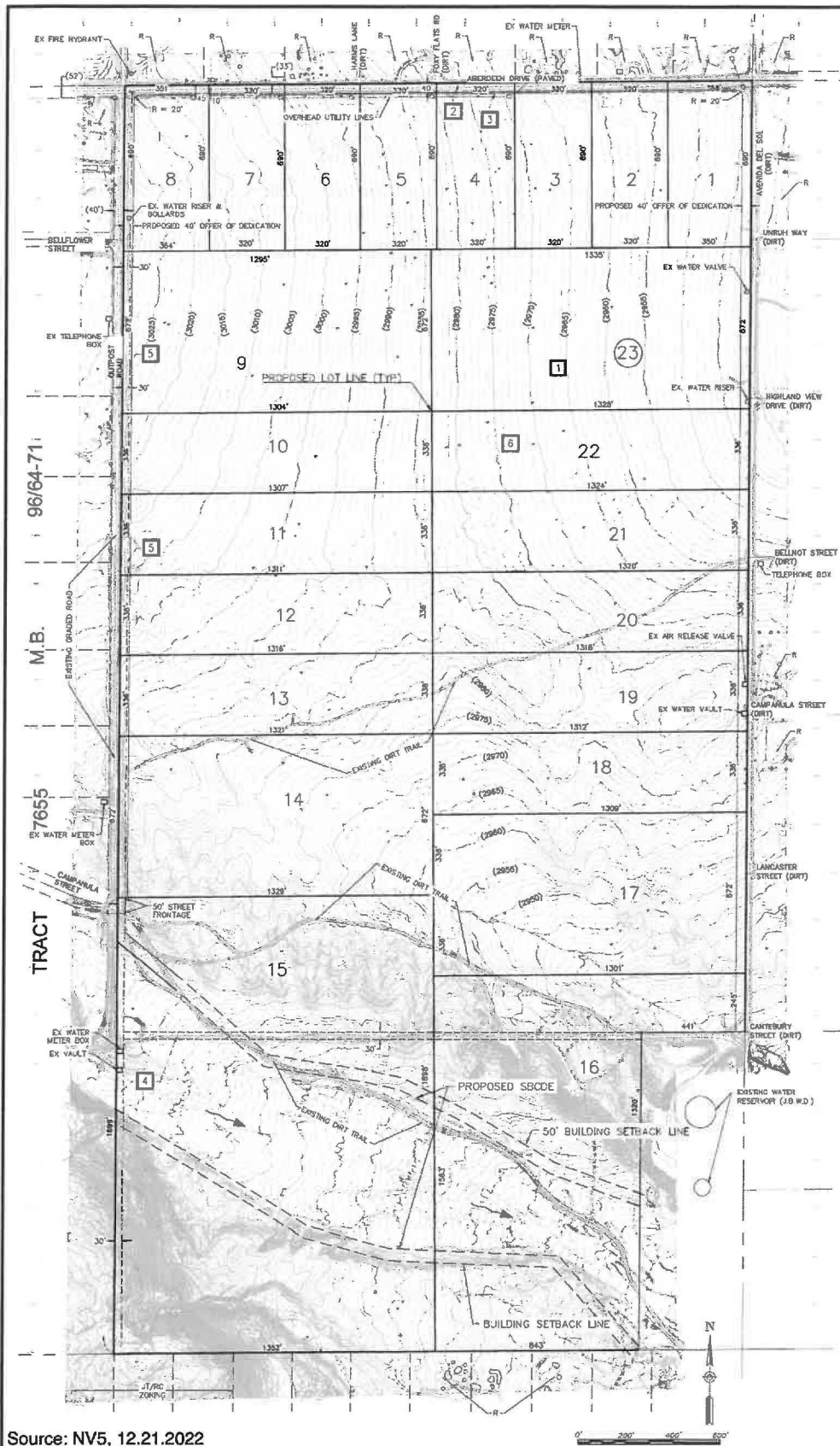
03.24.23



**Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
Project Vicinity Map
Joshua Tree, California**

Exhibit

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APPLICANT AND OWNER:

JT324 LLC
18340 VENTURA BLVD SUITE 218
TARTAGLIA, CA 91358
(619) 521-5500

NOTES:

1. GRADING ON LOTS IS NOT PROPOSED WITH SUBDIVISION.
2. NUMBER OF SUBDIVISION PHASES PROPOSED: ONE
3. THE SUBDIVIDER OWNS NOW CONTIGUOUS LAND
4. CURRENT ZONING DESIGNATION OF ALL SURROUNDING LAND: JT/RL EXCEPT WHERE NOTED HEREIN
5. ALL ADJACENT LOTS ARE VACANT EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN WITH "R"
6. ALL BUILDING SETBACK LINES ON PROPOSED LOTS SHALL COMPLY WITH THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CODE WHICH IS IN EFFECT ON DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS.

NUMBER OF PROPOSED LOTS: 23

AVERAGE LOT SIZE: 13.3 ACRES (GROSS)

MINIMUM LOT SIZE: 5.1 ACRES (GROSS)

EXISTING AND PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: JT/RL

EXISTING LAND USE: VACANT

PROPOSED LAND USE: 23 LOTS FOR RESIDENTIAL SALE ONLY

TOTAL GROSS AREA: APPROX. 306 ACRES (13,330,000 S.F.)

TOTAL NET AREA: APPROX. 304 ACRES (13,240,000 S.F.)

GROSS AREA OF LOTS

LOT NO.	SQ. FT.	ACRES
1	244,000	5.61
2	221,000	5.10
3	221,000	5.10
4	221,000	5.10
5	221,000	5.10
6	221,000	5.10
7	221,000	5.10
8	245,000	5.65
9	873,000	20.19
10	439,000	10.10
11	443,000	10.1
12	441,000	10.1
13	441,000	10.1
14	890,000	20.4
15	2,544,000	58.4
16	1,442,000	33.1
17	878,000	20.1
18	441,000	10.1
19	441,000	10.1
20	441,000	10.1
21	441,000	10.1
22	441,000	10.1
23	894,000	20.5

UTILITY PURVEYORS

WATER	JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT (JB WD) JOSHUA TREE, CALIFORNIA 92352 ATTENTION: JESSE PHONE: (760)365-8430
TELEPHONE	FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS 295 N. SUNRISE WAY PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262 PHONE: (760)778-3663
ELECTRICITY	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Edison 0889 502 N. WILSON SPRINGS ROAD YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 92384 PHONE: (760)369-5446
NATURAL GAS	THE GAS COMPANY 7320 PROMETHEAN ROAD YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 92384 PHONE: (760)328-0908
TV CABLE	SPECTRUM 63-425 AVENUE 45 MESA, CA 93201 PHONE: (760)774-5439
REFUSE DISPOSAL	BURDET 4878 NEWTON ROAD YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 92384 PHONE: (760)365-2015

LEGEND

- PROPOSED LOT LINE
- BUILDING SETBACK LINE
- EXISTING UTILITY POLE
- EXISTING LOT LINE
- EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY
- B.S.L. BUILDING SETBACK LINE
- S.B.C.D.E. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY GRAFIAZEE EASEMENT
- (-) EXISTING DIRECTION
- DIRECTION OF WATER FLOW OR DOWNWARD ORIGINITY
- EXISTING RESIDENCE
- EASEMENT NOTE NUMBER
- JOSHUA TREE

EASEMENT NOTES

1. UTILITY EASEMENT RESERVATION PER BOOK 2523, PAGE 209 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS, AFFECTS THE ENTIRETY OF THE SUBJECT PARCEL. (TITLE REPORT EXCEPTION NUMBER 1)
2. AN EASEMENT FOR HIGHWAY AND ROAD PURPOSES TO THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO PER BOOK 6810, PAGE 857 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS. (TITLE REPORT EXCEPTION NUMBER 2)
3. AN EASEMENT TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Edison COMPANY, A CORPORATION FOR POLE LINES AND CONDUITS PER BOOK 6828, PAGE 726 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS. (TITLE REPORT EXCEPTION NUMBER 3)
4. AN EASEMENT TO JOSHUA BASIN COUNTY WATER DISTRICT FOR ABOVE GROUND OR UNDERGROUND CONDUITS OR BOTH PER BOOK 6815, PAGE 1300 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS (TITLE REPORT ITEM NUMBER 4)
5. AN EASEMENT TO JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT FOR ABOVE OR UNDERGROUND CONDUITS OR BOTH PER INSTRUMENT NO. 90-411181 (TITLE REPORT ITEM NUMBER 5)
6. RESERVATIONS, EXCEPTIONS AND PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE PATENT FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND IN THE ACTS AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF PER INSTRUMENT NUMBER 2005-0145016 (TITLE REPORT ITEM NO. 6) AFFECTS THE ENTIRETY OF THE SUBJECT PARCEL.

NOTE:
NO EXISTING WELLS WERE OBSERVED ON SITE OR OF THE SURROUNDING PROPERTIES DURING OUR FIELD INVESTIGATION

03.24.23

CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21083.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

EVALUATION FORMAT

This Initial Study is prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq. and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000, et seq.). Specifically, the preparation of an Initial Study is guided by Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines. This format of the study is presented as follows. The project is evaluated based on its effect on 20 major categories of environmental factors. Each factor is reviewed by responding to a series of questions regarding the impact of the project on each element of the overall factor. The Initial Study checklist provides a formatted analysis that provides a determination of the effect of the project on the factor and its elements. The effect of the project is categorized into one of the following four categories of possible determinations:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
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Substantiation is then provided to justify each determination. One of the four following conclusions is then provided as a summary of the analysis for each of the major environmental factors.

1. **No Impact:** No impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.
2. **Less than Significant Impact:** No significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.
3. **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** Possible significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated and the following mitigation measures are required as a condition of project approval to reduce these impacts to a level below significant. The required mitigation measures are: (List of mitigation measures)
4. **Potentially Significant Impact:** Significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to evaluate these impacts, which are (List of the impacts requiring analysis within the EIR).

At the end of the analysis the required mitigation measures are restated and categorized as being either self- monitoring or as requiring a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below will be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

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DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the following finding is made:

<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION shall be prepared.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there shall not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION shall be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Prepared by Luis Rodriguez, Planner


Date


Approved by Christina Taylor, Supervising Planner


Date

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located within the view-shed of any Scenic Route listed in the General Plan):

Countywide Plan; Countywide Plan Draft PEIR; Submitted Project Materials

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located in the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, within the East Desert Region of San Bernardino County. The East Desert Region, much of which is covered by the Mojave Desert, is characterized by lower mountain ranges surrounded by desert plains and expansive vistas as a result.

The 304-acre site is zoned and designated for Rural Living, consistent with the surrounding lands to the north, east and west. The proposed Project would result in the development of up to 23 single family houses on lots ranging from approximately 5 to 58 acres. This very low-density residential development would be consistent with the existing character of the scattered residential buildings present in the surrounding area.

The area around the subject site lies in a desert plain with intermittent mountainous areas. Scenic vistas are present in all directions, characterized by expansive skies and ridge lines visible at varying proximities. As a result of the very low density of development in the area, there are few impediments to these vistas.

The subject site is bounded by Aberdeen Drive to the north, Avenida Del Sol to the east, Outpost Road to the west, and a dry wash followed by the Bartlett Mountains to the south. Currently, views to the south from Aberdeen Drive include the Bartlett Mountains as well as the more distant mountainous landscape of Joshua Tree National Park. While the exact configuration of houses on the proposed lots is not known, the very low density of the development means that these southward views would, at worst, only be marginally obstructed by the development. Views to the west from Avenida Del Sol include the Bartlett Mountains in the middle ground, the San Bernardino Mountains in the distance. Views to the east from Outpost Road include the distant mountainous terrain of Joshua Tree National Park. These vistas may be partially obstructed in places by the proposed development, but the very low density suggests that multiple unobstructed view corridors would remain. Views to the north look out towards a vast expanse of desert plain. The proposed Project would not impact this view from the Bartlett Mountains south of the site due to their higher elevation.

Overall, the proposed low density residential development would be similar to the character of the existing scattered houses in the area. The large lot residential properties would leave substantial sections of land undeveloped, resulting in ample space for view corridors towards scenic vistas in all directions. The Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

Highway 62/Twenty-nine Palms Highway is the main highway in the Joshua Tree area. The highway is classified by the State as an "Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated", and by the County as a County Designated Scenic Route. Highway 62 is located approximately 3.3 miles south of the subject site, and therefore would not be impacted by the proposed Project.

The Project site is bound by Aberdeen Drive, Avenida Del Sol, and Outpost Road, none of which are State or County designated scenic routes. Scenic resources on or near the site include Joshua Trees and the Bartlett Mountains. Joshua trees may not be removed from the site except under a permit issued by the County, as provided in Chapter 88 of the San Bernardino County Development Code, Desert Native Plant Protection. Given the size of the lots, and their ultimate use as single family residences, it is unlikely that Joshua trees would be impacted by the Project, since they can be avoided for a single family residence's footprint.

The edge of the Bartlett Mountains occurs on the southernmost edge on the subject site, on the rear boundary of the proposed 58.5-acre lot. Given the ample space on this property, and that the mountainous topography of the southwestern corner of the lot would not be suitable terrain for development, the Bartlett Mountains would not be damaged by the proposed Project.

Given that the scenic resources on the subject site, including Joshua Trees and the Bartlett Mountains, would not be substantially damaged by the proposed Project, and that the subject site is not located in proximity to a state scenic highway, impacts will be less than significant.

- c) *In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project proposes the subdivision of the approximately 304-acre site into 23 residential lots zoned and designated for Rural Living (RL). As discussed under significance question a), the development of very low-density single-family residences on lots ranging from 5-acres to 58-acres would result in substantial open space between buildings. This open space would allow ample space for public view corridors of the natural surroundings.

Development of the lots will be consistent with the Rural Living development standards, including compliance with allowable uses, maximum density, minimum setbacks, maximum lot coverage, and height limits. This will ensure that the Project maintains the visual character of the area, most of which is also zoned for Rural Living and occupied by scattered very low density housing. Furthermore, the proposed residential development will be subject to provisions of the County Development Code pertaining to fences, hedges and walls (Chapter 83.06), glare and outdoor lighting (Chapter 83.07) and landscaping standards (83.10). Compliance with these regulations will ensure that the Project will have less than significant impacts on the visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings.

- d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The area around the subject site is sparsely developed with residential properties. The existing sources of light and glare in the area are associated with these residential buildings, as well as headlights from passing vehicles on Aberdeen Drive and surrounding residential streets. The Project site is currently vacant and has no existing light sources.

Buildout of up to 23 single family residences on the site can be expected to marginally increase the levels of light in the area from interior and exterior buildings lighting, landscape lighting, and vehicles accessing the site. The Project would not require the use of high intensity outdoor lighting, and any outdoor lighting used on-site would be subject to Chapter 83.07 (Glare and Outdoor Lighting) of the County Development Code. Furthermore, compliance with the energy conservation requirements for new

residential buildings pursuant to the California Building Code (Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations) reduces the energy usage associated with outdoor lighting, and therefore the amount of outdoor lighting itself.

The Project could also result in additional glare from building windows. However, given that only 23 very low density residences are proposed, the Project would contribute to only a marginal increase in glare in the area. Overall, the lighting and glare levels produced by the Project would not exceed typical levels associated with the surrounding residential properties. Impacts will be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES - In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located in the Important Farmlands Overlay):

Countywide Plan; California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; Countywide Plan Natural Resources Agricultural Resource Map; Submitted Project Materials

- 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?*

No Impact.

The subject site is vacant and undeveloped, and is not in use for agriculture. The cultural resources survey conducted for the Project found that the subject site has remained unsettled, undeveloped, and largely unused throughout the historic period. According to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program interactive map, there is no Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Important, Unique Farmland, or farmland under other categories on the Project site or in its vicinity. Likewise, the Agricultural Resources map provided in the Natural Resources Element of the Countywide Plan shows no significant farmland resources in the Joshua Tree area.

The Project would therefore not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland). There would be no impacts.

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

No Impact.

The Project site is not under a Williamson Act contract. The site is zoned for Rural Living (RL), which permits low density residential uses as well as some agricultural uses. The proposed residential lots will not conflict with this existing zoning. There will be no impacts.

- 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))?*

No Impact.

The subject site is zoned for Rural Living (RL), and is not zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland production. The adjacent land to the southwest of the site and zoned for Resource Conservation is occupied by the Bartlett Mountains, which are rocky slopes and do not include forest or timber land. Development of the site would not conflict with existing zoning, and would not cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland production. There would be no impact.

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

No Impact.

The Project site is comprised of undeveloped desert land and is primarily vegetated by Mojavean creosote bush scrub. Vegetation in the area includes beavertail cactus, cholla cactus, cotton cactus, desert trumpet, creosote, ephedra, yucca, Joshua trees, and small grasses and brush. There is no forest land on the subject site or in the vicinity. Development of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. There would be no impact.

- 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?*

No Impact.

As stated above, no Farmland or forest land occurs on the Project site or in its vicinity. The proposed Project would therefore not result in any 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.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
III. AIR QUALITY - Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district might be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:					
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: *(Discuss conformity with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management Plan, if applicable):*

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0.; 1995 Mojave Desert Planning Area Federal Particulate Matter Attainment Plan; MDAQMD 2004 State and Federal Ozone Attainment Plan; MDAQMD Rule Book; MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines.

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

No Impact.

The Project is located within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), which is governed by the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). MDAQMD is responsible for monitoring criteria air pollutant concentrations within the MDAB and establishing management policies to ensure compliance with state and federal air quality standards.

In response to designations of non-attainment for multiple air pollutants in the MDAB, the MDAQMD adopted ozone and particulate matter plans. The Mojave Desert Planning Area Federal Particulate Matter Attainment Plan was adopted in 1995 in order to bring the Mojave Desert non-attainment area into attainment for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The MDAQMD adopted the State and Federal Ozone Attainment Plan in 2004 in an effort to bring the MDAB in attainment for the NAAQS for ozone. The MDAQMD also has adopted rules and regulations to improve and maintain air quality in the district, including permitting requirements and performance standards.

According to the MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines, a project is considered non-conforming if it conflicts with or may delay the implementation of any applicable attainment or maintenance plan. According to the Guidelines, a project is considered conforming if it “complies with all proposed control measures that are not yet adopted from the applicable plan(s) and is consistent with the growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s)”. Consistency with growth forecasts can also be demonstrated by a project’s conformity with the land use plan that was used to generate the growth forecast.

The Project site is designated and zoned for Rural Living (RL), which permits residential densities of up to 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres. The Project proposes 23 lots on the 304-acre site, with lot sizes ranging from 5 acres to 58 acres. One dwelling unit per lot, as proposed, would result in densities far below the maximum permitted for the RL zone, as defined in the County’s Development Code. The Project could thus result in the addition of 23 households or approximately 54 people to the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree.¹ Given that the Project is consistent with the County’s Land Use Plan, it can be assumed to be consistent with the growth forecasts used in the MDAQMD’s plans.

Furthermore, the proposed Project will comply with the MDAQMD’s attainment plans and all applicable rules and regulations. Pursuant to Rule 201, construction of any of the proposed subdivided lots requires a permit from the Air Pollution Control Office prior to any construction activities, and Rule XIII, which requires preconstruction review of all new facilities to ensure they do not interfere with the attainment and maintenance of ambient air quality standards. Development of the proposed subdivision would also be required to implement fugitive dust control measures (Rule 403) and use low VOC content architectural coatings (Rule 1113). Compliance with these measures will ensure that the Project and resulting development does not conflict with applicable air quality plans.

The Project conforms with a land use plan used in MDAQMD’s growth forecasts, and the proposed development resulting from the Project would be subject to all applicable plans and rules provided by the MDAQMD. It can therefore be concluded that the Project would not 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project is expected to result in the emission of criteria air pollutants during the eventual construction and operation of the residential lots. These emissions were projected using California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4 (Appendix A). The analysis was performed assuming a start date of 2024, because the Project was expected to initiate construction at that time. Since the CalEEMod modeling assumes every-improving technologies as time passes, although the Project will not begin construction in 2024, the emissions calculated are therefore conservative, and actual emissions are likely to be lower.

¹ Based on the average household size in Joshua Tree of 2.31 people per household, according to the Community Action Guide.

Construction Emissions

The Project proposes the subdivision of the approximately 304-acre property into 23 lots. The sale and subsequent development of these lots would be as individual residential properties, and construction of each lot would occur independently. It is therefore not known over what timeframe construction of the individual properties would occur, but it is expected that the eventual construction of all 23 lots would likely be staggered over a long period. However, for analysis purposes, construction emissions were calculated in CalEEMod assuming, conservatively, that all 23 lots would be developed over a 5-year period. Construction-related criteria pollutant emissions will be temporary and will end once construction is complete.

The 23 proposed lots would range in size from approximately 5 acres to 58 acres. Given the scale of each lot and that each property would be developed into a single-family residence, it is assumed that only 2-acres of each parcel would be disturbed during construction. It is also assumed that any grading required during construction would be balanced on-site. Based on these assumptions, Table 1 provides the estimated emissions resulting from construction of the Project.

Table 1						
Maximum Daily Construction-Related Emissions Summary (pounds per day)						
Construction Emissions	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO_x	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Daily Maximum	47.40	59.65	6.04	0.10	14.31	7.86
MDAQMD Thresholds	548.00	137.00	137.00	137.00	82.00	65.00
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Source: CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0						

As shown in the above table, criteria emissions resulting from the construction of the proposed 23 residential properties over a 5-year period would not exceed the MDAQMD daily emissions thresholds.

Operational Emissions

Operational emissions are the long term, ongoing emissions over the life of a project. They include area source emissions (such as off-gassing of architectural coatings), energy emissions, mobile source emissions (vehicular emissions), waste emissions, and emissions from water use. Mobile source emissions were calculated based on an average of 217 daily trips, per the ITE daily trip rate for the operation of 23 single family homes. Table 2 shows the daily emissions estimated for the operation of the Project at buildout.

Table 2						
Maximum Daily Operations-Related Emissions Summary (pounds per day)						
Operational Emissions	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO_x	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Daily Maximum	9.57	1.39	2.11	0.02	1.73	0.49
MDAQMD Thresholds	548.00	137.00	137.00	137.00	82.00	65.00
Exceeds?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Source: CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0						

As shown in the above table, operation of the proposed 23 single-family residences would not exceed the MDAQMD daily threshold for operations-related emissions. Given that the

Project would not exceed the MDAQMD thresholds for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous oxides (NO_x), reactive organic gases (ROG), sulfuric oxides (SO_x), or particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) during construction or operations, impacts related to criteria pollutant emissions would be less than significant.

Cumulative Contribution: Non-Attainment Criteria Pollutants

Given the dispersing nature of pollutant emissions and aggregate impacts from nearby jurisdictions, cumulative air quality is evaluated on a regional scale. The Mojave Desert Air Basin is a designated non-attainment region for ozone. Any development resulting in emissions of ozone or ozone precursors such as CO, NO_x or ROG, will, to some extent, contribute to existing regional non-attainment.

The MDAQMD does not currently provide thresholds of significance for the cumulative emissions of multiple projects. A project's potential cumulative contributions can instead be analyzed using the criteria for project-specific impacts, assuming that if an individual development generates less than significant construction and operational emissions, then it would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in non-attainment criteria pollutants.

Tables 1 and 2 show that construction and operation of the Project would result in CO, NO_x and ROG emissions well below the MDAQMD significance threshold and will not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Overall, impacts related to construction and operation of the proposed development will be less than significant and will not be cumulatively considerable.

c) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The MDAQMD considers residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, and medical facilities as sensitive receptor land uses. According to the MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines, projects within a specified distances of a sensitive receptors must be evaluated using significance threshold criteria number 4:

(4) [A project is considered significant if it] exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a Hazard Index (HI) (non-cancerous) greater than or equal to 1.

The threshold distances from sensitive receptors for the provided project types, as specified by the MDAQMD, are as follows:

- Any industrial project within 1000 feet;
- A distribution center (40 or more trucks per day) within 1000 feet;
- A major transportation project (50,000 or more vehicles per day) within 1000 feet;
- A dry cleaner using perchloroethylene within 500 feet;
- A gasoline dispensing facility within 300 feet.

The Project proposes the subdivision of 23 residential properties which, once developed, would be sensitive receptors. Construction of the proposed single-family residences could also generate air contaminants, including from the use of heavy-duty construction equipment. However, emissions from construction would be temporary and, given the small number of houses to be built, can be assumed to be less than significant. Once built out, the proposed single-family homes would not subject neighboring residential properties to substantial pollutant concentrations. As stated above, the Project is projected to generate approximately 217 daily vehicle trips once operational, which is well below the 50,000 daily trip threshold provided by MDAQMD for major transportation projects.

The lands surrounding the subject site are either undeveloped or occupied by residential uses. There are no industrial projects, distribution centers, dry cleaners, or gasoline dispensing facilities within 1,000 feet of the subject property, and therefore pollutants emitted by these land uses would not impact the proposed residential sites. Aberdeen Drive is the most significant transportation route within 1,000 feet of the subject site, and it has an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 1,415 vehicles per day.² There are therefore no major transportation projects (50,000 or more vehicles per day) within 1000 feet of the Project.

Overall, the Project proposes the development of residential properties which are consistent with the surrounding residential land uses. The proposed residential properties would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including both existing residential sites in the Project vicinity and future residents of the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

Some land uses can be sources of odors that, while not necessarily physically harmful, can be a nuisance to the public. Examples of such land uses include agriculture, chemical plants, rail yards, and wastewater treatment plants. The Project proposes the subdivision of the subject site into 23 residential lots which, once developed, may produce some odors from household activities. However, the residential lots would not be expected to produce any objectionable odors long term. Furthermore, given the large size of the proposed lots, ample space would be provided between houses, both on and off-site, for odors to disperse. Likewise, some odors may be generated during construction of the proposed single-family dwellings. However, the generation of these odors would be temporary, and would disperse with space. Overall, impacts from objectionable odors are expected to be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

² San Bernardino Countywide Plan, Transportation Existing Conditions Report (March 2017), Table 3 – San Bernardino County Existing ADT Counts.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Have substantial adverse effects, 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if project is located in the Biological Resources Overlay or contains habitat for any species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database ☒):

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; "Focused Survey for Agassiz's Desert Tortoise, Habitat Evaluation for Burrowing Owl and Joshua Tree, and General Biological Resource Assessment for a 304-acre site in the community of Joshua Tree" prepared by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants, September 2024 (Appendix B).

- a) Have substantial adverse effects, 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?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

A focused survey for Agassiz's desert tortoise, habitat assessment for burrowing owl, and a general biological resource assessment were prepared for the Project by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants, Inc. in 2021, and resurveyed in September 2024. The discussion below reflects the findings of the 2024 survey, which is appended to this Initial Study as Appendix B.

The subject site is located in the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, San Bernardino County. Elevations on the property range from approximately 3,070 feet at the southwestern corner down to 2,940 feet at the northeastern corner. The terrain varies from flat in the northern half to hilly on the southern half, including mountainous areas in the southwestern corner which are part of the Bartlett Mountains. The site contains a range of soil types, from sandy soils in the washes in the southern quarter of the site, to boulder outcrops in the mountainous area.

The surveys and resources assessments identified 83 plant species, and 41 species of fauna on the subject site, including 9 reptile, 24 bird, and 8 mammal species. The uncommon species identified in 2024 on the site included: Agassiz's desert tortoise, LeConte's thrasher, kit fox, western burrowing owl and loggerhead shrike.

Agassiz's desert tortoise

Agassiz's desert tortoise is a special status species, considered threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The following signs of desert tortoise were identified on the subject site during the resurvey in 2024: 13 recent scat of adult tortoises, 7 older scats of adult tortoises, 7 inactive burrows of adult tortoises, 5 active adult burrows, including one acre natal burrow containing 2 hatchlings, and 1 tortoise carcass. The biologist estimated that about 5 tortoises reside on the subject site, including the two hatchlings observed during the site survey. The subject site is not located in desert tortoise critical habitat according to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area plan, nor is it within Areas of Critical Environmental Concern or California National Conservation Lands. However, the presence of multiple members of the species results in the potential to significantly impact the species when construction for the homes that will eventually occupy the lots are constructed.

Given the presence of desert tortoise occurring on the subject site, mitigation measures are provided in BIO-1 to ensure that significant impacts to the species do not result from the proposed Project. The measure requires that if a tortoise is found on any lot prior to construction, all activities likely to affect the animal must cease and the County, CDFW

and USFWS must be contacted to determine the appropriate steps. The measure also requires that it be included as a condition with the recordation of the Tract Map, to insure ongoing compliance since the applicant has indicated that custom homes are likely to be constructed individually on the lots in the future. Take of Agassiz's desert tortoises is prohibited without prior authorization from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the USFWS. Compliance with these measures will ensure that impacts to tortoises are less than significant.

Burrowing owl

Burrowing owl is designated as a California Species of Special Concern by CDFW and as a Bird of Conservation Concern by USFWS. The owls have been observed within a 4.5-mile radius of the subject site, but scat was found on the site during the current survey. No sign of the species was found at any of the tortoise burrows, which are often used by owls. The site is generally too densely vegetated to be suitable, for burrowing owls. As such, it was concluded that no borrowing owls were present on the subject site but that it is being visited by a member of the species periodically. Because of the site's vegetation, the likelihood of nesting on the site is low, and impacts are expected to be less than significant, particularly with the implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2 (see nesting bird discussion below).

Nesting birds

Special status birds, including LeConte's thrasher, loggerhead shrike, prairie falcon, Swainson's hawk, Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, and golden eagle, have the potential to occur on the subject property, and thus could be affected by the proposed construction of homes on the site. According to §3503, §3503.5 and §3513 of the California Fish and Game Code, as well as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the take of birds and their active nests, including raptors and other migratory nongame birds, is prohibited.

To ensure that development of the proposed Project does not result in the take of nesting birds, mitigation is provided in BIO-2. If vegetation will be removed from the site, or if other ground disturbing activities will occur during the breeding season (March 15 to September 15), then a pre-construction survey must be conducted. All shrubs and structures within the Project site would need to be surveyed for nesting birds no more than three days prior to construction and or site preparation. If an active bird nest is identified, then the plant on which it occurs must be left in place until the birds leave the nest. No construction is permitted to occur near active bird nests of threatened or endangered species.

Golden eagles are also protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), which prohibits the take and disturbance of golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. Such actions are prohibited without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior. No golden eagle were identified on the Project site. Potential nesting golden eagles will be protected by the mitigation measure provided in BIO-2.

Kit fox

Kit fox, which are a protected species under the California Fish and Game Code, were not observed, and no sign was found during the 2024 survey. Although scat was identified in the 2021, it is believed that this observation was either incorrect, or that the species was a transient through the property. As a result, the biologist found that there would be no impact to the species from development of the Project.

Protected plant species

Desert native plants are protected by §88.01.060 of the San Bernardino County Development code and §80073 of Division 23 of the California Food and Agricultural Code. The following plant species, which occur on one or both of these lists, were observed on the subject site: Joshua tree, Mohave yucca, catclaw acacia, silver cholla, hedgehog cactus, cottontop cactus, beavertail cactus, and larger creosote bush rings.

The habitat evaluation and survey conducted for the Project included the recording of 179 Joshua trees and 11 larger creosote rings on the subject site. Additional information, including the number of trunks, height, and general health assessments, was collected for each Joshua tree. The mapped Joshua trees and larger creosote rings, as well as tabulated information about the Joshua trees, is available in the biological resources report in Appendix B. The Joshua tree is now protected under State law. No removal of the species, whether for destruction or transplantation, can occur without an Incidental Take Permit from CDFW. Mitigation measure BIO-3 is provided below to assure that the species are not significantly impacted by future home construction.

In addition, if any of the above listed species must be removed or harvested during Project site preparation and/or construction, the provisions of the County's requirements must apply, as provided in BIO-3. The measure requires that a Tree or Plant Removal Permit be obtained from the County in accordance with §88.01050 of the Development Code.

Summary

Protected species of plants, birds, tortoise, and other wildlife were identified on the subject site. Implementation of the mitigation measures provided below will be required to ensure that impacts to special status species are less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

Desert Tortoise. If an Agassiz's desert tortoise is found onsite prior to the initiation of or during construction on any lot, all activities likely to affect that animal(s) must cease and the County, CDFW and USFWS must be contacted to determine appropriate steps. No take of the tortoise(s) may occur without prior authorization from the appropriate regulatory agencies, including CDFW and USFWS. The County shall also impose this requirement on the recordation of the map, to assure ongoing compliance.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2:

Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys. In order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, CDWF recommends that certain construction activities not occur during the March 15 and September 15 nesting seasons. Specifically, vegetation should not be removed from the Project site and ground disturbing activities should not be conducted during this period if avoidable. If it is necessary to commence construction on any lot during this period, a qualified biologist must conduct a survey prior to construction and site preparation to survey all shrubs and structures within the Project site for nesting birds.

The surveys should be conducted during the appropriate time of day during the breeding season and must end no more than three days prior to ground disturbing activities. Documentation of surveys and findings should be submitted to the CDFW within ten days of the last survey. If no nesting birds were observed, then site preparation and/or construction may begin. If an active bird nest is located, the plant in which it occurs

should be left in place until the birds leave the nest. No construction is allowed near active bird nests of threatened or endangered species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3:

Desert Native Plants. In compliance with §88.01.050 of the County Development Code, a Desert Native Plant Assessment may be required, and a Tree or Plant Removal Permit must be authorized by the County before any protected desert native plant species can be harvested or removed from the Project site. Protected desert native plants are defined by the County and by §80073 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, Division 23.

Furthermore, consistent with State law, an Incidental Take Permit shall be secured for every Joshua tree proposed for destruction or relocation for any of the improvements or lot construction on the Project site prior to any disturbance of the species.

Monitoring BIO-A:

The applicant and/or individual lot owners shall provide the County with results of pre-construction nesting bird surveys, Incidental Take Permits and native plant Tree or Plant Removal Permit prior to any land disturbance on the Project site. In addition, documentation of pre-construction nesting bird surveys and findings must be submitted to the CDFW within ten days of completion.

Responsible parties: Project biologist, County Planning, California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and 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?*

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Several washes run through the southern quarter of the property, from northwest to southeast. These washes are identified by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants as USGS-designated blueline streams. This designation includes water in natural flowing channels, creeks, streams, or other flowing water features, perennial or ephemeral. Washes, like those on the subject site can provide important habitat for both plants and animals, including desert tortoises. Significant stands of catclaw acacia were identified along these washes. There are no waters of the US in Joshua Tree.

The washes are located in the two largest of the parcels proposed in the TTM. Parcels 15 and 16 are 58.4 acres and 33.1 acres, respectively. The Project proposes future residential development at a density of one dwelling unit per parcel, and thus development of parcels 15 and 16 would not necessitate the disturbance of the entire parcel. Given that the areas occupied by the washes are likely not suitable for building due to the terrain, development of the parcels could potentially occur without impacting the washes. However, if development is proposed for the area on or around the washes, then the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water

Quality Control Board (RWQCB) must be consulted. As described in BIO-4, if CDFW determines that the activity may substantially affect fish and wildlife resources, then a Streambed Alteration Agreement will be required. The Agreement will include measures to protect those resources and comply with CEQA. Additionally, if the RWQCB determines that the washes are under its jurisdiction and would potentially be significantly impacted by the proposed development, then measure BIO-5 will be implemented, which requires the proponent to obtain CWA 401 Certification. Compliance with these measures will ensure that the Project will not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or on state or federally protected wetlands.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4:

CDFW Streambed Alteration Agreement. If development is proposed for the area on or around the washes on lots 15 or 16, then the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) must be consulted. If CDFW determines that the activity may substantially affect fish and wildlife resources, then a Streambed Alteration Agreement will be property. The Agreement will include measures to protect those resources and provide mitigation, consistent with the terms to be negotiated with the Department, to assure that impacts are reduced to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5:

RWQCB CWA 401 Certification. If development is proposed for the area on or around the washes on lots 15 and 16, then the RWQCB must be consulted. If the RWQCB determines that the washes are under its jurisdiction and could be significantly impacted by the proposed development then the proponent will be required to obtain CWA 401 Certification prior to ground disturbance.

Monitoring BIO-B:

Documentation of CWA Certification and/or 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreements must be submitted to the County prior to any disturbance of wash areas on Lots 15 or 16.

Responsible parties: Project applicant, RWQCB, CDFW, County Planning Department.

- 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.

The subject site may be in use as a movement corridor for wildlife. In particular, the washes in the southern quarter of the site may provide taller and denser vegetation, thereby potentially providing cover for medium and larger animals to use the washes as a travel corridor. The washes may also serve as a movement corridor for desert tortoises. As discussed above, the washes occur on two large lots which may not necessitate the disturbance of the entire site, and particularly the area on which the washes are situated, for residential development. Additionally, given the low intensity of

development proposed for the subject site, corridors will remain for wildlife movement after building construction. The Project is not expected to interfere substantially with the movement of wildlife. Should these washes be disturbed for home construction, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5 would apply, thereby reducing impacts to less than significant levels. Any impacts to established wildlife corridors would be incremental, and impacts would be less than significant.

No fish occur on the subject site, and therefore there would be no impacts to migratory fish. Potential impacts to migratory bird nursery sites are addressed above under significance question a), and mitigated by BIO-2.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

As discussed under significance question a), a Desert Native Plant Assessment may be required, and a Tree or Plant Removal Permit must be authorized by the County before any protected desert native plant species can be harvested or removed from the subject site, pursuant to §88.01.050 of the County Development Code. Protected desert native plants are defined by the county and by §80073 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, Division 23.

Compliance with these measures, as provided in BIO-4, will ensure that the Project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

- 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?*

No Impact.

The Project site is not located in an area subject to an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. There will be no impacts.

Therefore, with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts to biological resources will be less than significant.

Issues		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Disturb any human remains, including those outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if the project is located in the Cultural ☐ or Palaeontologic ☐ Resources overlays or cite results of cultural resource review):

Countywide Plan; South Central Coast Information Center, California State University, Fullerton; "Historical Archaeological Resources Survey Report, APN 0599-191-49" prepared by CRM TECH, June 2022; Submitted Project Materials

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

A Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report was prepared for the Project by CRM TECH in June 2022 (Appendix C). The historical/archaeological survey included a records search, Native American input, historical background research, and a field survey.

Records Search

The records search was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) located on the campus of the California State University, Fullerton. The SCCIC is the official records repository for the County. Three linear surveys have previously been completed across portions of the Project area, but the site as a whole had not previously been surveyed for cultural resources. The records search found no cultural resources recorded within the half-mile search scope.

Native American Input

The State of California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) conducted a search of the Sacred Lands File on behalf of CRM TECH. The search identified no Native American cultural resources within the Project vicinity.

CRM TECH contacted four local tribes for further information: the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

The Twentynine Palms Band provided no additional information about the site, but provided a representative to participate in the field survey. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian identified the subject site as part of the tribe's traditional use area, and requested copies of all cultural resource documentation generated for the Project. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians responded that the Project site is not located near any known archaeological sites or Serrano villages known to the tribe. The Morongo Band of Mission Indians had not responded at the time that the cultural resources report was written.

Finally, the County conducted Tribal consultation under the requirements of AB 52. The Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation requested consultation, and further study of the site. Please see Tribal Cultural Resources for analysis of this consultation process.

Historical Background Research

Maps and photographs consulted during the historical background research suggest that the subject site has a relatively low sensitivity for historic-period cultural resources. Resources from the 1850s to 1970s indicate no evidence of settlement or development on the property during this era. The unpaved forerunner of present-day Aberdeen Drive is the earliest human intervention identified in the vicinity, dating back to the early 1950s. Outpost Road and Avenida Del Sol first appeared in the early 1970s alongside scattered buildings in the area. There is no evidence of previous settlement or development of the subject site.

Field Survey

The field survey was conducted by CRM TECH staff and a representative from the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians. Four archaeological sites and 20 isolates were identified during the field survey. Two of the sites and 17 of the isolates are of prehistoric Native American origin, and the other two sites and three isolates are of historic origin and constitute trash scatters. None of the sites or isolates meet the CEQA definition for a "historical resource".

According to Public Resource Code §5020.1(j), "'historical resource' includes, but is not limited to, any object, building, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California." More specifically, CEQA guidelines state that the term "historical resources" applies to any such resources listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, included in a local register

of historical resources, or determined to be historically significant by the Lead Agency (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(1)-(3)).

Regarding the proper criteria of historical significance, CEQA guidelines mandate that "a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be 'historically significant' if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources" (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(3)). A resource may be listed in the California Register if it meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method 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. (PRC §5024.1(c))

By definition, isolates do not qualify as archaeological sites or "historical resources" because they lack dispositional context and therefore the potential to provide information about prehistory or history. Therefore, none of the three historical isolates or seventeen prehistoric isolates qualify as "historical resources" under CEQA. The two historic-era sites lack identifiable association with persons or events of historic significance, and lack the quality or quantity to provide significant archaeological information. The two prehistoric sites identified during the field survey are not distinctive in origin, function, or type, and thus would be unlikely to provide new information about prehistoric Native American lifeways. These sites therefore do not qualify as "historical resources". Any limited data potential from these sites was provided when they were recorded in the inventory.

Conclusion

None of the prehistoric and historic sites and isolates identified on the Project site meet the CEQA definition for "historical resources". The proposed development would therefore not result in any substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5. Likewise, the records search, sacred lands file search, Native American consultation, and historical background research did not identify evidence of any such resources occurring on the subject site.

However, the absence of identified evidence does not necessarily guarantee the absence of potential resources. In the event that buried cultural materials are encountered during Project development, work on the site must stop until the materials can be investigated and handled as appropriate (CUL-1). Based on compliance with this recommendation, impacts to historical or archaeological resources pursuant to §15064.5 will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1:

Discovery of Buried Cultural Materials. In the event that any buried cultural materials are encountered during earth-moving operations associated with the Project, all work within 50 feet of the discovery must be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist and a Tribal monitor can evaluate the nature and significance of the finds.

- c) *Disturb any human remains, including those outside of formal cemeteries?*

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

The Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey conducted for the Project found no evidence of human remains, including those outside of formal cemeteries, on the subject site. However, this lack of evidence does not negate the possibility of human remains occurring on the site. Mitigation measures must be implemented to minimize potential impacts, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §7050.5. Adherence to the State requirements, as provided in CUL-2, will ensure that potential impacts to unanticipated human remains would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2:

Discovery of Human Remains. In the event that human remains are encountered during earth-moving operations associated with the Project, all work within 50 feet of the discovered must be halted, and the County Coroner must be contacted immediately. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, then the Native America Heritage Commissions must be contacted and the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) will be named.

Monitoring CUL-A:

The archaeological monitor shall provide the County with a report of findings within 30 days of completion of earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project archaeologist, Planning Division

Therefore, with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts to cultural resources will be less than significant.

Issues		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
VI. ENERGY – Would the project:					
a)	Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Countywide Plan Draft PEIR; California Emissions Estimator Model 2020.4.0; Submitted Materials

- a), b) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Energy resources would be used by the proposed development on a short-term basis during construction and on a long-term basis for operations.

As discussed in Section III, Air Quality, since the 23 proposed lots would be sold and developed independently, it is not known over what timeframe construction would occur. However, for analysis purposes, construction emissions were calculated in CalEEMod based on an assumed 5-year construction period.

Energy is consumed during construction during the site preparation, grading, building, and paving phases, in order to operate heavy equipment, for the manufacturing and transport of materials, and for the transport of construction workers. The primary energy source for these activities would be petroleum fuels (i.e. gasoline and diesel). Electricity would also be used during construction to power electric equipment, worksite lighting, and temporary worksite offices. The consumption of energy during construction would be temporary and minimal, would end with the completion of construction, and would not be wasteful or inefficient.

During Project operations, energy would be consumed for uses such as indoor and outdoor lighting, HVAC systems, water heating and cooling, and for household activities such as cooking. Table 3 shows the annual electricity and natural gas use estimated for the long-term operation of the 23 proposed residential properties.

Table 3 Project Energy Consumption		
Land Use	Electricity Use (kWh/yr)	Natural Gas Use (kBtu/yr)
Single Family Residential ¹	183,187	650,600
Source: CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0.		
¹ Based on the operation of 23 single-family residences.		

As shown in the above table, it is projected that the proposed development would consume 183,187 kWh (6,252.09 therms) per year of electricity, and 650,600 kBtu (6,507.55 therms) per year of natural gas. The projected electricity consumption for the proposed development would represent 0.0003% of County-wide electricity use in 2016, or 0.0002% of the projected County-wide electricity use for 2040.³ The Project's estimated natural gas use would represent 0.014% of County-wide use in 2016, or 0.012% of County-wide natural gas use projected for 2040.⁴

All residences built on the proposed lots are required to be constructed in accordance with applicable requirements in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, including the Building Code and Energy Code. Compliance with all requirements from the Title 24 codes, which now requires the installation of solar panels on all new buildings and performance standards for water heating and air conditioning, which will ensure that the most efficient building technologies are being used, and that energy use is not wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

Southern California Gas Company will provide natural gas to the Project site, and Southern California Edison will provide electricity. Pursuant to the Renewables Portfolio Standard, electricity providers will be required to procure 60% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, and 100% by 2045. As a result, electricity needs not met by the solar panels required on each house under the Title 24 regulations will increasingly be sourced from renewable sources. Overall, compliance with state requirements will ensure that the proposed residential properties will not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary in their electricity consumption.

As shown above, the estimates of Project energy use would constitute a small fraction of County-wide energy use in 2016 and 2040. Compliance with state regulations, as well as with applicable policies in the Countywide Plan Renewable Energy and Conservation Element, will ensure that operation of the Project will not be wasteful or inefficient in its energy use, nor will it conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

Therefore, no impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

³ County-wide electricity use provided by Southern California Edison in 2016 was 2,390,262,640 therms, and is projected to be 3,363,945,349 therms in 2040. Source: San Bernardino Countywide Plan Draft PEIR Appendix B.

⁴ County-wide natural gas use in 2016 was 45,007,722 therms, and is projected to be 56,292,861 therms in 2040. Source: San Bernardino Countywide Plan Draft PEIR Appendix B.

	Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
VII.	GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:				
a)	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i.	Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map Issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii.	Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii.	Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv.	Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located in the Geologic Hazards Overlay District): **Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; Percolation Investigation for Tentative Tract Map # 20584 prepared by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc., May 2022; MDAQMD Rule Book; Countywide Plan EIR**

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

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

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

No Impact.

According to the California Geologic Survey Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Map, the Pinto Mountain Fault runs east-west through the community of Joshua Tree, just north of Highway 62. This is the nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone to the Project site, which is approximately 2.8 miles north of the fault. Other nearby faults to the Project site include the Copper Mountain Fault, located approximately 4 miles northeast of the subject site, and the Johnson Valley Fault, which is approximately 5.5 miles west of the site. Fault rupture is not expected on the Project site because it does not occur in a fault zone. No impact is anticipated.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact.

While it is not possible to map the exact locations where ground shaking may would occur in the event of an earthquake, Figure 5.6-2 of the Countywide Plan EIR incudes a map from the California Geological Survey indicating where the intensity of ground shaking from earthquakes is expected to be most pronounced. According to this map, Joshua Tree and surrounding communities are likely places to experience moderate to strong ground shaking.

The primary hazard from ground shaking is the potential for building damage. However, this hazard is most acute for older building types, such as those with unreinforced masonry. Compliance with the Title 24 Building Code and use of current standard building and engineering practices greatly reduces the risk of a building collapsing during an earthquake.

Pursuant to the California Building Code, the County requires geotechnical investigations for all development projects. Given that the Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped, all buildings constructed on the site would be designed based on the appropriate seismic design parameters, and would be required to comply with the most up to date Building Code. This standard requirement will ensure that the potential impacts of strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No Impact.

Liquefaction has the potential to occur in areas with relatively loose, sandy soils and high groundwater levels as the result of long durations of ground shaking. According to Figure 5.6-3, Liquefaction and Landslide Susceptibility, in the Countywide Plan EIR, the community of Joshua Tree and surrounding area is not susceptible to liquefaction. Furthermore, exploratory borings to 15 feet, conducted for the Project by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc., found no evidence of shallow groundwater on the site, and historical data shows well levels at 300 to 350 feet below grade in the area. The Project is therefore not expected to cause any adverse effects as a result of seismic-related ground failure or liquefaction. There will be no impact.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact.

According to Figure 5.6-3, Liquefaction and Landslide Susceptibility, in the Countywide Plan EIR, the community of Joshua Tree and surrounding area are not susceptible to landslides. The Project is therefore not expected to cause any adverse effects as a result of landslides. There will be no impact.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

The County's Wind Erosion Hazards map does not have data for the community of Joshua Tree, including the Project site. However, because land surrounding the community to the north and south has a high erodibility rating, the subject site also likely prone to wind erosion. Erosion can occur or be exacerbated by construction and development, resulting from wind and stormwater.

Once the Project is built out, buildings, paved areas, and stabilized landscaped areas will minimize the potential for erosion. However, development of the Project would have the potential to result in the erosion of soils during site preparation, grading, and building construction. Construction activities including the removal of vegetation, grading, excavation, or any other activity that causes the disturbance of one or more acres is subject to a General Construction Permit, which requires the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP must include best management practices (BMPs), including drainage erosion controls, sediment controls, and wind erosion controls. Additionally, development of the residential lots would be subject to MDAQMD Rule 403, which requires the implementation of fugitive dust controls as well as the preparation and implementation of an approved Dust Control Plan. Implementation of the required plans, rules, and BMPs will ensure that the construction of the Project has less than significant impacts related to soil erosion.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

As stated above, the Project site is not susceptible to landslides or liquefaction. According to Figure 2-3 of the Countywide Plan, the Project site is also located in an area with low subsidence potential.

Desert areas of San Bernardino County can be prone to expansive soils due to the aridity of the climate, and the prevalence of alluvial and wind-deposited soils as well as soils with salts. Soil testing conducted for the Project identified the on-site soils as alluvial hill wash.⁵ Prior to the development of individual sites, geotechnical investigations should evaluate the potential for expansive or collapsible soils, per GEO-1. Further mitigation should be applied prior to development if expansive or collapsible soils are present on-site.

Overall, the Project site is not unstable, nor is it prone to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, or liquefaction. Geotechnical investigation should be prepared to determine and respond according if soils prone to expansion or collapse are present on site. Impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1:

Geotechnical investigation. Prior the grading and construction of individual properties, geotechnical investigations should be conducted in order to determine if the soils are prone to expansion or collapse. If these conditions are present, then further mitigation should be implemented prior to completion of final grading to ensure the stability of the site.

Monitoring GEO-A:

The geotechnical investigation reports shall be provided to the County prior to earth-moving activities for each lot as it is proposed for construction.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project engineer, County Land Use Services

- 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

According to the Countywide Plan EIR, much of the desert region has low to moderately expansive soils. Soils containing large amounts of clay, which expands when water is absorbed and shrinks when dry, typically have a high susceptibility to expansion. The soils on the subject site are alluvial hill wash from the nearby mountains, with medium to coarse grains. These soils have a low shrink-swell potential, and therefore the Project is not expected to result in significant impacts due to expansive soil.

⁵ Percolation investigation conducted for the Project by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc., May 2022.

- e) *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?*

No Impact.

The Project proposes that on-site septic systems would be installed on each residential lot upon development. A percolation investigation was conducted for the Project by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc (see Appendix D). The investigation found that the soil conditions on-site are favorable for the future use of on-site septic systems on each of the 23 proposed lots. Soils are of the alluvial hill wash type and are medium to coarse grained. Exploratory borings to 15 feet found no evidence of shallow groundwater, and historical data shows well levels at 300 to 350 feet below grade in the area. Based on these facts, the percolation investigation concluded that the on-site soils are capable of adequality supporting the use of septic tanks. There will be no impact.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

The Paleontological Resources Technical Report prepared for the Countywide Plan EIR determined that the Eastern Desert Region of the county is comprised of geologic units of varying paleontological sensitivities. The mapping provided in the report is at a large scale and is not intended for project-level assessments. It is therefore not known what the sensitivity is of the geologic unit underlying the Project site. It is known, however, that surface soils are wind- and water-borne in nature, and of recent geologic periods. Given the unknown potential for paleontological resources to occur on the subject property at greater depths, however, mitigation measure GEO-2 should be implemented to prevent potentially significant impacts. This measure, which requires monitoring of the site during earth-moving operations, will ensure that potential impacts to paleontological resources are less than significant.

Mitigation Measure GEO-2:

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

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Monitoring GEO-B:

The paleontological monitor shall provide the County with a report of findings within 30 days of completing earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, paleontological monitor, County Land Use Services

Therefore, with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts associated with geologic hazards will be less than significant.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; California Emissions Estimator Versions 2020.4.0; San Bernardino County 2011 GHG Emissions Reduction Plan; MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines; Submitted Project Materials

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

According to the MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines, a project will have less than significant impacts to greenhouse gases if it generates total emissions less than 100,000 tons of CO₂e per year. As discussed in Section III, Air Quality, California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0 was used to project air quality and greenhouse gas emissions for the proposed development (Appendix A). The Project will generate GHG emissions during its construction and operations.

Construction

As discussed in Section III, Air Quality, it is assumed for analysis purposes that all 23 proposed residential lots would be built within a five-year construction period. Construction-related emissions would result from the operation of construction equipment, vehicle emissions from worker commutes, material hauling, and other ground-disturbing activities. As shown in Table 4, construction of the Project is expected to result in the emission of 3,069.85 MTCO₂e over five years.

The MDAQMD and other air quality districts currently do not have construction-related GHG emissions thresholds for projects of this nature. As such, construction-related GHG emissions were amortized over a 30-year period, added to annual operational emissions, and compared to the MDAQMD annual threshold.

Operations

Upon buildout of the 23 proposed residential properties, operations would result in five categories of GHG emissions: area emissions (pavement and architectural coating off-gassing), energy use, mobile source emissions, solid waste disposal, and water use. As stated above, GHG emissions from construction of the Project were amortized over a 30-year period and added to the total annual operational emissions. Table 4 shows the total combined construction and operational GHG emissions.

Table 4	
Project GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons of Co2 Equivalent)	
Phase	MTCO₂e per year
Construction	
2024	560.71
2025	635.44
2026	634.40
2027	633.45
2028	605.85
Construction Total	3,069.85
Operations	
Area	0.29
Energy	67.58
Mobile	271.34
Waste	22.13
Water	7.39
Construction: 30-year Amortized ¹	102.33
Total Operational	471.06
MDAQMD Threshold	100,000.00
Exceeds?	No
¹ Project construction GHG emissions were amortized over 30-years then added to operational GHG emissions. 3,069.85/30 = 102.33	

As shown in the table above, the combined 471.06 metric tons of annual GHG emissions resulting from construction and operation of the Project would not exceed the MDAQMD GHG threshold of 100,000 MTCO₂e per year.

The San Bernardino County 2011 GHG Emissions Reduction Plan (GHG Plan) includes a GHG Development Review Process (DRP), which provides measures to reduce the GHG emissions associated with new development. The GHG Plan includes a set of performance standards which have been added to the County Development Code, and must be implemented in all new development projects. According to the DRP, with the application of the GHG performance standards, small projects that do not exceed 3,000 MTCO₂e per year will be considered consistent with the GHG Plan and determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions.

The development of the proposed residential lots must comply with the County's GHG Performance Standards, as required by § 84.30.030 of the County Development Code, and as provided in Appendix F of the County GHG Plan. As shown in Table 4, above, the total emissions resulting from construction and operation of the proposed development would not exceed the County's 3,000 MTCO₂e threshold for small projects.

Given that the GHG emissions projected for buildout and operation of the Project do not exceed the MDAQMD or County GHG significance thresholds, it can be concluded that impacts would be less than significant.

- b) *Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) requires the State to adopt regulations in order to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Pursuant to AB 32, the San Bernardino County GHG Emissions Reduction Plan (GHG Plan) establishes actions to reduce the County's GHG emissions to 15% below 2011 levels by 2020. As discussed above, according to the County GHG Development Review Process, a project is considered consistent with the GHG Plan if it complies with the GHG Performance Standards and would result in less than 3,000 MTCO₂e per year. Given that the Project complies with this standard, it can be assumed that it would not conflict with the County's 2011 GHG Plan, and, therefore, nor would it conflict with AB 32.

Overall, the proposed developed is consistent with the County's GHG reduction plan and is below the MDAQMD's threshold of significance for CO₂e. As such, the Project will not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, and impacts will be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

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

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; San Bernardino Emergency Operations Plan; State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker; Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor

- 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The proposed Project would result in the development of up to 23 single family residences. Construction of these residential buildings would involve the use of heavy equipment, which could involve the use of small quantities of oil, fuels, and other flammable substances. During construction, equipment could require refueling or other minor on-site maintenance that could lead to fuel and oil spills. Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, contractors will be subject to the state laws pertaining to the handling, storage, and use of hazardous materials during construction. Abidance of safe handling and storage protocols, as provided on the labelling of hazardous products and pursuant to State laws will minimize the risk of explosion or accidental release of hazardous substances.

During the long-term operation of the residential properties, standard household products would likely be used and stored on-site, including those which are potentially hazardous. Such products include cleaning products and solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, and pool chemicals. These chemicals would occur in limited quantities and would not be used in sufficient quantities to pose a threat to public health or cause a foreseeable release into the environment. Operation of the proposed Project would not result in a significant risk of explosion because the household products are not explosive and would not be stored in substantial quantities.

Overall, the use and handling of hazardous materials during Project construction and operation must occur in accordance with applicable federal, State, and County laws, including those provided by the California Occupations Health and Safety Administration (CalOSHA) and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Compliance with these regulations will ensure that impacts will be less than significant.

- c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

No Impact.

The nearest school to the Project site is the Boston School, located approximately 0.5 mile to the east. As stated above, long-term operation of the Project may involve the use of potentially hazardous household substances such as cleaners and pesticides in limited quantities. The proposed residential properties are not expected to emit any hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste to jeopardize schools. Given that no such activity is expected to occur, and that the nearest school is more than one-quarter mile from the subject site, no impacts are expected.

- 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?*

No Impact.

The Project site is currently vacant. The site is not included on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. According to the GeoTracker database provided by the State Water Resources Control Board, the subject site is not located on a Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST), Department of Defense, or Cleanup Program site, nor are any such sites located within a one-mile radius of the Project property. The nearest site, located approximately 2 miles south of the Project, is a LUST Cleanup Site affiliated with the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. The status provided for the cleanup site is "Completed – Case Closed", and therefore it is not expected to have any impacts on the Project. According to the EnviroStor database provided by the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Project property is not a hazardous waste facility, a site with known contamination, or a site warranting further investigation, nor are any such sites located within a one-mile radius of the Project.

The Project is not on or near any sites on a list of hazardous materials sites compiles pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, nor is it expected to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as a result. There will be no impacts.

- 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?*

No Impact.

The nearest airport to the Project is the Yucca Valley Airport, located approximately 6.3 miles southwest of the subject site. Given that the Project is located more than two miles from the nearest airport, it would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing on the subject site. There will be no impacts.

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

No Impact.

Emergency evacuation routes in the Project area include state highways, such as Highway 62, as well as major and secondary roadways, such as Aberdeen Drive, Sunny Vista Road, and Sunburst Street. The subject site is approximately 4 miles north of Highway 62/Twentynine Palms Highway. Development of the proposed Project would not interfere with emergency evacuation operations on this route, or any other designated evacuation routes. Access to the Project site would be provided from Aberdeen Drive and individual driveways. Individual driveways would be developed to meet the County standard for fire lanes, and all development within the Project will be subject to review and approval from the San Bernardino County Fire Marshall. Development of each lot

will be subject to requirements of the Title 24 Building Code and Fire Code. During construction of the proposed residential units, adequate access for emergency vehicles must be maintained, as required by the County.

The County updated its adopted Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in 2018. Given that the Project is consistent with the General Plan, will not interfere with the local evacuation route and will comply with the local plan review and state fire code, the Project will have no impacts to the implementation of the adopted EOP or any other adopted emergency evacuation plans.

- g) *Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

According to Policy HZ-1.2, the County prohibits new development in high or very high fire hazard severity zones unless sufficient mitigation is incorporated. The community of Joshua Tree, including the subject site, is designated as a moderate fire hazard severity zone according to the Countywide Plan Policy Map (HZ-5). The Project will be required to comply with application provisions in the Title 24 Fire Code in the Countywide Plan, ensuring that standard safety measures are in place. As discussed above, the Project will not prevent the implementation of the County's Emergency Operations Plan. Overall, the Project's potential impacts related to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires will be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; Countywide Plan Water, Wastewater, and Hydrology Existing Conditions; Joshua Basin Water District 2020 Urban Water Management Plan; Preliminary Offsite Hydrology Study for 304-Acre Parcel at APN 0599-191-49, prepared by NV5 (October 2022)(Appendix E).

- a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located within the Southern Mojave-Salton Sea watershed which drains into the Salton Sea. The Project site is located within the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The RWQCB has adopted a Basin Plan to protect water quality in the Colorado River Basin. The Project is required to comply with the RWQCB standards for the protection of water quality.

Unincorporated communities within San Bernardino County within the jurisdiction of the Colorado River RWQCB have no Waters of the US and are excluded from MS4 permits. However, development in this area is still subject to construction and operational practices to control and reduce stormwater runoff, as well as grading and erosion control measures as provided by the County and the MDAQMD.

Site plans for the development of the 23 proposed residential lots will be subject to review by the County and the RWQCB. These reviews will ensure that construction and operational best management practices (BMPs) satisfy the local, state, and federal standards. Potential BMPs include erosion control measures and general site management during construction, low impact development practices such as the conservation of natural drainages, minimization of impervious surfaces, and optimized hydrologic designs, as well as post-construction practices such as the protection of channel banks. The implementation of existing regulations and BMPs will ensure that development of the Project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

- b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project is in the service area for the Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD). JBWD supplies water from two groundwater basins: Copper Mountain Valley and Joshua Tree. The JBWD has conducted planning efforts to ensure the sustainable management of its water supply, including for normal year, single-dry year and multiple dry year conditions, as provided in its 2020 Urban Water Management Plan and 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Annual water demand was estimated for the Projects operations based on the assumed buildout of all 23 residential lots, with an average of 2.31 occupants per house. Table 5 shows the estimated Project water demand.

Table 5 Estimated Project Water Demand						
Planning Area	Number of Dwelling Units (DU)	# of Occupants Per DU ¹	Gallons per Day (gpd) per Occupant ²	Gpd per Total Dwelling Units	Water Demand (gpd)	Water Demand (AFY)
Indoor Residential	23	2.31	55	127.05	2,922.15	3.27
¹ Average household population per Joshua Tree Community Action Guide, Appendix A, Joshua Tree Community Profile. ² CA Indoor Water Use Performance Standard						

As shown in the table above, it is estimated that the proposed 23 single-family houses would use approximately 3.27 acre-feet of water per year for residential uses.

Table 6 shows the quantity of water delivered by the Joshua Basin Water District in 2020 as well as the projected deliveries in 2025 and 2030.

Table 6 JBWD Water Deliveries – Actual and Projected			
Use Type	Actual (AFY)	Projected (AFY)	
	2020	2025	2030
Single Family	791	854	856
Total (All Land Uses)	1,022	1,108	1,108
Source: Joshua Basin Water District 2020 Urban Water Management Plan			

Indoor water use associated with buildout of the Project would represent approximately 0.41% of water delivered to single family residential land uses by JBWD in 2020 or 0.38% of projected water deliveries to this land use in 2030. Based on a Project buildout population of 54 people, the indoor water demand estimated for the Project would be approximately 54 gallons per capita per day (GPCD). This falls well below the water district's target of 157 GPCD. Given that the Project's indoor water use makes up only a small portion of JBWD's actual and projected deliveries, and that the GPCD falls well below the District's target, it can be assumed that the Project would not impede sustainable groundwater management.

In addition to residential indoor water use, the operation of the proposed residential properties would also use water for landscape irrigation. Given the large size of the proposed lots, it can be assumed that only a small portion of each property would be landscaped. The County of San Bernardino has adopted the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) (CCR §490 through 495 of Chapter 2.7 of Division 2 of Title 23) as promulgated by the California Department of Water Resources. MWELO establishes practices to reduce the consumption of water for landscape irrigation of new developments. Landscaping on the Project properties will be required to adhere to the provisions of MWELO.

Given that the Project's estimated indoor water use would be well below JBWD's per capita target, and that the Project's water use for landscaping would be subject to the MWELO, impacts to sustainable groundwater management would be less than significant.

- 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;*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Development of up to 23 single family residential units would result in the addition of impervious surfaces to the undeveloped 304-acre site. However, given that individual lots will range from 5 to 58 acres, a considerable amount of permeable land would likely remain on the site after development. The Project proposes County utility easements in order to provide an open storm channel along the location of the existing washes on the southern portion of the site. This would maintain the existing drainage pattern of the site and area.

Construction of the residential lots, including the removal of vegetation, grading, excavation, or any other activity that causes the disturbance of one or more acres will be subject to a General Construction Permit, which requires the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP must include best management practices (BMPs), including drainage erosion controls, sediment controls, and wind erosion controls. Additionally, development of the residential lots would be subject to MDAQMD Rule 403, which requires the implementation of fugitive dust controls as well as the preparation and implementation of an approved Dust Control Plan. Implementation of the required plans, rules, and BMPs will ensure that the construction of the Project has less than significant impacts related to erosion or siltation.

- ii. *Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite;*
- iii. *Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of runoff; or*
- iv. *Impede or redirect flood flows?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Existing Drainage

Two washes run through the southern quarter of the property, from northwest to southeast. The hydrologic and hydraulic study prepared for the Project by NV5, Inc found that this portion of the site might be flooded when the 100-year storm flow occurs.

Proposed Drainage

To mitigate any impacts associated with this potential flooding, an open storm channel capable of conveying the 100-year flow should be provided on-site, following the natural course of the existing washes. The Tentative Tract Map has been planned such that the large lots on the southern portion of the site would provide ample space for development to avoid the 100-year floodplain. The Project proposes a San Bernardino County Drainage Easement based upon the 100-year flood limits with a 50' setback line.

Implementation of the proposed channel and setbacks would ensure that the Project's impacts related to on- and off-site flooding, as well as contribution of runoff water, are less than significant. Given that the proposed storm channel will follow the natural course of the existing washes, impacts related to the impediment or redirection of flood flows would also be less than significant.

- d) *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is not located in proximity to a body of water, and is thus not subject to hazards from dam failure, tsunamis, or seiche.

The site is covered by two FEMA flood hazard categories. The northern portion of the site is within FIRM Zone D, which designates areas with possible but undetermined flood hazards. The southern portion of the site is within Zone X, which designates areas of minimal flood hazards and above the 500-year flood level. Based on these FEMA designations, the Project is not likely to be subject or to result in flood hazards. As stated above, development on the southern portion of the Project site would avoid the existing washes, which may be subject to flooding. Provided development avoids the existing washes, impacts related to flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche would be less than significant.

- e) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

No Impact.

As discussed in Section X a), site plans for the development of the 23 proposed residential lots will be subject to review by the County and the RWQCB. These reviews will ensure that construction and operational best management practices (BMPs) do not conflict with any applicable water quality control plans. As discussed in Section X b), the Project's water use makes up only a small portion of JBWD's actual and projected deliveries, and that the Project's estimated gallons per capita per day falls well below the District's target. The Project would therefore not impede Joshua Basin's sustainable groundwater management plan. There will be no impacts.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:					

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) | Physically divide an established community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; County Development Code; Joshua Tree Community Action Guide; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Physically divide an established community?*

No Impact.

The subject property is vacant and is zoned for Rural Living (RL). Adjacent properties to the north, east, and west of the site are also zoned RL. Lands to the south of the site are zoned RL and for Resource Conservation (RC). Surrounding land uses are a mix of sparse residential properties and vacant lands. The Project proposes a low-density residential development which would be consistent with the General Plan and surrounding uses. It would not result in the construction of a feature that would impair access within or between communities, and it would not physically divide an established community. There will be no impact.

- 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?*

No Impact.

The Project site is located within the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, within San Bernardino County. The Project is subject to the provisions of the Countywide Plan, the San Bernardino County Development Code, and the Joshua Tree Community Action Plan.

The subject site is zoned for Rural Living (RL), which permits residential and agricultural uses, as well as similar and compatible uses. The Project proposes a subdivision comprised of 23 lots each 5 acres or larger, resulting in a up to 23 dwelling units, or one unit per lot. The proposed development will conform with the development standards provided in §82.04.060 of the County Development Code, including minimum lot area of 2.5 acres, the maximum density of 1 unit per 2.5 acres, and the minimum front, side, and rear setbacks.

According to Policy LU-2.4 in the Countywide Plan, proposed developments that are consistent with the Land Use Map (i.e. do not require a change in Land Use Category), can generally be considered as compatible and consistent with surrounding land uses and the community's identity. The Project is consistent with the existing Rural Living designation. The proposed large-lot residential development is also consistent with Policy LU-2.8, which promotes a rural, low intensity lifestyle in the unincorporated desert regions of the County.

The Joshua Tree Community Action Guide includes Community Focus Statements promoting the preservation of the desert ecosystem and the maintenance of the rural desert lifestyle and character. As discussed in multiple sections of this document, including Section IV, Biological Resources, the Project will not significantly adversely affect the desert ecosystem. As evidenced by the consistency of the proposed development with the RL land use designation and surrounding land uses, the Project will continue the existing character of the area.

Overall, the Project will be consistent with applicable policies and regulations provided in the Countywide Plan and Development Code, as well as the Community Action Guide. The proposed development will therefore not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for this purpose. There will be no impacts.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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XII. MINERAL RESOURCES - Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) | Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) | Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located within the Mineral Resource Zone Overlay):

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

No Impact.

Policy NR-6.1 of the Countywide Plan states that the development of land that would substantially preclude the future development mining facilities in areas classified as Mineral Resource Zone (MRX) 2a, 2b, or 3a is prohibited or discouraged. According to the Mineral Resource Zone Policy Map of the Countywide Plan, there are no MRZ 2a, 2b, or 3a within the vicinity of the Project site, or within the Joshua Tree community. The Project is therefore not expected to have any impacts on the availability of known mineral resources.

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

No Impact.

As stated above, the subject site is not located in or near an area classified as MRZ 2a, 2b, or 3a. The Project site is not in use, nor is it delineated as, as a mineral resources recovery site. The proposed development would therefore have no impacts resulting in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
XIII. NOISE - Would the project 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if the project is located in the Noise Hazard Overlay District ☐ or is subject to severe noise levels according to the General Plan Noise Element ☐):

Countywide Plan; US Environmental Protection Agency, Noise from Construction Equipment and Operations, Building Equipment and Home Appliances (1971); Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project proposes the subdivision of the 304-acre site into 23 residential lots for individual sale, each ranging from 5 to 58 acres. The site is located on Aberdeen Drive, a paved two-lane road, designated by the county as a Primary Highway. It is expected that eventual construction of the residential properties, as well as their long-term operation, will generate noise.

Most of the land surrounding the Project is vacant, however some residential buildings are distributed sparsely along Aberdeen Drive (five houses adjacent to the Project), Avenida Del Sol (three houses adjacent to the Project), and Outpost Road (one house adjacent to the Project). Table 7 shows the County noise standards for residential properties.

Table 7 County Noise Standards for Stationary Noise Sources		
Affected Land Uses (Receiving Noise)	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.
Residential	55 dBA	45 dBA
Source: San Bernardino County Development Code, Table 83-2. dBA = A-weighted decibel		

Construction Noise

The development proposed residential lots would occur as individual properties, and construction of each lot would occur independently. As described in Section II, Air Quality, for the analysis purposes it was assumed that construction of all 23 lots would occur over a five-year period, though construction would likely occur over a longer timeframe.

Construction activities could generate elevated noise levels due to the use of heavy equipment, however this noise would be temporary and periodic in nature. Data compiled by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), shown in Table 8, shows standard noise levels generated by common construction equipment.

Table 8 Construction Equipment Noise Levels	
Construction Equipment	Noise Level in dBA Leq at 50 feet ¹
Front Loader	73 - 86
Truck	82 - 95
Saw	72 - 82
Jackhammer	82 - 98
Pump	68 - 72
Generator	71 - 83
Compressor	75 - 87
Concrete Mixer	75 - 88
Backhoe	73 - 95
Tractor	77 - 98
Scraper/Grader	80 - 93
Paver	85 - 88
Source: US Environmental Protection Agency, Noise from Construction Equipment and Operations, Building Equipment and Home Appliances (1971). ¹ dBA = A-weighted decibel; Leq = equivalent energy noise level	

The noise levels shown in the above table would diminish with distance from the construction site at a rate of approximately 6 dBA per doubling of distance. For example, a noise level of 86 dBA at 50 feet from a front loader would reduce to 80 dBA at a distance of 100 feet. Given the large scale of the proposed residential lots, it is not known exactly how close construction would occur to the neighboring residential properties on Aberdeen Drive, Avenida Del Sol, and Outpost Road. Based on the minimum setback of 25 feet for sites zoned for Rural Living, Project construction could occur as close as 50 feet from existing residential properties. However, it is more likely that future residential buildings would be sited in a more centralized location within each lot, and therefore there would be more space for noise to attenuate.

According to §83.01.080(g)(3), temporary construction noise is exempt from the County noise standards provided it occurs between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., except on Sundays and Federal holidays. Therefore, provided Project-related construction occurs during the permitted operating hours, the Project will not generate a substantial temporary in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of County standards.

Operational Noise

Once operational, the Project is not expected to generate noise beyond typical sources associated with residential land uses, such as people, garage doors, air conditioners, landscaping equipment and trash collection. The Project is consistent with the Rural Living (RL) land use and zoning designated for the site by the County. The proposed subdivision of the 304-acre site will result in 23 residential lots ranging from approximately 5 acres to 58 acres, with an average lot size of 13 acres. The proposed density of the site is thus significantly below the maximum density of 1 unit per 2.5 acres in Rural Living zones. Given that the proposed development of up to 23 single family residential dwellings is consistent with the Countywide Plan designation and zoning for the site, it can be assumed that operational noise and traffic noise resulting from the Project would not exceed those projected for buildout of the Countywide Plan. Furthermore, due to the minimal level of ambient noise generated by residential properties and the large scale of the proposed residential lots, the Project is expected to have less than significant impacts on ambient noise levels in its vicinity.

- b) *Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Groundborne vibration is sound radiated through the ground. At buildout, the Project is not expected to generate significant groundborne vibration. It may, however, generate groundborne vibration during construction, but these impacts would be temporary and would end once construction is complete. The primary source of vibration during construction would be the operation of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers. Residential properties occur adjacent to the Project site on the other side of Aberdeen Drive, Avenida Del Sol, and Outpost Road. There is potential for construction vibration, though short-term, to be felt on these neighboring properties.

The County Development Code provides standards for the level of vibration that is permitted beyond the property line of a given project. However, according to §83.01.090(b)(2) of the County Development Code, temporary construction activities between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., excluding Sundays and Federal holidays, are exempt from these vibration standards. Therefore, given that significant groundborne vibration is not expected to result from Project operations, and provided that Project construction is conducted during the permitted operating hours, then impacts will be less than significant.

- 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?*

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

No Impact.

The nearest airport to the Project is the Yucca Valley Airport, located approximately 6.3 miles southwest of the subject site. Given that the Project is located more than two miles from the nearest airport, it would not result in excessive noise for people residing on the subject site. There will be no impacts.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING - Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Joshua Tree Community Action Guide; Submitted Project Materials.

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

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project proposes a Tentative Tract Map for the subdivision of the approximately 304-acre site into 23 residential lots. Based on the average household size of 2.31 people in Joshua Tree,⁶ full buildout of the Project could result in about 54 new residents in the unincorporated community.

The site is designated and zoned for Rural Living (RL). The proposed development would be consistent with the zoning, with a maximum density of 23 single family detached dwellings across the site, on lots ranging from approximately 5 acres to 58 acres. The RL zone permits development at densities of up to 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres. Given that the Project would result in a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, the proposed development is consistent with, and at a lower maximum density than, the land use designation and zone provided by the County.

It can therefore be concluded that the potential population growth of about 54 people is consistent with the growth planned for by the County of San Bernardino for the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree. The Project would thus not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area, and impacts would be less than significant.

⁶ Joshua Tree Community Action Guide, Appendix A, Joshua Tree Community Profile.

- b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The subject site is currently vacant and undeveloped. Development of the proposed Project would not displace any existing people or housing and would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. There would be no impact.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XV. 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:				
Fire Protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police Protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Public Facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; Countywide Plan Draft PEIR.

- 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:*

Fire Protection?

No Impact.

The unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, including the Project site, receives fire protection services from the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (County Fire). County Fire is organized into six divisions within four service zones; Joshua Tree is located within the South Desert service zone, in Division 4. At the time that the Countywide Plan EIR was written (fiscal year 2016-17), Division 4 had a total of 84 employees.

The nearest fire station to the Project is Station 36, located at 6715 Park Boulevard in Joshua Tree, approximately 3.5 miles south of the subject site. On average, County Fire had a 2019 response time of 8 minutes and 38 seconds. The target response time for rural areas is 22 minutes and 30 seconds. While Joshua Tree meets the criteria for a rural area, as provided in the Countywide Plan EIR,⁷ the proximity of the Project site to the local fire station means that it would likely receive a faster response time than is standard for rural areas.

⁷ Rural areas as defined as areas with a population of less than 10,000 people are/or a population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile. Source: San Bernardino Countywide Plan Draft PEIR, p.5.14-7.

Ultimate development of the proposed 23 residential lots could result in up to 23 single family homes, and a population of 54 residents.⁸ Given the proximity of subject site to the existing fire station, and the nominal population growth resulting from development of the proposed Project, new fire protection facilities would not be required. Therefore, no environmental impacts would occur.

Police Protection?

No Impact.

The Project site is located within the Morongo Basin Sheriff Service Agency area. The nearest sheriff's station is the Morongo Basin Station located at 6527 White Feather Road in Joshua Tree, approximately 4 miles southeast of the subject site. As of the writing of the Countywide Plan EIR, the Morongo Basin Station was staffed by 17 patrol deputies, with a service area population of 24,426 residents in the unincorporated east desert region. This equates to 1,437 residents per deputy.

According to the Countywide Plan EIR, implementation of the Countywide Plan would result in little growth, only approximately 1,359 additional residents. The Plan therefore found that existing facilities would be adequate to serve this growth. Given that the proposed development is consistent with the Rural Living (RL) designation in the Countywide Plan, it can be assumed that the Project would not generate more demand for police protection than anticipated in the Countywide Plan EIR. Therefore, the Project would not require new police facilities, and no environmental impacts would occur as a result.

Schools?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Schools are provided to the east desert region of the County, including the community of Joshua Tree, by the Morongo Unified School District. The sixteen schools in the District include eleven elementary, K-8, and K-12 schools, two middle schools, and three high schools. A total of 8,466 students are enrolled in the Morongo Unified School District from kindergarten to grade 12.

Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree provides post-secondary education in the eastern desert region.

Table 9 shows the projected number of new students to be generated as a result of buildout of the Countywide Plan in the eastern desert region, including the Project.

⁸ Based on the average household of 2.31, as provided in the Joshua Tree Community Action Guide, Appendix A Community Profile.

Table 9 Projected Student Population Growth, 2016 to 2040			
Planning Area	Housing Unit Growth	Student Generation Rate	Projection Number of Additional Students
East Desert Region	394	0.6	236
Project	23	0.6	14
Source: San Bernardino Countywide Plan Draft PEIR, Table 5.14-8. Housing unit growth for the East Desert Region is projected based on buildout of the Countywide Plan.			

As shown in the above table, buildout of the Countywide Plan from 2016 to 2040 is expected to result in the addition of 394 housing units in the east desert region, and as a result, 236 new students. Based on the same student generation rate of 0.6 students per housing unit, buildout of the proposed Project could result in approximately 14 new students.

The addition of 14 students as a result of buildout of the Project would represent approximately 5.8 percent of the additional students expected from buildout of the Countywide Plan in the eastern desert region. This small increase in student population as a result of the Project is not expected to require the construction of new school facilities. The Project would also be required to pay the District's Development School Fee of \$3.36 per square foot, which would help fund the expansion of school facilities once required. As stated in the Countywide Plan EIR, the construction or renovation of school facilities would be subject to environmental review, and therefore impacts would be less than significant.

Parks?

Less Than Significant Impact.

As discussed below, in Section XVI, the parks and recreation facilities in the community of Joshua Tree are overseen by County Service Area (CSA) 20, established by the County Board of Supervisors. CSA 20 provides financing for four parks, three ball fields, one recreation center building, a water playground, a skateboard park, and a community center. The community is also near Joshua Tree National Park.

While the proposed development of 23 single family houses could result in a small increase in the demand on parks in the community of Joshua Tree, this increase would be nominal. Substantial physical deterioration of facilities would not occur or be accelerated as a result of the Project, and impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Other Public Facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The nearest library to the subject site is located at 6465 Park Boulevard in Joshua Tree. Approximately 3.15 miles south of the Project property, the Joshua Tree Branch Library is part of the San Bernardino County Library system, which is comprised of 32 branches

and a collection of over 1.4 million items. Based on a service ratio of 0.5 square feet of building space and 2.75 collection items per capita, the Countywide Plan EIR determined that population growth of 49,680 in unincorporated areas as a result of buildout of the Plan would require the expansion of facilities and the collection. The addition of 23 single family dwellings, as proposed by the Project, would only contribute incrementally to this planned population growth. However, as stated in the Countywide Plan EIR, tax revenues generated from future development would help fund the required library expansions, and CEQA review of proposed new facilities would ensure that significant environmental impacts do not occur as a result. Impacts from the Project on library facilities would therefore be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XVI. 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 facility will occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; San Bernardino County Special Districts, CSA 20; Submitted Project Materials

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

Parks and recreation facilities in the community of Joshua Tree are overseen by County Service Area (CSA) 20, established by the County Board of Supervisors. Also known as the Joshua Tree Recreation and Park District, CSA 20 provides financing for four parks, three ball fields, one recreation center building, a water playground, a skateboard park, and a community center. The community is also in close proximity to Joshua Tree National Park.

As described in Section XIV, Population and Housing, the Project could result in the ultimate development of up to 23 single family dwellings. The resulting new households could marginally increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks, as well as other recreation facilities. However, the increase in use from up to 23 households would be negligible, such that substantial physical deterioration of facilities would not occur or be accelerated. Impacts would be less than significant.

- 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?*

No Impact.

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

The Project does not include recreational facilities. As discussed above, the proposed development could result in incremental increases in use of recreational facilities, the impacts of which would be negligible. The construction or expansion of recreational facilities would therefore not be required as a result of the Project, and thus no adverse physical effects on the environment would occur as a result. There would be no impacts.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

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

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; San Bernardino Countywide Plan Transportation Existing Conditions Report; ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th ed.; San Bernardino County Transit Authority Bicycle Plan (2018); SBCTA Recommended Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for VMT and LOS Assessment.

- a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Level of Service

The Project is consistent with the Rural Living (RL) land use designation provided in the Countywide Plan. The proposed development will result in up to 23 single family residences on lots ranging from approximately 5 to 58 acres.

According to the Countywide Plan Transportation Existing Conditions Report, a Level of Service (LOS) of C or better is considered acceptable on County roadway segments in the Desert Region. An average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 7,000 vehicles or fewer is the threshold for a LOS C on 2-lane roads in the Desert Region of the County. The Transportation Existing Conditions Report included traffic counts for roadway segments across the County. The two nearest segments of road that received traffic counts for the report are Aberdeen Drive west of Yucca Mesa Drive, approximately 2.5 miles west of the subject site, and Sunburst Avenue, north of Highway 62, which is approximately 1.2 miles southeast of the Project. Table 10 shows the ADT for the two segments at the time of the traffic count. Both segments are well below the traffic volume threshold for LOS C.

Table 10 Existing Roadway Level of Service					
Road Name	Segment	Lanes	ADT	Threshold	LOS
Aberdeen Dr.	W of Yucca Mesa Dr.	2	1,415	7,000	C or better
Sunburst Ave.	N of SH 62	2	4,393	7,000	C or better

Source: San Bernardino Countywide Plan Transportation Existing Conditions Report (March 2017) Table 9.

Based the development of 23 housing units under ITE Code 210 (single family residential), the Project would result in approximately 217 daily trips. Given the relatively small traffic volume that would be added by the proposed development, the Project would be unlikely to result in surrounding roadways exceeding the required LOS. The Project would therefore not conflict with the LOS requirement provided in Policy TM-1.1 of the Countywide Plan.

Roadway Improvements and Alternative Transportation Facilities

The Project site occurs in a low-density residential area in the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree. Site access would be from Aberdeen Drive, which is currently an undivided two-lane paved road with unpaved shoulders. The road does not currently have sidewalks or bicycle facilities. Basin Transit provides bus service in the Yucca Valley/Joshua Tree/Twenty-nine Palms area. The nearest bus routes to the Project site are Basin Transit Route 1 (Yucca Valley-Twenty-nine Palms) and Route 15 (MCAGCC-Palm Springs), both of which run along Highway 62, approximately 4 miles south of the subject site, as well as Route 21 (Landers-Yucca Valley) which runs up Yucca Mesa Road, approximately 2.8 miles west of the site.

The Countywide Plan Roadway Network policy map designates Aberdeen Drive as a Major Highway. Table 11 shows the roadway characteristics for Major Highways, according to the County.

Table 11 County Roadway Designations				
Roadway Designation	Typical Street Cross Section Characteristics			
	Divided	Right-of-Way	Curb-to-Curb	Lanes
Major Highway	At times	104'	80'	2 to 4

Countywide Policy Plan, Transportation and Mobility Element, Table TM-1, October 2020.

The San Bernardino County Transit Authority (SBCTA) Bicycle Plan (2018) designates Aberdeen Drive for a future Class II Bike Lane. Class II bicycle facilities are defined as those in which a portion of the roadway has been designated by striping, signaling, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

The Project will not conflict with the designated roadway improvements or bicycle facilities proposed for Aberdeen Drive. Prior to the issuance of building permits for the individual residential lots, the proponents will be required to pay their fair share amount for the recommended improvements, if any. The Project would therefore not disrupt or interfere with existing or planned bicycle facilities, nor would it result in unsafe conditions for bicyclists or pedestrians.

Neither the Countywide Plan nor the transit plans provided by SBCTA propose future transit routes in the East Desert Region. Given that no transit facilities occur or are planned for Aberdeen Drive, the Project would also not interfere with transit service or related policies.

Based on the evidence provided above, the Project will not conflict with transportation plans or policies, including the Countywide Plan roadway capacity and roadway design standards, as well as the complete streets, transit, and active transportation policies. Impacts will be less than significant.

- b) *Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 subdivision (b)?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Pursuant to Senate Bill 743 (SB 473), section 15064.3(b) of the CEQA Guidelines states that vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. The County has developed guidelines for VMT screening and analysis. According to the County's Recommended TIA Guidelines, a project is exempt from project-level VMT assessment if it is located in a transit priority area (TPA), if it is located in a low VMT area, or if it meets the project type screening criteria for local serving uses.

The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) provides a VMT Screening Tool to determine whether a given parcel is located within a transit priority area or low VMT area. According to the VMT Screening Tool, the Project site is located within a low VMT area.⁹ The proposed Project is therefore screened from further VMT analysis, and would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 (b). Impacts would be less than significant.

- c) *Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Site plans for the development of the proposed residential lots will be subject to review by the San Bernardino County Fire Marshall. This review will ensure that no hazards are created due to geometric design features.

The Project is zoned and designated for Rural Living (RL), which is consistent with most of the surrounding land uses. Lands to the north, east, and west of the Project are occupied by vacant lands and sparsely distributed residential properties. Nearby residential properties will not result in any incompatible uses. Lands to the southwest of the Project are occupied by the Bartlett Mountains, which are zoned for Resource Conservation (RC), and are not expected to generate any traffic with incompatible uses.

⁹ The results of the VMT Screening Tool, following consultation with the County Department of Public Works – Traffic Division, are provided in Appendix E.

Overall, given that the Project is consistent with surrounding land uses and site plans will be subject to review by the County Fire Marshall, no transportation-related hazards are expected, and impacts will be less than significant.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Emergency evacuation routes in the Project area include state highways, such as Highway 62, and major and secondary roadways, such as Aberdeen Drive, Sunny Vista Road, and Sunburst Street. The subject site is approximately 4 miles north of Highway 62/Twenty-nine Palms Highway. Development of the proposed Project would not interfere with emergency evacuation operations on this route, or any other designated evacuation routes. Access to the Project site would be provided from Aberdeen Drive and internal driveways. Internal driveways would be developed to meet the County standard for fire lanes, and all development within the Project will be subject to review and approval from the San Bernardino County Fire Marshall. Development of each lot will be subject to requirements of the Title 24 Building Code and Fire Code. During construction of the proposed residential lots, adequate access for emergency vehicles must be maintained, as required by the County.

Overall, the Project is not anticipated to result in inadequate emergency access, and impacts will be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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XVIII. 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:
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Cultural Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), South Central Coast Information Center, California State University, Fullerton; "Historical Archaeological Resources Survey Report, APN 0599-191-49" prepared by CRM TECH, June 2022; Submitted Project Materials

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:

- i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or*
- ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?*

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

CEQA defines tribal cultural resources as 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 included on a local register of historical resources (PRC §5020.1(k)), or that is listed as a historical resources in the California Register (PRC §5024.1(c)).

As stated in Section V, Cultural Resources, a Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report was prepared for the Project by CRM TECH in June 2022 (Appendix C). The cultural resources study included a search of the Sacred Lands File, conducted by the State of California Native American Heritage Commissions (NAHC) on behalf of the Project. The search identified no significant Native American cultural resources within the Project vicinity.

A field survey was conducted by CRM TECH staff and a representative of the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians. The survey found two archaeological sites and 17 isolates of Native American origin.

CRM TECH contacted four local tribes for further information on the potential presence of Native American cultural resources in the area. The four local tribes are the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. The Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians provided no additional information about the site, but provided a representative to participate in the field survey. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian identified the subject site as part of the tribe's traditional use area, and requested copies of all cultural resource documentation generated for the Project. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians responded that the Project site is not located near any known archaeological sites or Serrano villages known to the tribe. At the time which the cultural resources report was written, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians had not responded.

The County conducted Tribal Consultation as a part of this Project, consistent with the requirements of AB 52. The Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation requested consultation, and upon reviewing the cultural resources report, also requested the implementation of an extended Phase 1 investigation, in order to determine the extent of the two sites identified during the field investigation. Tribal representatives prepared the testing program, and both the Project archaeologist and Tribal archaeologists conducted the field work under that program.

The field work associated with this program included re-surveying the two identified sites, and preparing multiple shovel test pits (STP) at both locations. All of the artifacts identified at the sites were collected, as were the archaeological isolates identified elsewhere on the site. The STPs revealed no buried resources under the identified surface items. In conformance with the Tribe's request, all of the resources were buried in an area of the site that will not be developed. Based on these procedures, the Tribe determined that its concerns had been addressed, and concluded consultation.

As described in Section V., Cultural Resources, the 2022 cultural resources survey report prepared for the Project found no significant resources on the subject site, and the testing program found no significant resources in the STPs. However, because

this does not guarantee the absence of such resources, mitigation is recommended to prevent potential impacts. As provided in CUL-1 and CUL-2 in Section V, Cultural Resources, if any buried cultural materials or human remains are encountered during earth-moving operations associated with the Project, all work within 50 feet of the discovery must be halted, and a qualified archaeologist and Tribal monitor or the County Coroner must be contacted. Earth-moving operations must remain halted until the appropriate actions have been taken. Implementation of these measures will ensure that the Project will not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource. Impacts will be less than significant with the implementation of the mitigation measures in Section V.

Therefore, with the implementation of mitigation measures provided in Section V., impacts to tribal cultural resources will be less than significant.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:					
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Joshua Basin Water District 2020 Urban Water Management Plan; CalRecycle Estimated Solid Waste Generation Rates
<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates> (accessed March 2023); Submitted Project Materials

- 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

Domestic Water

The Project is in the service area for the Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) and proposes an on-site easement for JBWD for above- or below-ground conduits.

JBWD delivered 791 AFY of water to single family residences in 2020, and expects to deliver 856 AFY of water to single family residences in 2030. JBWD supplies water from two groundwater basins: Copper Mountain Valley and Joshua Tree. JBWD has conducted planning efforts to ensure the sustainable management of its water supply, including for normal year, single-dry year and multiple dry year conditions, as provided in its 2020 Urban Water Management Plan and 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

As shown in Table 5 of Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, indoor water use estimated for the operation of the proposed Project is 2,922.15 gallons per day (gpd) or 3.27 acre-feet per year (AFY). Indoor water use associated with buildout of the Project would therefore represent approximately 0.41% of water delivered by JBWD in 2020 or 0.38% of projected water deliveries for 2030. Based on a Project buildout population of 54 people, the indoor water demand estimated for the Project would be approximately 54 gallons per capita per day (GPCD). This falls well below the water district's target of 157 GPCD. Given that the Project's indoor water use makes up only a small portion of JBWD's actual and projected deliveries, and that the GPCD falls well below the District's target, it can be assumed that the Project would not impede sustainable groundwater management.

In addition to residential indoor water use, the operation of the proposed residential properties would also use water for landscape irrigation. Given the large size of the proposed lots, it is assumed that only a small portion of each property would be landscaped. The County of San Bernardino has adopted the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) (CCR §490 through 495 of Chapter 2.7 of Division 2 of Title 23) as promulgated by the California Department of Water Resources. MWELo establishes practices to reduce the consumption of water for landscape irrigation of new developments. Landscaping on the Project properties will be required to adhere to the provisions of MWELo.

Given that the Project's estimated indoor water use would be well below JBWD's per capita target, and that the Project's outdoor water use would be subject to MWELo, it can be concluded that the District would have sufficient water supplies to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Impacts will be less than significant.

Wastewater Treatment

The Project proposes that on-site septic systems would be installed in each residential lot upon development. A percolation investigation was conducted for the Project by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc. The investigation found that the soil conditions on-site are

favorable for the future use of on-site septic systems on each of the 23 proposed lots. The Project would therefore not be served by a wastewater treatment provider and would have no impacts related to wastewater treatment capacity.

Drainage System

The Project proposes the development of an open storm channel on the southern portion of the site, where the two washes currently occur. This channel shall be designed to convey the 100-year storm flows, ensuring that this southern portion of the site does not flood. A San Bernardino County Drainage Easement is proposed based on the 100-year flood limits with a 50-foot setback line. This channel would follow the natural course of the washes, and would be located on the subject site. The Project would not require the expansion or relocation of off-site drainage facilities.

Energy

Southern California Edison provides electricity to the subject site via existing overhead utilities lines. The Project will not require the expansion or relocation of electric power facilities.

Natural gas will not be provided to the Project site. Future residences will be on propane.

Telecommunications

The Project will receive telephone service from Frontier Communications and TV Cable from Spectrum. The Project will connect to existing telephone boxes that occur adjacent to the subject site.

Summary

As demonstrated above, JBWD has sufficient water supplies available to service the Project and reasonably foreseeable development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. The Project will manage wastewater via on-site septic tanks for each parcel, and therefore will not impact the capacity of wastewater treatment providers. The Project will connect to existing electricity and telecommunications lines and will not require any connection to natural gas lines. It will therefore not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. The Project will include an easement for an on-site drainage channel following the natural course of the existing washes and will not require the relocation of construction of off-site facilities. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

- 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?*

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site will receive solid waste collection and disposal services from Burrtec Waste & Recycling. Table 12 shows the estimated waste that the Project would generate during operations. Using solid waste generation factors provided by CalRecycle, and accounting for the 50% diversion required by Assembly Bill 939, the proposed Project is estimated to result in the generation of approximately 21 tons of solid waste per year.

Table 12 Estimated Solid Waste Disposal at Project Buildout				
Land Use	CIWMB Disposal Rates	Proposed	Solid Waste Disposal	
			Pounds Per Day	Tons Per Year
Single Family Residential	10 lbs / dwelling unit / day	23	230	42
TOTAL (with 50% diversion)			115	21
CalRecycle Estimated Solid Waste Generation Rates https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates (accessed March 2023)				

The Twentynine Palms Transfer Station and the Landers Sanitary Landfill serve the East Desert Region of the County, including the subject site. The Landers Landfill has a maximum capacity of 13,983,500 cubic yards, and as of 2016, a remaining capacity of 11,148,100 cubic yards.¹⁰ Assuming the proposed development would generate 442 cubic yards of waste per year,¹¹ the Project would contribute less than 0.004% of the remaining capacity of the landfill annually.

Burrtec is responsible for maintaining standards that assure that all waste is handled in a manner that meets the local, state, and federal standards. These requirements will ensure that impacts associated with solid waste disposal remain less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

¹⁰ CalRecycle SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details – Landers Sanitary Landfill (36-AA-0057)
<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/1882?siteID=2664> (accessed March 2023).

¹¹ Assuming that 1 CY of residential solid waste is equivalent to 95 lbs, 115 lbs per day = 442 cubic yards per year.
 Source: "Volume to Weight Conversion Factors," USEPA Office of Resource Conversion and Recovery. April 2016.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
XX. WILDFIRE: If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water resources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; San Bernardino Emergency Operations Plan; San Bernardino County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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

No Impact

According to the Countywide Plan, Highway 62/Twenty-nine Palms Highway is the primary evacuation route in Joshua Tree. The subject site is approximately 4 miles north of Highway 62. Development resulting from the proposed Project would not interfere with emergency evacuation operations on this route, or any other designated evacuation routes. Access to the Project site would be provided from Aberdeen Drive and internal driveways. Internal driveways would be developed to meet the County standard for fire lanes, and all development within the Project will be subject to review and approval from the San Bernardino County Fire Marshall. Development of each lot will be subject to requirements of the Title 24 Building Code and Fire Code.

The County updated its adopted Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in 2018. Given that the Project will not interfere with the local evacuation route and will comply with the local plan review and state fire code, the Project will have no impacts that would potentially impair the adopted EOP or any other adopted emergency evacuation plans.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

According to Policy HZ-1.2, the County prohibits new development in high or very high fire hazard severity zones unless sufficient mitigation is incorporated. The community of Joshua Tree, including the subject site, is designated as a moderate fire hazard severity zone according to the Countywide Plan Policy Map (HZ-5). The Project would not exacerbate wildfire risk due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors. Furthermore, the County's Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan provides goals and objective to reduce wildfire hazards in unincorporated areas. The County's implementation of this plan and the EOP, as well as the Project's compliance with applicable policies in the Countywide Plan, will ensure that the wildfire hazard will be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project does not propose the installation or maintenance of roads, fuel breaks, or emergency water resources power lines. While the ultimate development of the proposed residential lots will require the installation of driveways for internal circulation, as well as the installation of utilities, the Project is not located within a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.¹² The installation and maintenance of the infrastructure required for the Project would therefore have less than significant impacts related to the exacerbation of fire risk.

- 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?*

No Impact.

The Project site is not in an area mapped for significant landslides. The site and its surroundings are sparsely vegetated, and development potential upstream is highly limited. There will be no impact resulting from downstream flooding or landslides.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

¹² San Bernardino Countywide Plan Draft PEIR, 5.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:					

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) | Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) | Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) | Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- a) *Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?*

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Biological Resources: As discussed in Section IV, the Project does not have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish species or cause the population of a fish species to drop below self-sustaining levels. Implementation of the mitigation measures (BIO-1 to BIO-6) provided in this document would ensure that the Project would have less than significant impacts to the sensitive plant and wildlife species known to occur in the Project area. The proposed Project would therefore not significantly degrade the quality of the environmental, substantially reduce the habitat of a wildlife species, cause a wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to

eliminate a plant or animal community, nor reduce the number or range of a rare or endangered plant or animal species.

Cultural Resources: The Project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. While three historical isolates and seventeen prehistorical isolates were identified on the Project site, as discussed in Section V, none of the isolates provided dispositional context or potential to provide information about prehistory or history. Mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 ensure that any buried cultural materials or human remains discovered on the site during earth-moving operations would be handled appropriately.

Overall, there will be no significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated. Project-related impacts are considered less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures contained in this document.

- b) *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?*

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

A significant impact could occur if the proposed Project, in conjunction with related projects, would result in impacts that would be less than significant when view separately, but would be significant when viewed together. In this case, the impacts of the proposed Project are individually limited and not cumulatively considerable. The proposed development is consistent with the development envisioned for this area per the Countywide Plan. The Project would not intensify the land use in the area beyond the Rural Living designation assigned to the site in the Countywide Plan. All environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the proposed Project would be less than significant with the implementation of the mitigations measures included in this document, and when viewed in conjunction with other closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects, would be less than significant.

- c) *Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

The proposed Project would not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, with the implementation of the Municipal Code, other standards requirements and laws, and the mitigation measures included in this document.

Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be less than significant.

XXII. MITIGATION MEASURES

Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

Desert Tortoise. If an Agassiz's desert tortoise is found onsite prior to the initiation of or during construction on any lot, all activities likely to affect that animal(s) must cease and the County, CDFW and USFWS must be contacted to determine appropriate steps. No take of the tortoise(s) may occur without prior authorization from the appropriate regulatory agencies, including CDFW and USFWS.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2:

Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys. In order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, CDFW recommends that certain construction activities not occur during the March 15 and September 15 nesting seasons. Specifically, vegetation should not be removed from the Project site and ground disturbing activities should not be conducted during this period if avoidable. If it is necessary to commence construction on any lot during this period, a qualified biologist must conduct a survey prior to construction and site preparation to survey all shrubs and structures within the Project site for nesting birds.

The surveys should be conducted during the appropriate time of day during the breeding season and must end no more than three days prior to ground disturbing activities. Documentation of surveys and findings should be submitted to the CDFW within ten days of the last survey. If no nesting birds were observed, then site preparation and/or construction may begin. If an active bird nest is located, the plant in which it occurs should be left in place until the birds leave the nest. No construction is allowed near active bird nests of threatened or endangered species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3:

Desert Native Plants. In compliance with §88.01.050 of the County Development Code, a Tree or Plant Removal Permit must be authorized by the County before any protected desert native plant species can be harvested or removed from the subject site. Protected desert native plants are defined by the county and by §80073 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, Division 23.

Furthermore, a Desert Native Plant Assessment may be required by the County to identify the numbers and locations of protected plants in compliance with the California Native Plant Protection Act.

Monitoring BIO-A:

Documentation of pre-construction nesting bird and desert kit fox surveys and findings must be submitted to the CDFW within ten days of completion.

Responsible parties: Project biologist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4:

CDFW Streambed Alteration Agreement. If development is proposed for the area on or around the washes on lots 15 or 16, then the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) must be consulted. If CDFW determines that the activity may substantially affect fish and wildlife resources, then a Streambed Alteration Agreement will be property. The Agreement will include measures to protect those resources and comply with CEQA.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5:

RWQCB CWA 401 Certification. If development is proposed for the area on or around the washes on lots 15 and 16, then the RWQCB must be consulted. If the RWQCB determines that the washes are under its jurisdiction and could be significantly impacted by the proposed development then the proponent will be required to obtain CWA 401 Certification.

Monitoring BIO-B:

Documentation of CWA Certification and/or 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreements must be submitted to the RWQCB, CDFW, as applicable. Application materials must be submitted to the County with the accompanying development applications.

Responsible parties: Project applicant, RWQCB, CDFW, USACE, County Planning Department.

Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure CUL-1:

Discovery of Buried Cultural Materials. In the event that any buried cultural materials are encountered during earth-moving operations associated with the Project, all work within 50 feet of the discovery must be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist and a Tribal monitor can evaluate the nature and significance of the finds.

Monitoring CUL-A:

The archaeological monitor shall provide the County with a report of findings within 30 days of completion of earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project archaeologist, Planning Division

Geology and Soils

Mitigation Measure GEO-1:

Geotechnical investigation. Prior the grading and construction of individual properties, geotechnical investigations should be conducted in order to determine if the soils are prone to expansion or collapse. If these conditions are present, then further mitigation should be implemented prior to ensure the stability of the site.

Monitoring GEO-A:

The geotechnical investigation reports shall be provided to the County prior to earth-moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, Project engineer, County Land Use Services

Mitigation Measure GEO-2:

Discovery of paleontological resources. All earth-moving operations within the Project site reaching below a depth of three feet below ground level must be monitoring periodically for potential paleontological resources. A full-time monitoring program must be implemented if potentially fossiliferous soils are encountered. The monitor should be prepared to quick salvage fossils as they are unearthed to avoid construction delays and should collect samples of sediments that are likely to contain fossil remains of small vertebrates or invertebrates. The monitor must also have the power to temporarily halt grading equipment to allow for the removal of abundant or large specimens.

Monitoring GEO-B:

The paleontological monitor shall provide the County with a report of findings within 30 days of completing earth moving activities.

Responsible Parties: Project applicant, paleontological monitor, County Land Use Services

GENERAL REFERENCES

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Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

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PROJECT-SPECIFIC REFERENCES

Appendix A: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Analysis - CalEEMod Runs, prepared by Terra Nova Planning and Research, March 2023.

Appendix B: "Focused Survey for Agassiz's Desert Tortoise, Habitat Evaluation for Burrowing Owl and Joshua Tree, and General Biological Resource Assessment for a 304-acre site in the community of Joshua Tree," prepared by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants, December 2021.

Appendix C: "Historical Archaeological Resources Survey Report, APN 0599-191-49," prepared by CRM TECH, June 2022.

Appendix D: "Percolation Investigation for Tentative Tract Map # 20584," prepared by AM/PAC and Associates, Inc., May 2022.

Appendix E: "Preliminary Offsite Hydrology Study for 304-Acre Parcel at APN 0599-191-49," prepared by NV5, October 2022.

Appendix F: Consultation regarding VMT with County Department of Public Works, Traffic Division, April 2023.

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APPENDIX A

A1. CalEEMod Construction Outputs

and

A.2 CalEEMod Operations Outputs

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January 2025

APPENDIX B

**Focused Survey for Agassiz's Desert Tortoise,
Habitat Evaluation for Burrowing Owl and Joshua Tree,
and
General Biological Resource Assessment
For a 304-acre± Site
(APN 0599-191-49)
In the
Community of Joshua Tree
San Bernardino County, California**

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

APPENDIX C

Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report
and
Archaeological Exploratory Testing Program Report
Assessor's Parcel Number 0599-191-49
Joshua Tree Area
San Bernardino County, California

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

APPENDIX D

Percolation Investigation

Initial Study Tentative Tract Map No. 20584
JT304 LLC
APN: 00599-191-49
January 2025

APPENDIX E

Preliminary Offsite Hydrology Study

For

304-acre parcel at

APN 0599-191-49

Aberdeen Drive

Joshua Tree, California

County of San Bernardino

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APPENDIX F

Low VMT Area