Thermal Community Park
Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Lead Agency:
Desert Recreation District
45305 Oasis Street
Indio, CA 92201

Prepared by:
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Acronyms

ACBCI	Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
APN	Assessor Parcel Numbers
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BFSA	BFSA Environmental Services, a Perennial Company
BMP	Best Management Practice
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resource Board
CBSC	California Building Standards Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH4	Methane
CNDD	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CO2e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
C-P-S	Scenic Highway Commercial Zoning
CRMTP	Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation plan
CWA	Clean Water Act
dBA	Decibel
DPM	Diesel Particulate Matter
DRD	Desert Recreation District
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FTIP	Federal Transportation Improvement Program
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GPA	General Plan Amendment
GWh	Gigawatt Hours
I10	Interstate 10
IID	Imperial Irrigation District
ISMND	Impact Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
LED	Light Emitting Diode
Leq	Equivalent Sound Level

LI	Light Industrial
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MRZ-1	Mineral Resource Zone 1
M-SC	Manufacturing-Service Commercial
MTCO2e	Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
MU	Mixed Use
N20	Nitrous oxide
NO_x	Nitrogen Dioxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OPR	Office of Planning and Research
OS-R	Open Space Recreation
PM10	Particles that are less than 10 micrometers in diameter
PM2.5	Particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
R-2-8000	Multiple Family Dwellings Zoning
R-3	General Residential Zoning
RCNM	Roadway Construction Noise Model
RMS	Root Mean Square
R-R	Railroad zoning
SCAG	Southern California Association of Government
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SO_x	Sulfur Oxides
SR 86	State Route 86
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SSAB	Salton Sea Air Basin
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminants
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resource
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VHFHS	Very High Fire Hazard Severity
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile organic compounds
WMP	Water Management Plan
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan

1.0 Introduction

1. **Project Title**
   Thermal Community Park

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address**
   Desert Recreation District
   45-305 Oasis Street
   Indio, CA 92201

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number**
   Troy Strange, Director of Planning and Public Works, Desert Recreation District (DRD)
   760-347-3484

4. **Project Location**
   The approximately 9.8 acre proposed Project site is located at the southeast corner of the Olive Street and Church Street intersection in the unincorporated community of Thermal, County of Riverside, California (Assessor Parcel Numbers 757-062-003, 757-062-002). Exhibit 1 shows the Regional Location, Exhibits 2 shows the proposed Project Location, Exhibit 3 shows the proposed Project Site, and Exhibit 4 shows Conceptual Site Plan. Currently, the proposed Project site is undeveloped with some tree coverage and wire fencing.

5. **Project Applicant/Sponsor's Name and Address**
   Desert Recreation District
   45-305 Oasis St
   Indio, CA 92201

6. **General Plan Designation**
   Light Industrial (LI) (See Exhibit 5, Existing and Proposed Land Use Designation).

7. **Zoning**
   Manufacturing-Service Commercial (M-SC) (See Exhibit 6, Existing and Proposed Zoning Designation).

8. **Description of Project**
   The Desert Recreation District (District) is proposing to develop the Thermal Community Park (proposed Project) that will be a new community park with ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, a fitness station, a playground, horseshoe pits, a picnic area, a splash pad, pond area, and parking lots in the area of Thermal, unincorporated Riverside County, California. The site is a former palm tree nursery and is currently covered by palm trees, some light debris, and scrub brush. See Exhibit 4, Conceptual Site Plan.

   The District will be requesting a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to be adopted by the County in order to change the proposed Project site's land use designation from Light Industrial (LI) to Open Space-Recreation (OS-R). The current designation of LI does not permit the construction of public parks, while OS-R designation permits the construction of parks while conforming to existing land use designation in the immediately surrounding area (see Exhibit 5, Existing and Proposed Land Use Designation).

The proposed Project will request for County adoption of a change of zone from the existing Manufacturing-Service Commercial (M-SC) to General Residential (R-3) as shown in Exhibit 6, Existing and Proposed Zoning Designation. The current zoning of M-SC does not permit the construction of public parks, while R-3 zoning permits the construction of parks while conforming to existing zoning in the immediately surrounding area.

Circulation on site will primarily be via pedestrian access. Parking will be located around the perimeter of the site along Church Street to the north and Olive Street to the east. See Exhibit 4, Conceptual Site Plan.

Construction of the park is anticipated to occur in one phase from mid- to late-2023 to mid- to late-2024.

9. Surrounding Land Uses

The proposed Project site, formerly used as a date palm tree farm, is surrounded by a mix of light residential, agricultural, manufacturing, service, and commercial zones. The site is surrounded by single-family residential uses, a vacant parcel, the Imperial County Sheriff's office and a church to the north, by US Route 111 and an office and associated uses to the east, agricultural uses to the south, and by the Coachella Valley Unified School District offices, facilities and a high school to the west.

Direction	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Existing Land Use
North	Medium High Density Residential and Commercial Retail	One-family dwellings (R-3-4000), multiple-family dwellings (R-2-8000), scenic highway commercial (C-P-S)	Residences, businesses, community services
South	Light Industrial	Manufacturing-service commercial zone (M-SC), Mixed Use (MU)	Unused, palm nursery
East	Commercial Retail and Light Industrial	Manufacturing-service commercial zone (M-SC), Light Agriculture (A-1-20), scenic highway commercial (C-P-S), Railroad (R-R)	Residences and small businesses, agriculture, Whitewater River Stormwater Channel
West	High Density Residential	Manufacturing-service commercial zone (M-SC), multiple-family dwellings (R-2-8000)	Schools, unused land

There are no existing utilities located on the site.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

- Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)
- Riverside County Fire Department
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

- **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.?**

- The Desert Recreation District sent letters to 19 Native American Tribes on August 10, 2022. As of November 15, 2022, one response was received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians requesting mitigation measures which are outlined in Section 3.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources.* Additionally, the District received a response from the Desert Cahuilla Indians, who requested a consultation on November 16, 2022.

Exhibit 1: Regional Location

Exhibit 2: Project Location

Exhibit 3: Project Site

Exhibit 4: Conceptual Site Plan

Exhibit 5: Existing and Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation

Exhibit 6: Existing and Proposed Zoning Designation

2.0 Environmental Evaluation

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

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

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☒ Geology/Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Land Use/Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population/Housing	☐ Public Services
☒ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will 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 will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the Proposed Action 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 (EIR) is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the Proposed Action 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 Action, nothing further is required.

_____ _____

Signature Date

3.0 Technical Issue Analysis

3.1 Aesthetics

3.1.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) In nonurbanized 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 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. **Less than Significant Impact.** The Little San Bernardino, Santa Rosa, and San Jacinto mountain ranges can be viewed from most of the Coachella Valley including from the proposed Project site. However, there are no scenic vistas in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project site. The closest scenic features are the Mecca Hills, which are located approximately three and a half miles to the north-east of the proposed Project site.

Proposed buildings would not exceed approximately 15-25 feet in height. Other structures would include fencing and signage which would not exceed approximately 25 feet in height. Field lighting is anticipated to be approximately 40-100 feet high (Stouch Lighting LED Lighting Solutions; 2022) depending on finalized site design (see Exhibit 4, Conceptual Site Plan).

The proposed buildings and site improvements would partially obscure views of the Santa Rosa, San Jacinto, and Little San Bernardino Mountains. However, the impacts would not differ from existing conditions, as the site is surrounded on the south by dense date palm groves up to 40 feet high, to the west by Thermal Ballpark with field lighting, playgrounds, and other shelters similar to what will be used at Thermal Community Park, to the north by an array of residential, commercial, and public service buildings, and to the east by additional palm trees. The park would not substantially alter existing conditions in the area, and impacts would be less than significant.

b- c). **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project site is an unused date palm farm. It does not contain nor is in close proximity to any scenic resources and is not on or near any National Register of Historical Places, California State Historical Landmarks, or California Historical Resources or Points of Interest (California Office of Historic Preservation; 2022).

The nearest freeways to the proposed Project are State Highway 86 (SR 86), which is approximately three-quarters of a mile northeast of the proposed Project site, and Interstate 10 (I10), which is approximately five miles north of the site. The site is not visible from either SR 86 or I10. Neither freeway is designated or eligible as a state scenic highway (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration; 2022).

Demolition activities required for proposed Project construction would involve removal of existing trees and shrubs from the proposed Project site. However, the park development would replace this landscaping with trees, shrubs, and other climate-appropriate vegetation throughout the site. With the exception of the existing trees on site, there are no historic buildings, rock outcroppings at or near the proposed Project site. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

d. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project has the potential to include new sources of nighttime lighting through lights along its baseball fields and tennis courts. Since the proposed Project site is currently vacant with the exception of date palms throughout the site, the play field features of the site have the potential to add new sources of nighttime lighting to the area. However, since surrounding uses only include residential development to the north, US Highway 111 to the east, agricultural fields to the south and school and office uses to the west, impacts from nighttime glare would therefore be less than significant.

3.1.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.1.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

3.2.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a-e. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is currently designated as Prime Farmland in the Riverside County Important Farmland Map of 2016 except for the northeast corner of the site which is designated as Other Lands. The proposed Project site is currently zoned for Manufacturing – Service Commercial (M-SC) under the Riverside County Zoning Code which permits agricultural uses. However, the site's General Plan land use designation of Light Industrial (LI) does not allow Agricultural uses according to the Riverside County General Plan. In California planning, zoning designations are subject to general plan land use designations. When zoning and general plan land use designation conflict, determination for appropriate uses defer to the General Plan Therefore, agricultural uses are not permitted on the proposed Project site. The developers of this site are requesting a zone change and

General Plan amendment to General Residential (R-3) and Open Space-Recreation (OS-R) respectively. Both requested land use designations are less intense use than their current designation and will improve compatibility of the site with existing residential neighborhoods and schools in the surrounding area.

The proposed Project site is not currently used as an active agricultural site, is not currently regulated to allow agricultural use, and is surrounded by thousands of acres of additional prime farmland which still be available for development. Therefore, the proposed Project would have less than significant impact.

3.2.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.2.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.3 Air Quality

3.3.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the Project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** An air quality assessment was completed by Vista Environmental on September 2, 2022 (Appendix A, Air Quality Analysis; 2022). The proposed Project site is located within the Coachella Valley (Valley) portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB) and air quality regulation is administered by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), whose Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) describes air pollution control strategies to be taken by a city, county, or region classified as a nonattainment area. The main purpose of an AQMP is to bring the area into compliance with federal and State air quality standards. CEQA requires that certain projects be analyzed for consistency with the AQMP. For a project to be consistent with the AQMP, it must be consistent with the assumptions and objectives of the AQMP and should not interfere with the region's ability to comply with federal and State air quality standards. If a project is determined to be inconsistent, the lead agency may consider project modifications or inclusion of mitigation to eliminate the inconsistency (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) CEQA Handbook identifies two key measures of consistency:

1. Whether the proposed Project will result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the AQMP.
2. Whether the proposed Project will exceed the assumptions in the AQMP in 2016 or increments based on the year of proposed Project build-out phase.

a. *Criterion 1 – Increase in the frequency or severity of violations:*
Based on the proposed Project's air quality modeling analysis provided in Impact b), it was

determined that short-term construction impacts and long-term operational impacts will not result in significant impacts based on the SCAQMD regional and local thresholds of significance (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Therefore, with compliance with all applicable SCAQMD rules and regulations, the proposed Project is not expected to contribute to the exceedance of any air pollutant concentration standards and is found to be consistent with the AQMP for the first criterion.

b. Criterion 2 – Exceed assumptions in the AQMP:

Consistency with the AQMP assumptions is determined by performing an analysis of the proposed Project with the assumptions in the AQMP. The emphasis of this criterion is to ensure that the analyses conducted for the proposed Project are based on the same forecasts as the AQMP. The AQMP is developed through use of the planning forecasts provided in the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Connect SoCal), adopted September 3, 2020 and the 2019 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (2019 FTIP), adopted September 2018. Connect SoCal is a major planning document for the regional transportation and land use network within southern California. The Connect SoCal is a long-range plan that is required by federal and State requirements placed on the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) and is updated every four years. The 2019 FTIP provides long-range planning for future transportation improvement projects that are constructed with State and/or federal funds within southern California. Local governments are required to use these plans as the basis of their plans for the purpose of consistency with applicable regional plans under CEQA (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

The proposed Project site is currently designated as Light Industrial in the County of Riverside General Plan, which allows for park uses. Development of the proposed park would not result in an inconsistency with the current land use designation. The development of the park would not result in a significant increase in population, which would thereby result in an increase in air pollutant emissions. Therefore the proposed Project would not exceed the AQMP assumptions for the proposed Project site. The proposed Project has been found to be consistent with the AQMP for the second criterion (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Based on above, the proposed Project would not result in an inconsistency with the SCAQMD AQMP. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project site is located within the jurisdiction of the SCAQMD (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). The proposed Project would contribute to regional air pollutant emissions during construction (short-term) and operation (long-term). Construction and operational activities were screened for criteria pollutants by VISTA Environmental including: VOC, NOx, CO, SO2, PM10, and PM2.5.

Construction Emissions. Construction related emissions are expected from the following construction activities: site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, architectural coating, and construction workers commuting (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). The duration of construction activity was based on California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) defaults with construction starting in January 2023 and an opening year of 2024, as shown on Table 1, *Construction Schedule.* The associated construction equipment for all phases based on CalEEMod defaults are shown on Table 1, *Construction Equipment*. Site specific construction fleet may vary due to specific project needs at the time of construction.

Table 1: Construction Schedule

Phase Name	Start Date	End Date	Days
Site Preparation	1/02/23	1/13/23	10
Grading	1/14/23	2/10/23	20
Building Construction	2/11/23	12/29/23	230
Paving	1/02/24	1/29/24	20
Architectural Coating	1/30/24	2/26/24	20

Source: CalEEMod default durations for each phase (see Appendix A, Air Quality Analysis).

Construction emissions for construction worker vehicles traveling to and from the proposed Project site, as well as vendor trips (construction materials delivered to the proposed Project site) were estimated based on CalEEMod defaults (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). The only change to the default trips was that 6 daily vendor truck trips were added to the site preparation and grading phases, in order to account for water truck emissions. Since the proposed Project site is anticipated to be balanced with no import or export of dirt, no haul truck trips were added to the CalEEMod model (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). Table 2 summarizes the anticipated construction equipment list .

SCAQMD Rules that are currently applicable during construction activity for the proposed park proposed Project include:

- Rule 403 / 403.1 (Fugitive Dust)
- Rule 431.2 (Low Sulfur Fuel)
- Rule 1113 (Architectural Coatings)
- Rule 1186 / 1186.1 (Street Sweepers)

Table 2: Construction Equipment

Activity	Equipment	Number	Hours Per Day
Site Preparation	Rubber Tired Dozers	3	8
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	4	8
Grading	Excavators	1	8
	Graders	1	8
	Rubber Tired Dozers	1	8
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	8
	Cranes	1	7
	Forklifts	3	8
	Generator Set	1	8

Activity	Equipment	Number	Hours Per Day
Building Construction	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	7
	Welders	1	8
Paving	Pavers	2	8
	Paving Equipment	2	8
	Rollers	2	8
Architectural Coating	Air Compressors	1	8

Source: CalEEMod default construction equipment for each phase (see Appendix A, (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

The estimated maximum daily construction emissions for the proposed Project are summarized in Table 3, Proposed Project Construction Emissions Summary. Table 3 shows that the proposed Project would not exceed the applicable SCAQMD thresholds during construction and with implementation of applicable rules identified above (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). Therefore, impacts associated with the emissions of criteria pollutants during construction would be less than significant.

Table 3: Proposed Project Construction Emissions Summary

Construction Year	Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_x	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Construction Activities – Summer Scenario						
2023	2.72	27.73	22.29	0.05	8.73	4.96
2024	9.75	9.55	15.03	0.02	0.59	0.46
Construction Activities – Winter Scenario						
2023	2.72	27.74	21.42	0.05	8.73	4.96
2024	9.74	9.55	14.96	0.02	0.59	0.46
Maximum Daily Emissions	**9.75**	**27.74**	**22.29**	**0.05**	**8.73**	**4.96**
SCAQMD Regional Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
SCAQMD Local Threshold	--	304	2,292	--	14	8
Thresholds Exceeded?	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**

Source: CalEEMod (see Appendix A, Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Operational Emissions. Operational activities associated with the proposed Project will result in emissions of CO, VOCs, NOx, SOx, PM10, and PM2.5. Operational related emissions are expected from the following primary sources: area source emissions, energy source emissions, and mobile source emissions (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Project mobile source emissions impacts are dependent on both overall daily vehicle trip generation and the effect of the proposed Project on peak hour traffic volumes and traffic operations in the vicinity of the proposed Project site. The proposed Project-related operational air quality impacts derive primarily from vehicle trips generated by the proposed Project. Trip characteristics available from the report, *Thermal Community Park Project Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment*¸ prepared by Ganddini Group, December 6, 2021, (see Appendix B, Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment; 2022) were utilized in this analysis.

The estimated operational-source emissions for the proposed Project are summarized in Table 4, *Operational Emissions Summary*. As shown, the proposed Project would not exceed the applicable SCAQMD regional and local thresholds (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Table 4: Operational Emissions Summary

	Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_x	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Operational Activities – Summer Scenario						
Proposed Project	0.24	0.02	0.17	<0.01	0.03	<0.01
SCAQMD Regional Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
Threshold Exceeded?	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
Operational Activities – Winter Scenario						
Proposed Project	0.23	0.02	0.15	<0.01	0.03	<0.01
SCAQMD Regional Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
SCAQMD Local Threshold	--	304	2,292	--	4	2
Thresholds Exceeded?	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**

Source: CalEEMod (see Appendix A, Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project has the potential to expose nearby sensitive receptors to criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants (TACs). The nearest sensitive receptor to the proposed Project site are school uses as near as 85 feet to the west of the proposed Project site and a single-family home as near as 120 feet to the north of the proposed Project site. As discussed above in (b), the local concentrations of criteria pollutant emissions have been calculated for construction and operational activities. The analysis above found that less than significant criteria pollutant concentrations would occur during construction and operation of the proposed Project at the nearby sensitive receptors. As such, a less than significant impact would occur to sensitive receptors from localized criteria pollutant concentrations (Air Quality Analysis; 2022).

According to SCAQMD methodology, health effects from TACs are usually described in terms of "individual cancer risk." "Individual Cancer Risk" is the likelihood that a person exposed to concentrations of toxic air contaminants over a 70-year lifetime will contract cancer, based on the use of standard risk-assessment methodology. Construction of the proposed Project would generate TAC emissions from the onsite operation of diesel-powered equipment in the form of diesel particulate matter (DPM). Given the relatively limited number of heavy-duty construction equipment, the varying distances to the nearby sensitive receptors that construction equipment would operate, and the short-term construction schedule, the proposed Project would not result in a long-term (i.e., 70 years) substantial source of toxic air contaminant emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk. In addition, California Code of Regulations Title 13, Article 4.8, Chapter 9, Section 2449 regulates emissions from off-road diesel equipment in California. This regulation limits idling of equipment to no more than five minutes and requires equipment operators to label each piece of equipment and provide annual reports to California Air Resource Board (CARB) of their fleet's usage and emissions. This regulation also requires systematic

upgrading of the emission Tier level of each fleet; currently, no commercial operator is allowed to purchase Tier 0 or Tier 1 equipment and by January 2023 no commercial operator is allowed to purchase Tier 2 equipment. In addition to the purchase restrictions, equipment operators need to meet fleet average emissions targets that become more stringent each year between years 2014 and 2023. Therefore, less than significant short-term TAC impacts would occur during construction of the proposed Project and due to the nominal number of truck trips generated from operation of the proposed park, a less than significant long-term TAC impacts would occur during operation of the proposed Project (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The SCAQMD CEQA Handbook states that an odor impact would occur if the proposed park creates an odor nuisance pursuant to SCAQMD Rule 402, which states:

> *A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property* (South Coast AQMD; 2022).

Construction of the proposed Project would result in short-term emissions associated with construction equipment that may produce odors noticeable to nearby residents. However, these emissions would be incidental and short-term and therefore, would not be significant. Operation of the park includes the use of barbeques on the northeastern portion of the proposed Project site. These are anticipated to be used sporadically and for short durations. Nearby residents to the north may smell barbeques but the odors will be intermittent and would not occur on a daily or hourly basis and should not be offensive (Air Quality Analysis; 2022). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.3.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.3.3 Level of Significance

Not applicable.

3.4 Biological Resources

3.4.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. Less Than Significant Impact. A habitat assessment and Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation plan (CVMSHCP) Consistency Analysis for the proposed was completed by ELMT in September, 2022 (Appendix C, Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Project Consistency Analysis; 2022). ELMT biologist Jacob H. Lloyd Davies conducted a field survey and evaluated the condition of the habitat within the proposed Project on May 16, 2022 (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022).

Special-Status Plants: Nine (9) special-status plant species have been recorded in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as occurring within the United States Geological Survey Indio quadrangle topographical map (Appendix C of Appendix C, Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). No special-status plant species were observed on-site during the field investigation. Based on habitat requirements for the identified special-status species, known species distributions, and existing site conditions, it was determined that the proposed Project site does not have the potential to support any special-status plant species. Due to the significant disturbance of on-site soils and complete lack of natural habitats, no special-status plant species are expected to occur, and all are presumed absent (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022).

Special-Status Wildlife: 25 special-status wildlife species have been reported in the Indio quadrangle (Appendix C, Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). No special-status animal species were observed during the field investigation. However, based on habitat requirements for the identified special-status wildlife species, known distributions, and routine disturbance, it was determined that the proposed Project has a high potential to support Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) and a low potential to support western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*). Further, it was determined that no other special-status wildlife species have the potential to occur on-site and are presumed absent (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022).

Cooper's hawk and western yellow bat are not state or federally threatened or endangered. In order to ensure impacts to Cooper's hawk do not occur from implementation of the proposed Project, a pre-construction nesting bird clearance survey should be conducted prior to ground disturbance. With implementation of the pre-construction nesting bird clearance survey, impacts to Cooper's hawk will be less than significant and no mitigation will be required. Western yellow bat is covered under the CVMSHCP, and as such, no further surveys or additional mitigation measures will be required for this species, if present (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

b. Less Than Significant Impact There are three key agencies that regulate activities within inland streams, wetlands, and riparian areas in California (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Project Consistency Analysis; 2022). The Corps Regulatory Branch regulates discharge of dredge and/or fill materials into "waters of the United States" pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Of the State agencies, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regulates alterations to streambed and associated plant communities pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code, and the Regional Board regulates discharges into surface waters pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022).

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) National Hydrography Dataset were reviewed to determine if any blueline streams or riverine resources have been documented within or immediately surrounding the proposed Project site.

No jurisdictional drainage and/or wetland features were observed within the proposed Project site during the field survey (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Therefore, development of the proposed Project will not result in impacts to Corps, Regional Board, or CDFW jurisdiction and regulatory approvals will not be required.

No special-status natural communities were observed within the boundaries of the proposed Project (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Therefore, no special-status natural communities will be impacted by proposed Project implementation. Impacts on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the State of California will be less than significant.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact** As discussed in the previous section, no jurisdictional drainage and/or wetland features were observed within the proposed Project site during the field survey. Further, no blueline streams have been recorded on the proposed Project site. The nearest recorded blueline stream to the site was identified approximately one quarter of a mile to the northeast within the Whitewater River. Therefore, development of the proposed Project will not result in impacts to Corps, Regional Board, or CDFW jurisdiction and regulatory approvals will not be required (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Impacts would be less than significant.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact** Habitat linkages provide links between larger habitat areas that are separated by development. Wildlife corridors are similar to linkages but provide specific opportunities for animals to disperse or migrate between areas. A corridor can be defined as a linear landscape feature of sufficient width to allow animal movement between two comparatively undisturbed habitat fragments. Adequate cover is essential for a corridor to function as a wildlife movement area. It is possible for a habitat corridor to be adequate for one species yet inadequate for others. (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022).

According to the CVMSHCP, the proposed Project site does not occur within any identified wildlife migratory corridors or linkages. The nearest corridor to the site occurs approximately one fifth of a mile to the northeast within the Whitewater River. The site is isolated from the Whitewater River by existing development and the eastern portion of the larger agricultural operation that the proposed Project site contributes to. In addition, the site does not support natural plant communities that would be expected to contribute to wildlife migratory behavior in a meaningful way. As a result, implementation of the proposed Project will not disrupt or have any adverse effects on any migratory corridors or linkages in the surrounding area (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Impacts will be less than significant.

e-f). **Less Than Significant Impact** The proposed Project was reviewed to determine consistency with the CVMSHCP (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Geographic Information System (GIS) software was utilized by ELMT Consulting to map the proposed Project in relation to the CVMSHCP including conservation areas, corridors and linkages, and sand transport areas. The CVMSHCP requires that local permittees comply with various protective measures for covered species, communities, essential ecological processes, and biological corridors. In addition, certain projects may be subject to local development mitigation fees, a Joint Project Review Process, or other conservation or implementation measures.

The proposed Project is not listed as a planned "Covered Activity" under the published CVMSHCP but is still considered to be a current Covered Activity pursuant to Section 7.1 of the CVMSHCP. According to Section 7.1 of the CVMSHCP, take authorization will be provided for certain activities that take place outside of Conservation Areas including *"new projects approved pursuant to county and city general plans, transportation improvement plans for roads in addition to those addressed in Section 7.2, master drainage plans, capital improvement plans, water and waste management plans, the County's adopted*

Trails Master Plan, and other plans adopted by the Permittees" (Coachella Valley Conservation Commission; 2022).

As a Covered Activity located outside designated conservation areas, construction of the proposed Project would be required to implement the applicable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures described in Section 4.4 of the CVMSHCP. With implementation of applicable avoidance and minimization measures, the proposed Project would be fully consistent with the biological goals and objectives of the CVMSHCP. ELMT Consulting did not identify any other local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (Habitat Assessment CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis; 2022). Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

3.4.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.4.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.5 Cultural Resources

3.5.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the Project:				
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

a-c. Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. A Cultural Resources Survey Program was completed by BFSA Environmental Services, a Perennial Company (BFSA) on October 12, 2022 and revised on January 30, 2023 (Appendix D, Cultural Resources Survey; 2023). The purpose of this investigation was to determine if any cultural resources would be affected by the proposed Project. This study consisted of the processing of a records search of previously recorded archaeological sites on or near the property and the completion of an archaeological survey of the proposed Project, an intensive pedestrian survey of the 10.3-acre property by a qualified archaeologist, and preparation of this report. This archaeological study conformed to County of Riverside Cultural Resource Guidelines and the statutory requirements of CEQA, Section 15064.5.

The archaeological assessment for the proposed Project was negative for the presence of cultural resources (Cultural Resources Survey; 2023). The subject property has been impacted or partially graded in the past for agriculture as early as 1953. When land is cleared, disked, or otherwise disturbed, evidence of surface artifact scatters is typically lost. Whether or not cultural resources have ever existed on the Thermal Community Park Project parcel is unclear. The current status of the property appears to have affected the potential to discover any surface scatters of artifacts, and cultural materials that may have been on site could have been masked by both disking and prior grading across the property.

Given that the prior development within the proposed Project area might mask archaeological deposits, and the proximity to known features exploited by the prehistoric inhabitants of the area such as Lake Cahuilla and the Whitewater River, there is a potential that buried archaeological deposits are present within the proposed Project boundaries (Cultural Resources Survey; 2023). Further, both the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians have indicated that there remains a potential for subsurface resources within the project based on the presence of Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) within the project vicinity. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed Project implement a cultural resources monitoring program conducted by an archaeologist and Native American representative during grading of the property as outlined in the mitigation section below. As such, impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

3.5.2 Mitigation

Monitoring during ground-disturbing activities, such as grading or trenching, by a qualified archaeologist is recommended to ensure that if buried features (*i.e.,* human remains, hearths, or cultural deposits) are present, they will be handled in a timely and proper manner. Further, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians have requested to review the potential for subsurface resources prior to mass grading of the property in addition to the preparation of a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan (CRMTP) prior to any ground disturbance. The lead agency has indicated that the removal of the palm trees and stumps found within the project is slated to occur prior to mass grading. As such, the monitoring program shall include archaeological and Native American monitoring of the tree removal process. The full scope of the monitoring program is provided below (Cultural Resources Survey; 2023):

CUL-1 The Applicant shall retain a qualified professional archaeologist who meets U.S. Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Standards to oversee and coordinate archaeological monitoring of the development. The applicant shall provide written verification that a certified archaeologist has been retained to implement the monitoring program. This verification shall be presented in a letter from the project archaeologist to the lead agency.

CUL-2 During the original cutting of previously undisturbed deposits, the archaeological monitor(s) and tribal representative shall be on-site, as determined by the consulting archaeologist, to perform periodic inspections of the excavations. The frequency of inspections will depend upon the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and the presence and abundance of artifacts and features. The consulting archaeologist shall have the authority to modify the monitoring program if the potential for cultural resources appears to be less than anticipated.

CUL-3 Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the applicant shall enter into a Native American monitoring agreement with one of the Consulting Tribes for the Project. The Native American monitor shall be on-site during all initial ground disturbing activities, including clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, grading, and trenching, within native soils. In consultation with the consulting archaeologist, the Native American Monitor will have the authority to temporarily divert, redirect, or halt the ground disturbance activities to allow identification, evaluation, and potential recovery of cultural resources.

CUL-4 The qualified archaeologist shall develop a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan (CRMTP) to address the details, timing, and responsibility of all archaeological and cultural resource activities that occur on the Project site, in coordination with the Consulting Tribe(s).

CUL-5 The initial removal of palm trees and stumps within the project, which is scheduled prior to formal grading, shall be monitored by the consulting archaeologist and the Consulting Tribe in accordance with the CRMTP to provide an early view of the subsurface.

CUL-6 The archaeological monitor shall conduct an Archaeological Sensitivity Training "Sensitivity Workshop," in conjunction with the Consulting Tribe(s)'s Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). The training session will focus on what the archaeological and tribal cultural resources that may be encountered during earthmoving activities and the procedures to be followed in such an event.

CUL-7 In the event that previously unidentified cultural resources are discovered, the archaeologist shall have the authority to divert or temporarily halt ground disturbance operation in the area of discovery to allow for the evaluation of potentially significant cultural resources. Isolates and clearly non-significant deposits will be minimally documented in the field so the monitored grading can proceed. For potentially significant resources, the archaeologist shall contact the lead agency at the time of discovery. The archaeologist, in consultation with the lead agency, shall determine the significance of the discovered resources. The lead agency must concur with the evaluation before construction activities will be allowed to resume in the affected area. For significant cultural resources, a Research Design and Data Recovery Program to mitigate impacts shall be prepared by the consulting archaeologist and approved by the lead agency before being carried out using professional archaeological methods. All cultural material collected during the grading monitoring program shall be processed and curated according to the current professional repository standards. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.

CUL-8 In the event of discovery of human remains during grading or other ground disturbance, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the discovery) shall cease and the landowner shall comply with State Health and Safety Code § 7050.5 and Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.98. In the event human remains are found and identified as Native American, the landowner shall also notify the … [lead agency so that they] can ensure PRC § 5097.98 is followed.

CUL-9 A final monitoring report documenting the field and analysis results and interpreting any discovered artifact and research data obtained during the monitoring phase shall be completed and submitted to the satisfaction of the lead agency at the conclusion of the project. The report will include Department of Parks and Recreation Primary and Archaeological Site Forms if applicable and will also be provided to any consulting tribe.

3.5.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.6 Energy

3.6.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. Less than Significant Impact. An energy impact assessment was completed by VISTA Environmental on September 6, 2022 (Appendix E, Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). Vista Environmental used the California Emissions Estimator Model™ (CalEEMod) v2020.4.0 to calculate the criteria pollutant emissions created from construction and operation of the proposed Project. The CalEEMod model-run output files are provided in Appendix A of Appendix E, Energy Impact Assessment.

This analysis includes a discussion of the potential energy impacts of the proposed Project, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. The proposed Project would impact energy resources during proposed Project construction and operation. Energy resources that could potentially be impacted include electricity and petroleum-based fuel supplies and distribution systems (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). It should be noted that no natural gas lines are currently located on the site and no natural gas would be utilized by the proposed Project. Electricity, a consumptive utility, is a man-made resource. The production of electricity requires the consumption or conversion of energy resources, including water, wind, oil, gas, coal, solar, geothermal, and nuclear resources, into energy. The delivery of electricity involves a number of system components, including substations and transformers that lower transmission line power (voltage) to a level appropriate for onsite distribution and use. The electricity generated is distributed through a network of transmission and distribution lines commonly called a power grid. Conveyance of electricity through transmission lines is typically responsive to market demands. In 2020, Imperial Irrigation District (IID), which provides electricity to the proposed Project vicinity, provided 3,512 gigawatt-hours (GWh) per year of electricity to its service area (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022).

Petroleum-based fuels currently account for a majority of California's transportation energy sources and primarily consist of diesel and gasoline types of fuels (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). However, the state has been working on developing strategies to reduce petroleum use. Over the last decade California has implemented several policies, rules, and regulations to improve vehicle efficiency, increase the development and use of alternative fuels, reduce air pollutants and GHG emissions from the transportation sector, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Accordingly, petroleum-based fuel consumption in California has declined. According to the CEC, in 2017, 1,052 million gallons of gasoline and 148 million gallons of diesel were sold in Riverside County (CEC; 2018).

Construction Related Energy

The proposed Project would consume energy resources during construction in three general forms:

1. Petroleum-based fuels used to power off-road construction vehicles and equipment on the proposed Project site, construction worker travel to and from the proposed Project site, as well as delivery and haul truck trips (e.g., hauling demolition material to offsite reuse and disposal facilities)

2. Electricity associated with the conveyance of water that would be used during proposed Project construction for dust control (supply and conveyance) and electricity to power any necessary lighting during construction, electronic equipment, or other construction activities necessitating electrical power

3. Energy used in the production of proposed Project related construction materials, such as asphalt, steel, concrete, pipes, and manufactured or processed materials such as lumber and glass

Construction-Related Electricity

During construction, the proposed Project would consume electricity to construct the new structures and infrastructure (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). Electricity would be supplied to the proposed Project site by IID and would be obtained from the existing electrical lines in the vicinity of the proposed Project site. The use of electricity from existing power lines rather than temporary diesel or gasoline-powered generators would minimize impacts on fuel consumption. Electricity consumed during project construction would vary throughout the construction period based on the construction activities being performed. Various construction activities include electricity associated with the conveyance of water that would be used during project construction for dust control (supply and conveyance) and electricity to power any necessary lighting during construction, electronic equipment, or other construction activities necessitating electrical power. Such electricity demand would be temporary and nominal and would cease upon the completion of construction. Overall, construction activities associated with the proposed Project would require limited electricity consumption that would not be expected to have an adverse impact on available electricity supplies and infrastructure. Therefore, the use of electricity during proposed Project construction would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

Since power lines currently exist in the vicinity of the proposed Project site, it is anticipated that only nominal improvements would be required to IID distribution lines and equipment with development of the proposed Project (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). Compliance with the City's guidelines and requirements would ensure that the proposed Project fulfills its responsibilities relative to infrastructure installation, coordinates any electrical infrastructure removals or relocations, and limits any impacts associated with construction of the proposed Project. Construction of the proposed Project's electrical infrastructure is not anticipated to adversely affect the electrical infrastructure serving the surrounding uses or utility system capacity.

Construction-Related Petroleum Fuel Use

Petroleum-based fuel usage represents the highest amount of transportation energy potentially consumed during construction, which would be utilized by both off-road equipment operating on the proposed Project site and on-road automobiles transporting workers to and from the proposed Project site and on-road trucks transporting equipment and supplies to the proposed Project site (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022).

The off-road construction equipment and construction-related vehicle trips fuel usage was calculated through use of the fuel use assumptions provided in Appendix B of Appendix E (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022), which found that construction activities for the proposed Project would consume 18,133 gallons of gasoline and 48,073 gallons of diesel fuel. This equates to 0.0017 percent of the gasoline and 0.032 percent of the diesel consumed annually in Riverside County. As such, the construction-related petroleum use would be nominal, when compared to current county-wide petroleum usage rates.

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project would be required to adhere to all State and SCAQMD regulations for off-road equipment and on-road trucks, which provide minimum fuel efficiency standards (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). As such, construction activities for the proposed Project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Impacts regarding transportation energy would be less than significant. Development of the proposed Project would not result in the need to manufacture construction materials or create new building material facilities specifically to supply the proposed Project. It is difficult to measure the energy used in the production of construction materials such as asphalt, steel, and concrete; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the production of building materials such as concrete, steel, etc., would employ all reasonable energy conservation practices in the interest of minimizing the cost of doing business.

Therefore impacts related to construction activities would be less than significant.

Operational Energy

The ongoing operation of the proposed Project would require the use of energy resources for multiple purposes including, but not limited to, lighting, electronics, water usage, solid waste disposal, landscape equipment, and vehicle trips.

Operations-Related Electricity

Operation of the proposed Project would result in consumption of electricity at the proposed Project site. According to the CalEEMod model (see Appendix A of Appendix E, Energy Impact Assessment; 2022), the proposed Project would consume 18,200 kilowatt-hours per year of electricity (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). This equates to 0.0005 percent of the electricity consumed annually by IID. As such, the operations-related electricity use would be nominal when compared to current electricity usage rates by IID.

Additionally, the proposed Project would comply with all federal, State, and County requirements related to the consumption of electricity, including California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24, Part 6, Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CCR Title 24, Part 11, the CALGreen Code (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). The CCR Title 24, Part 6 and Part 11 standards require numerous energy efficiency measures to be incorporated into the proposed Project, including enhanced insulation and use of energy-efficient lighting and appliances as well as requiring a variety of other energy efficiency measures to be incorporated into the proposed structure. Therefore, it is anticipated the proposed Project will be designed and built to minimize electricity use and that existing and planned electricity capacity and electricity supplies would be sufficient to support the proposed Project's electricity demand.

Operations-Related Petroleum Fuel Use

Operation of the proposed Project would result in increased consumption of petroleum-based fuels

related to vehicular travel to and from the proposed Project site. As calculated in Appendix B of Appendix E (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022), the proposed Project would consume 587 gallons of gasoline per year. This equates to 0.00005 percent of the gasoline consumed in the County annually. As such, the operations-related petroleum use would be nominal when compared to current petroleum usage rates in the County.

Additionally, the proposed Project would be required to comply with all federal, State, and County requirements related to the consumption of transportation energy, including CCR Title 24, Part 11, the CALGreen Code, which requires all new parking lots to provide preferred parking for clean air vehicles (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). Therefore, the proposed Project will be required to be designed and built to minimize transportation energy through the promotion of the use of electric-powered vehicles and that existing and planned capacity and supplies of transportation fuels would be sufficient to support the proposed Project's demand.

Thus, impacts regarding transportation energy supply and infrastructure capacity would be less than significant.

b. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency (Energy Impact Assessment; 2022). Since the Desert Recreation District has not yet adopted an energy plan, the applicable plans are from the State. The proposed Project would be required to meet the Title 24, Part 6 building energy efficiency requirements that require incorporation of several energy efficiency measures into the design of the proposed park, including use of Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting, enhanced insulation and windows, high-efficiency ventilation and appliances within the proposed Project (California Energy Commission; 2022). In addition, the proposed Project would be required to meet the Part 11 California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen), which provides minimum requirements for bicycle parking, carpool/vanpool/electric vehicle parking spaces, use of water-efficient plumbing and landscaping fixtures, recycling and use of recycled materials in building products (California Department of General Services; 2022). Through implementation of the above programs, regulations, and policies, the proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant.

3.6.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.6.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.7 Geology and Soils

3.7.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

a-i. **No Impact.** There are no known active faults crossing the proposed Project site. The proposed Project site is located approximately 3 miles from the nearest fault, which lies northeast of the proposed Project site within the Mecca Hills (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). Therefore, ground rupture due to faulting is considered unlikely at this site. No impact would occur.

a-ii. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project site is located in a seismically active area of southern California and is expected to experience moderate to severe ground shaking during the lifetime of the proposed Project. This risk is not considered substantially different than that of other similar properties in the southern California area. As a mandatory condition of proposed Project approval, the proposed Project would be required to construct the proposed buildings in accordance with the California Building Standards Code (CBSC), also known as California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 24 (Part 2) (California Building Standards Commission; 2022). The CBSC provide standards that must be met to safeguard life or limb, health, property, and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of all buildings and structures, and have been specifically tailored for California earthquake conditions. With mandatory compliance with these standards, potential impacts related to seismic ground shaking would be less than significant. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects, including loss, injury, or death, involving seismic ground shaking. Impacts would be less than significant.

a-iii. **Less than Significant Impact.** Liquefaction takes place when loosely packed, water-logged sediments at or near the ground surface lose their strength in response to strong ground shaking (United States Geological Survey; 2022). The proposed Project site is located in an area with high susceptibility to liquefaction (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). However, the proposed Project site is very flat with very little elevation variation, and the possibility of ground failure is low. Furthermore, where liquefaction hazards are found to exist, appropriate engineering design and construction measures are to be incorporated into the proposed Project design by the State of California as deemed appropriate by the proposed Project engineer Due to the site's lack of elevation variation, and with appropriate design and construction measures, impacts from liquefaction will be less than significant.

a-iv. **No Impact.** The proposed Project site is flat and has very little variation in elevation ranging from approximately -127 to -125 feet below sea level (Google Earth Pro; 2022). The area surrounding the proposed Project site also has very little elevation variation. The closest areas with significant elevation variation are the Mecca Hills approximately 3 miles northeast and the Santa Rose Mountains which are approximately 7 miles southwest. Based on a review of the ***California Geological Survey*** (CGS) *Information Warehouse: Reported California Landslides* that records landslides within California, no landslides have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed Project site, the nearest one having occurred approximately 47 miles southwest in Julian, California on March 18, 2022 (CGS; 2022). Additionally, the CGS has not identified the proposed Project site as being in a zone susceptible to landslides. Therefore, no impact would occur.

b. **Less than Significant Impact.** During construction of the proposed Project, soils would be disrupted during grading activities, thereby increasing the potential for wind or water-related erosion and sedimentation until construction is completed. Because the proposed Project includes more than 25 parking spaces, it would be required by Riverside County to prepare and implement a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), which is a site-specific post-construction water quality management program designed to minimize the release of waterborne pollutants, including pollutants of concern for downstream receiving waters, under long-term conditions via Best Management Practices (BMPs) (County of Riverside Transportation Department; 2022). The WQMP also is required to establish a post-construction implementation and maintenance plan to ensure on-going, long-term erosion protection.

With the implementation of the WQMP, the proposed Project would comply with County requirements and minimize its impact on soils. Impacts would be less than significant.

c-d. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is flat and has very little variation in elevation ranging from approximately -127 to -125 feet below sea level (Google Earth Pro; 2022). The area surrounding the proposed Project site also has very little elevation variation. The closest areas with significant elevation variation are the Mecca Hills approximately 3 miles northeast and the Santa Rose Mountains which are approximately 7 miles southwest. Based on a review of the ***California Geological Survey (CGS) Information Warehouse: Reported California Landslides*** that records landslides within California, no landslides have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed Project site, the nearest one having occurred approximately 47 miles southwest in Julian, California on March 18, 2022 (CGS; 2022). Additionally, the CGS has not identified the proposed Project site as being in a zone susceptible to landslides. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The proposed Project site does not contain substantial natural or man-made slopes. Additionally, there are no hillsides in the vicinity of the proposed Project site with the potential to expose the site to landslide hazards. Therefore, no impact would occur related to landslides.

Liquefaction takes place when loosely packed, water-logged sediments at or near the ground surface lose their strength in response to strong ground shaking (United States Geological Service; 2022). The proposed Project site is located in an area with high susceptibility to liquefaction (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). However, the proposed Project site is very flat with very little elevation variation, and the possibility of ground failure is low. Furthermore, where liquefaction hazards are found to exist, appropriate engineering design and construction measures are to be incorporated into the proposed Project design by the State of California as deemed appropriate by the proposed Project engineer. Due to the site's lack of elevation variation, and with appropriate design and construction measures, impacts from liquefaction will be less than significant.

Lateral spreading or flow are terms referring to landslides that commonly form on gentle slopes and that have rapid fluid-like flow movement, like water (United States Geological Survey [USGS]; 2022). There are no creeks or open bodies of water adjacent to the proposed Project site where lateral spreading could occur (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). Therefore, the potential for lateral spreading on or adjacent to the proposed Project site is low.

Therefore, impacts associated with liquefaction, lateral spreading, soil shrinkage/subsidence, and collapse would be less than significant.

c. No Impact. The proposed Project would not involve the use of septic tanks or any other alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

d. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed Project site is located in a high sensitivity paleontological zone (High A) (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). High A designation is based on geologic formations or mapped rock units that are known to contain or have the correct age and depositional conditions to contain significant paleontological resources. These include rocks of Silurian or Devonian age and younger that have potential to contain remains of fossil fish, and Mesozoic and Cenozoic rocks that contain fossilized body elements and trace fossils such as tracks, nests, and eggs.

e. No impact. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater systems will be used on site. Therefore, there will be no impact.

f. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. A Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP) was completed on October 12, 2022 by BFSA to address the treatment of scientifically significant fossil remains that might be uncovered by earthmoving activities at previously unknown fossil sites within the proposed Project (Appendix D, Cultural Resources Survey; 2022). The existence of potentially fossiliferous early Holocene fluvial and lacustrine deposits of ancient Lake Cahuilla mapped across the proposed Project, the known occurrence of fossils from the surface and at shallow depths from these sediments across the Salton Basin, and the "High" paleontological sensitivity rating assigned to deposits of ancient Lake Cahuilla for yielding paleontological resources all support the recommendation that full-time paleontological monitoring from the surface be required during mass grading and excavation activities in undisturbed sediments in order to mitigate any adverse impacts (loss or destruction) to potential, nonrenewable paleontological resources (PRIMP; 2022).

3.7.2 Mitigation

With the implementation of mitigation measures under CA-1 through CA-9, impacts will be less than significant.

PAL-1: When implemented, the following mitigation measures will reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources to less than significant (PRIMP; 2022):

- All mass grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching activities within undisturbed alluvial/lacustrine deposits at the proposed Project, starting at the surface, are to be monitored full-time for paleontological resources. Prior to initiation of any grading, drilling, and/or excavation activities, a preconstruction meeting will be held and attended by the paleontologist of record, representatives of the grading contractor and subcontractors, the proposed Project owner or developer, and a representative of the lead agency. The nature of potential paleontological resources shall be discussed, as well as the protocol that is to be implemented following discovery of any fossiliferous materials. Monitoring of any potential artificial fill or disturbed soils is not required.
- A Riverside County-approved paleontologist, or personnel managed at the direction of a Riverside County-approved paleontologist, shall monitor earth disturbance activities for potential paleontological resources.
- In the field, the paleontological monitors have the authority and responsibility to halt or divert grading operations.
- The paleontological principal investigator shall notify the County of Riverside of any fossil discoveries by email and/or phone call.
- Paleontological salvage during trenching activities is typically from the trench spoils and does not delay the trenching activity. Fossils encountered during earth-disturbing activities will be collected and placed in cardboard flats or plastic buckets and identified by field number, collector, and date collected. On mass grading projects, any discovered fossil site is protected by flagging to prevent it from being overrun by earthmovers (scrapers) before salvage begins. All grading activities within 50 feet of the discovery site should be suspended until fossil recovery has been completed. Fossils are collected in a similar manner, with notes and photographs being taken before removing fossils. If the site involves a large terrestrial vertebrate, for example, large bone(s) or a mammoth tusk, that is/are

too large to be easily removed by a single monitor, a field crew will be sent to the site to excavate around the find, encase the discovery within a plaster jacket, and remove it after the plaster has set. For large fossils, use of the contractor's construction equipment is solicited to remove the jacket to a safe location. It sometimes happens that fossils are found by construction workers when a paleontological monitor is not on-site or is occupied elsewhere on a grading project. In such cases, all work should be halted within 50 feet of the discovery location until it can be properly evaluated by the paleontological monitor or professional paleontologist.

- Sediments containing small invertebrate and/or vertebrate fossils are considered just as important as larger fossils and will always be collected (see below). When vertebrate fossil remains are recovered, additional sediment samples will be taken from the same location to process micro-vertebrate specimens.
- Isolated fossils will be collected by hand, wrapped in paper, and placed in temporary collecting flats or five-gallon buckets. Notes will be taken on the map location and stratigraphy of the site, and the site will be photographed before it is vacated and the fossils are removed to a safe place. Particularly small invertebrate fossils typically represent multiple specimens of a limited number of organisms, and a scientifically suitable sample can be obtained by one to several five-gallon buckets of fossiliferous sediment. If it is possible to dry-screen the sediment in the field, a concentrated sample may consist of one or two buckets of material. For micro-vertebrate fossils, the standard test is usually the observed presence of small pieces of bone within the sediments. If bone is present, multiple five-gallon buckets of sediment can be collected and returned to a separate facility to wet-screen the sediment. If, after five buckets have been wet-screened and have failed to yield any micro-vertebrate or other fossil material under microscopic examination, then this process can be terminated. In the laboratory, any recovered fossils are cleaned of extraneous matrix, any breaks are repaired, and the specimen, if necessary, is stabilized by soaking in an archivally approved acrylic hardener (e.g., a solution of acetone and Paraloid B-72).
- Fossils will be identified by an adjunct invertebrate or vertebrate paleontology specialist, depending on the group of fossils needing identification (e.g., mollusks, reptiles, birds, mammals, or fish). Standard museum curation steps will be utilized by, or under the direct supervision of, the principal investigator, who has nine years of paleontological curatorial experience. Curation steps include cleaning, preparing, sorting, identifying, painting, numbering, and labeling all specimens before submittal to the receiving institution.
- Pursuant to the County of Riverside's "SABER" Policy, paleontological materials (fossils) found in Riverside County should, by preference, be directed to the Western Science Center in Hemet, California. A written agreement between the proposed Project developer and the preferred archival institution should be in hand before grading begins. The proposed Project owner/developer will assume financial responsibility for any institutional curation fees for the proposed Project.
- A final written report will be produced by the proposed Project paleontologist, and submitted to the County of Riverside geologist at the conclusion of grading activities for the proposed Project. The report will include sections on general background information, previous studies (both geologic and palaeontologic), results of findings and analysis, discussion of all recovered fossils, a fossil list identified to the lowest taxonomic level possible, a list of references cited, index and locality maps, and graphics to show the locations of all fossil localities. A letter documenting the receipt and acceptance of the fossil collections by the receiving institution must be included in the final report, a copy of which is to be archived with the fossil collection. If fossils are not recovered during the proposed Project, the final report will be in a shortened letter format.
- The developer or owner will assume financial responsibility for the PRIMP and any associated curation fees for the proposed Project.

- The proposed Project paleontologist and a California Professional Geologist will be the author(s) signing all paleontological reports related to the proposed Project.

3.7.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

3.8.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** An assessment Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions impacts for the proposed Project site was completed by VISTA Environmental Consulting (VISTA) (Appendix G, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact; 2022). VISTA found that the proposed Project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. The proposed Project would result in the development of a community park. The proposed Project is anticipated to generate construction and operational GHG emissions from construction activities and equipment, area sources, energy sources, mobile sources, solid waste, and water supply, treatment and distribution The proposed Project's GHG emissions have been calculated with the CalEEMod model for construction and operational emissions. A summary of the results is shown below in Table 5, *Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact; 2022).

Table 5: Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Emission Source	Emissions (metric tons per year)[1]			
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	Total CO_2e
Construction Emissions (amortized)	19.29	<0.01	<0.01	19.57
Operational Emissions	15.62	0.01	<0.01	16.02
Total CO_2e (all sources)	34.91	0.01	<0.01	35.59
SCAQMD Thresholds (CO_2e)				3,000
Threshold Exceeded?				**NO**

Source: CalEEMod (see Appendix C of Appendix G, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact).

The Desert Recreation District has not adopted its own numeric threshold of significance for determining impacts with respect to GHG emissions (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact; 2022). A screening threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO2 equivalent (MTCO2e) per year was used to determine if additional analysis is required as an acceptable approach for small projects. This approach is a widely accepted threshold used by the County of Riverside and numerous cities in the South Coast Air Basin and is based on the SCAQMD staff's proposed GHG screening threshold for stationary source emissions for non-industrial projects, as described in the SCAQMD's *Interim CEQA GHG Significance Threshold for Stationary Sources, Rules and Plans* (South Coast AQMD;

2022).

The data provided in Table 5 shows that the proposed Project would create 35.59 MTCO2e per year (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact; 2022). As shown, the proposed Project would not exceed the 3,000 MTCO2e threshold. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact; 2022). The Desert Recreation District does not yet have a Climate Action Plan or Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, however the County of Riverside adopted the County of Riverside Climate Action Plan (CAP) on December 2015 and updated November 2019. The 2015 CAP utilized a GHG emissions reduction target of a 15 percent decrease from 2008 levels by the year 2020, in order to meet the requirements of AB 32 and SB 375. The CAP was updated in 2019 in order to address a 2017 Settlement Agreement with the Sierra Club and other groups as well as to bring the CAP in conformance with SB 32 and AB 197 that set a statewide 2030 goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The 2017 Settlement Agreement updated the CAP to also be in alignment with the goal and policies for new development provided in California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, prepared by the California Air Resource Board (CARB), November 2017.

The CAP has developed a process for determining significance of GHG impacts from new development projects that includes (1) applying an emissions level that is determined to be less than significant for small projects, and (2) utilizing Screening Tables to mitigate proposed Project GHG emissions that exceed the threshold level (Riverside County Planning Department; 2022). The CAP has provided a threshold of 3,000 $MTCO_2e$ per year, which was based on capturing 90 percent of emission from all projects in the County, to be used to identify projects that require the use of Screening Tables or a project-specific technical analysis to quantify and mitigate proposed Project emissions. As detailed above in impact a), the proposed Project would generate 35.59 $MTCO_2e$ per year, which is within the 3,000 $MTCO_2e$ per year threshold. Therefore, impact would be less than significant.

3.8.2 Mitigation

No mitigation measures required.

3.8.3 Level of Significance

Not Applicable.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

3.9.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a-b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will consist of a new community park with ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, a fitness station, a playground, horseshoe pits, a picnic area, a splash pad, pond area, and parking lots. During construction, equipment used onsite will use typical fluids such as diesel or gasoline, hydrologic fluids, antifreeze and motor oil. However, no maintenance of construction vehicles would occur onsite. Therefore, no transport or disposal, including accidental spills of typical construction equipment fluids would occur.

During operation of the proposed Project, typical pesticides and herbicides would likely be used to maintain the landscaping, however, Desert Recreation District would be required to store and use

these according to the manufacturer's specification similar to the use of these materials at other park sites. The proposed park expansion would not create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials because the park will not use significant quantities of hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** There are 3 schools with a 0.5-mile radius to the proposed park site: La Familia High School, John Kelley Elementary School, and Kokell Elementary School. The proposed park expansion would not create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials because the park uses will not use significant quantities of hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste. During construction, equipment used onsite will use typical fluids such as diesel or gasoline, hydrologic fluids, antifreeze and motor oil. However, no maintenance of vehicles would occur onsite. Therefore, no transport or disposal, including accidental spills of typical construction equipment fluids would occur.

During operation of the proposed Project, typical pesticides and herbicides would likely be used to maintain the landscaping, however, the client would be required to store and use these according to the manufacturer's specification similar to the use of these materials at other park sites. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

d. **Less than Significant Impact.** The nearest cleanup sites are both located at the Jaccqueline Cochran Airport approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the site (Department of Toxic and Substance Control EnviroStor Database; 2022): Army Airport, whose status is designated as *Inactive – Needs Evaluation*, and Thermal Ground Air STA Base whose status is designated as *Inactive – Action Required.* Both sites are categorized as *Military Evaluation*. Potential contaminants for the site include explosives, lead, munitions debris, and perchlorate in the soil. However, the clean-up status for the site has been deemed inactive as of August 15, 2019 (Department of Toxic and Substance Control EnviroStor Database; 2022).

The Thermal Landfill is also located approximately 1.5 miles south of the site, south of 59th Avenue between Polk Street and Filmore Street in Thermal (Google Earth Pro; 2022). Its status is designated as *Certified/Operation & Maintenance*, and it has been categorized as *Voluntary Cleanup* (Department of Toxic and Substance Control EnviroStor Database; 2022). The site was designated "Voluntary" clean-up due to metals, organochlorine pesticides, and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons in the soil. However, the site's clean-up status has been deemed certified/operation and maintenance as of June 28, 2019 (Department of Toxic and Substance Control EnviroStor Database; 2022). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. **Less than Significant Impact.** The closest airport to the proposed Project site is the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, which is approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the proposed Project site (Google Earth Pro; 2022). The proposed Project site is located within the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility (ALUC) Airport Influence Area Zone D (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). Zone D prohibits highly noise-sensitive outdoor non-residential uses and hazards to flight (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission; 2022).

The proposed use of the proposed Project is not noise-sensitive and would not cause a safety hazard for people utilizing the proposed Project area. Furthermore, the proposed Project would not present a flight hazard to aircraft utilizing the airport. In addition to this, the proposed Project would be subject

to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission and would comply with all applicable regulations. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

f. **Less than Significant Impact.** The County of Riverside Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the County's hazards, reviews and assesses past disaster occurrences, estimates the probability of future occurrences, and sets goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and man-made hazards (County of Riverside Emergency Management Department; 2022). The proposed Project would adhere to any applicable mitigation strategies listed within the plan to assure that the proposed Project would not physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Therefore, Impacts would be less than significant.

g. **No Impact.** See section 3.20, *Wildfire*.

3.9.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.9.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not Applicable.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

3.10.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or 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 polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would be subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater regulations for construction which are required when there is a soil disturbance of more than one acre. The proposed Project will be required to comply with all rules, regulations, and procedures of the NPDES permit for municipal, construction, and industrial activities as outlined by the California State Water Resources Control Board or any of its Regional Water Quality Control Boards (State of California Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board; 2022).

The proposed Project will also be required to with the State's most current Construction General Permit (CGP) Order 2009-0009-DWQ. The CGP requires the development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which is designed to help prevent potential adverse effects to surface water quality that would occur during the construction of the proposed Project (California State Water Resources Control Board; 2022).

Compliance with the requirements for the preparation of the SWPPP and NPDES would ensure that impacts associated with water quality standards or waste discharge requirements would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required. Impacts would be less than significant.

b. Less than Significant Impact. The primary source of water in the Coachella Valley is groundwater extracted by deep wells and replenished with Colorado River Water. The CVWD will provide domestic water service to the proposed Project and is a participant in the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group that prepared an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (WMP) in 2018 (Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group). The 2018 Integrated Regional WMP determined that long-term regional demand for potable water is expected to increase; however, with continued conservation measures and replenishment of groundwater, sufficient supplies would be available to meet the projected demand. Therefore, proposed Project water demands have already been accounted for within the 2018 Integrated Regional WMP and sufficient water supplies exist to serve the proposed Project.

The proposed Project would be required to comply with the CVWD's and the County's water-efficiency requirements, such as including the use of drought-tolerant planting materials and limited landscaping irrigation. The proposed Project would also be required to comply with the CVWD's drought restrictions and water reduction measures as applicable. Therefore, compliance and implementation of CVWD and County requirements would ensure that the proposed Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, and no mitigation would be require. Impacts would be less than significant.

c-i-iii. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is located on flat land approximately one third of a mile west of the nearest river or stream (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022). All of the proposed storm drain infrastructure will be incorporated into a Drainage Plan that would be submitted to and subject to review by the County's Public Works Department in order to ensure compliance as required by Riverside County (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District; 2022). The required grading and drainage plans would be designed to prevent erosion and/or siltation on – or off-site by controlling stormwater flow. Therefore, with implementation of required drainage controls, impacts would be less than significant.

c-iv. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is located in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain Zone AE, meaning that the proposed Project site is located in an area that has at least a 1-percent annual chance of flooding in any given year (FEMA; 2022). Through proposed design features, the proposed Project would not impede or redirect flood flows and impacts would be less than significant.

d. No Impact. The proposed Project site is located within U.S Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone AE (FEMA; 2022). The proposed Project site is not located within the vicinity of any other water bodies. Because the proposed Project site is 10 miles northwest of the Salton Sea, 80 miles from the Pacific Ocean, and far from any lakes or dams (Riverside County Map My County V10; 2022),

there is no possibility of dam failure, tsunami or seiche impacting the proposed Project. Therefore, there would be no impact.

e. **Less than Significant Impact**. Proposed Project water demand would be accounted for by CVWD and sufficient water supplies exist to serve the proposed Project (Coachella Valley Water District; 2022). Because the proposed Project includes more than 25 parking spaces, it would be required to implement a project specific WQMP approved by the County and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for both construction and operational activities (County of Riverside Transportation Department; 2022). The WQMP incorporates design features that would prevent the proposed Project from conflicting with or obstructing implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.10.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.10.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not Applicable.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

3.11.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. No Impact. The closest residential development is located immediately across Church Street to the north and Olive Street to the west of the proposed Project site. These residential developments consist of single-family homes (Google Earth Pro; 2022). The proposed Project involves the development of a neighborhood park, soccer field and park amenities. Development of the proposed Project would not physically disrupt or divide the arrangement of an established community. Therefore, no impact would occur.

b. Less than Significant Impact. The development of the proposed Project would consist of a new community park with ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, a fitness station, a playground, horseshoe pits, a picnic area, a splash pad, pond area, and parking lots (see Exhibit 4, Conceptual Site Plan). The proposed Project site is currently zoned Manufacturing-Service Commercial (M-SC) (Riverside County Zoning Ordinance; 2022) and is designated Light Industrial (Riverside County General Plan; 2022). However, the proposed Project would require a General Plan Amendment to Open Space-Recreation (OS-R) and a Change of Zone to General Residential (R-3).

The proposed Project site is located within the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility (ALUC) Airport Influence Area within Zone D (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission; 2022). Zone D prohibits highly noise-sensitive outdoor non-residential uses and hazards to flight. The proposed use of the site would not be highly noise-sensitive non-residential use, and structures on the site would not present a flight risk to aircraft using the airport. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the proposed Project area and would comply with all applicable requirements for ALUC Zone D.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not cause significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigation an environmental effect. Impacts would be less than significant.

3.11.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.11.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not Applicable.

3.12 Mineral Resources

3.12.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a-b. No Impact. The proposed Project site is within Mineral Resource Zone 1 (MRZ-1); therefore no significant mineral deposits are present on the site, nor does the site have the likelihood for their presence (Riverside County General Plan; 2022). The proposed Project site is currently zoned M-SC (manufacturing-service commercial zone) and is designated as Light Industrial in the General Plan. Neither the existing nor proposed zoning designations allow for mineral production. Furthermore, if a potential mineral extraction operation were to be located within the proposed Project site, it would be incompatible both with the land use designation and surrounding land uses. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.12.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.12.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not Applicable.

3.13 Noise

3.13.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a. Less than Significant Impact. A noise impact study was completed by VISTA Environmental (VISTA) on September 2, 2022 (Appendix H, Noise Impact Study; 2022). The Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) Version 1.1. was utilized by VISTA to calculate the noise from construction activities and reference noise sources of parks were utilized to calculate operational noise impacts. The RCNM model output files and reference noise measurement printouts are provided in Appendix C of Appendix H, Noise Impact Study. VISTA found that the proposed Project may generate substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in excess of standards established in the Riverside County General Plan or Noise Ordinance:

Construction Noise

Construction noise represents a short-term increase in the ambient noise levels throughout the proposed Project site. Noise generated during construction would be dependent on the mix and make up of construction equipment, site geometry and the distance between the noise source and receiver. Proposed Project construction would consist of activities related to site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. The nearest sensitive receptors are school uses approximately 85 feet to the west of the proposed Project site and a single-family home as near as 120 feet to the north.

General Plan Policy N 13.1 requires that construction noise impacts be minimized on adjacent uses through acceptable practices (Riverside County General Plan; 2022). General Plan Policy N 13.2 requires that construction activities be limited to established hours of operation in order to mitigate the generation of excessive or adverse noise impacts on the surrounding community. Section 9.52.020(I) of the Riverside County Municipal Code provides the established hours of construction operations and details that construction activities that occur between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during the months of June through September and between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during the months of October through May are exempt from the Noise Ordinance (Riverside County Municipal Code; 2022). General Plan Policy 13.4 requires that all construction equipment utilize noise reduction features (e.g. mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than what was originally installed by the manufacturer. Through adherence to County regulations, construction of the proposed Project would not exceed the applicable standards in the General Plan and Municipal Code.

However, the County construction noise standards do not provide any limits to the noise levels that may be created from construction activities and even with adherence to the County standards, the resultant construction noise levels may result in a significant substantial temporary noise increase to the nearby sensitive receptors. In order to determine if the proposed construction activities would create a significant substantial temporary noise increase, the construction noise standards provided in the Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (FTA Manual), prepared by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), September 2018 (Federal Transit Administration; 2022), has been utilized, since this is the only guidance document from a government agency that defines what constitutes a significant construction noise impact from implementing a project. The FTA Manual details that a significant construction noise impact would occur if construction noise exceeds 80 decibel (dBA) equivalent sound level (Leq) over an 8-hour workday at any of the nearby homes.

Construction noise impacts to the nearby sensitive receptors have been calculated through the use of the Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) and through use of the construction equipment assumptions generated by the CalEEMod model (see Appendix A of Appendix H, Noise Impact Study). For each phase of construction, all construction equipment was analyzed based on being placed in the middle of the proposed Project site, which is based on the analysis methodology detailed in the FTA Manual for a General Assessment. However, in order to provide a conservative analysis, all equipment was analyzed, instead of just the two nosiest pieces of equipment as detailed in the FTA Manual. The results are shown below in Table 6, and the RCNM printouts are provided in Appendix D of Appendix H, Noise Impact Study (2022).

Table 6: Construction Noise Levels at Nearby Sensitive Receptors

Construction Phase	Construction Noise Level (dBA Leq) at: School Uses to West	Home to North
Site Preparation	71	70
Grading	71	70
Building Construction	72	71
Paving	67	66
Architectural Coatings	59	58
FTA Construction Noise Threshold3	85	80
Exceed Threshold?	No	No

Notes:
1 The nearest home is located as near as 100 feet southwest of the proposed Project site (160 feet from the center of the proposed Project site)

Construction Phase	Construction Noise Level (dBA Leq) at: School Uses to West	Home to North
2 The nearest church is located as near as 250 feet southeast of the proposed Project site (500 feet from the center of the proposed Project site)		
3 Obtained from the FTA Manual (FTA, 2018)		

Source: RCNM, Federal Highway Administration, 2006 (See Appendix D of Appendix H, Noise Impact Study).

Table 7 shows that the greatest noise impact would occur during the site preparation, grading, and building construction phases of construction at the homes on the southwest side of the proposed Project site with a noise level as high as 72 dBA at the school uses to the west and 71 dBA at the home to the north, which are within the FTA's construction noise thresholds of 80 dBA for residential uses and 85 dBA for commercial uses. Therefore, through adherence to the allowable construction times detailed in Section 9.52.020(I) of the Riverside County Code, the proposed Project would not create a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels from construction of the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Noise

The proposed Project consists of development of a community park. As detailed in the Thermal Community Park Project Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment¸ prepared by Ganddini Group, December 6, 2021, (see Appendix B, Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment; 2022), the proposed Project would generate an average of 8 daily trips, which is a negligible increase in traffic. As such, no roadway noise impacts would occur from the proposed Project and this operational noise analysis is limited to onsite noise sources. The potential project-related operational noise sources within the proposed Project site are expected to include the following:

- Parking lot vehicle movements
- Playground, splash pad and picnic area
- Tennis and Basketball courts
- Multi-purpose ball fields
- Baseball field

Section 9.52.040 of the Riverside County Code limits noise created by the proposed commercial uses on the nearby residential properties to 55 dBA between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. and to 45 dBA between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. and at the nearby public facilities to 65 dBA between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. and to 45 dBA between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. (Riverside County Code of Ordinances; 2022). Since the school uses to the west are not used at nighttime, only the daytime noise threshold has been utilized to analyze the noise impacts to the school uses.

In order to determine potential noise impacts from the above noise sources, reference noise measurements were taken from each of the above sources. The noise levels were calculated through use of standards geometric spreading of noise from a point source of 6 dB per doubling of distance between source and receptor. It should be noted that the reference noise measurements were taken at other parks that had multiple activities occurring simultaneously. Since each reference measurement already accounts for the combined sources noise levels, the noise levels from all sources were not added together. A summary of the calculated noise level at the nearby homes is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Onsite Operational Noise Levels at Nearby Sensitive Receptors

Noise Source	School Uses to West		Home to North	
	Distance – Source to Receptor (feet)	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Distance – Source to Receptor (feet)	Noise Level (dBA Leq)
Parking Lots	85	38	120	35
Playground, Splash Pad & Picnic Area	320	41	370	40
Tennis & Basketball Courts	120	35	260	28
Multi-Purpose Ball fields	300	41	520	36
Baseball Field	140	41	440	32
County Noise Standard (Day/Night)		65		55/45
Exceed Threshold?		No		No/No

Source: Reference Noise Measurements (See Appendix D of Appendix H, Noise Impact Study).

Table 7 shows that all onsite noise sources at the school uses to the west would be within the County's daytime noise standard of 65 dBA for public facilities. Table 7 also shows that all onsite noise sources at the nearest home to the north would be within both the County's daytime noise standard of 55 dBA and nighttime noise standards of 45 dBA at the nearest home to the north of the proposed Project site. As such, operations-related onsite noise impacts would be less than significant.

b. Less than Significant Impact. Construction activities can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment used and methods used, and distance to the affected structures soil type. Ground-borne vibration levels resulting from construction activities were estimated by data published by the FTA. Table 8, Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment, provides a summary of vibration levels for various construction equipment types that would be used during construction of the proposed Project. It should be noted that the County threshold is typically 4 times lower than the PPV values shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	PPV (in/sec) at 25 feet
Vibratory Roller	0.210
Small bulldozer	0.003
Jackhammer	0.035
Loaded Trucks	0.076
Large Bulldozer	0.089

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2018.

From the list of equipment shown in Table 8, a vibratory roller with a vibration level of 0.210 inch-per-second PPV at 25 feet would be the source of the highest vibration levels of all equipment utilized during construction activities for the proposed Project. Based on typical propagation rates at 100 feet, this would result in a vibration level of 0.01 inch-per-second PPV (0.003 inch-per-second RMS) at the nearest offsite residential structure to the proposed Project site. The construction-related vibration levels would be below the 0.01 inch-per-second RMS threshold detailed above. Therefore, a less than significant vibration impact is anticipated from construction of the proposed Project.

Operation of the proposed community park would not include any known sources of vibration. Therefore, no vibration impact is anticipated from operation of the proposed Project.

c. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project may expose people residing in the proposed Project area to excessive noise levels from aircraft. The nearest airport is Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport that is located as near as 0.8 mile west of the proposed Project site. The proposed Project site is located outside of the 65 dBA CNEL (community noise equivalent level) noise contours of the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission; 2022). Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people to excessive noise levels from aircraft and no impact would occur from excessive noise levels from aircraft.

3.13.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.13.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.14 Population and Housing

3.14.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a-b. No Impact. The proposed Project does not include any development of new homes or extending existing infrastructure that would directly or indirectly induce population growth. No housing exists on the proposed Project site; therefore it would not displace any existing housing or people. There would be no impact.

3.14.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.14.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.15 Public Services

3.15.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
PUBLIC SERVICES – Would the project:				
a) 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police Protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a-i. Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is served by Riverside County fire Station 39 located at 86-911 Avenue 58 in Thermal, approximately one mile southwest of the proposed Project site. Fire Captain Jose Rodriguez was contacted by phone on October 25, 2022 and stated that a total of six personnel are assigned to the station, and a crew of three people is on site at all times (Fire Captain Jose Rodrigues at 760-399-5303, October 25, 2022). The Riverside County Fire Department will review and approve proposed Project plans to ensure all applicable fire standards and regulations are met as required by the County (Office of the County Fire Marshall; 2022). Therefore, impacts associated with fire protection services would be less than significant.

a-ii. Less than Significant Impact. The Riverside County Sheriff Department provides police protection to the proposed Project site and surrounding area. The Sheriff department is located at 86625 Airport Blvd in Thermal, less than one mile west of the proposed Project site. An information request for staffing at the station was filed on October 25, 2022, reference number C000850-102522. A response was received the same day stating that the station has 106 sworn officers and 30 non-sworn staff personnel (Riverside County Sheriff Department Public Records Center; 2022). The Riverside County Police Department will review and approve proposed Project plans to ensure all applicable safety standards and regulations are met as required by the County (Building and Safety Department; 2022). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

a-iii. Less than Significant Impact. The nearest schools are La Familia High School which is directly across the street west of the proposed Project site at 56-615 Olive St, and John Kelly Elementary School, which is less than 1,000 feet northwest of the proposed Project site at 87163 Center St in Thermal. There is no

housing proposed on the proposed Project site that would lead to an increase in population and therefore the need for increased enrollments at these schools. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

a-iv. Less than Significant Impact. See Section 3.16, *Recreation* for discussion on Parks. Impacts would be less than significant.

a-v. Less than Significant Impact. As stated above, the proposed Project is not adding any new dwelling units that would result in an increase in population that would require the provision of additional public facilities, including libraries, hospitals, community recreation center, post offices, and/or animal shelters within the community of Thermal. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not adversely affect other public facilities or require the construction of new or modified public facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

3.15.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.15.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.16 Recreation

3.16.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐

a. No Impact. The proposed Project would provide an additional recreational area to the neighborhood and region. Therefore, the proposed Project would not increase the use of existing recreational areas in the neighborhood or region, thereby resulting in their physical deterioration. There would be no impact.

b. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed Project would require the construction of recreation facilities, play fields, and parking lots at the proposed Project site. This has the potential to impact existing traffic and circulation in the area, result in changes to the area's air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, or to affect potential biological and cultural resources on the site (please refer to sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18 for impact discussions on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, public services, transportation, and tribal cultural resources respectively). Mitigations will be required for the proposed Project's potential impacts on Cultural and Tribal Cultural resources (please refer to the mitigation listed below). Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

3.16.2 Mitigation

With the implementation of CUL-1 through CUL-9, and PAL-1, impacts would be less than significant.

3.16.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.17 Transportation

3.17.1 Impacts

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

a. **Less than Significant Impact**. A Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment was completed on October 10, 2022 by the Ganddini Group (Appendix B, Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment; 2022). Based on the Ganddini Group's review of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual* (11th Edition) Land Use Code 411 – Public Park, the proposed Project is forecast to generate approximately eight daily vehicle trips, including no or nominal trips during the AM peak hour and one trip during the PM peak hour (Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition; 2021).

The proposed Project consists of a local-serving community park that is forecast to generate approximately nine trips during the am and pm peak hours. The proposed Project would construct all on-site and off-site improvements in accordance with County design standards; therefore, the proposed Project would not create any new safety or operational concerns and is exempt from further operational analysis (County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines; 2020). Therefore, the proposed Project satisfies two of the County-established exemption criteria and is not required to prepare further level or service or operational analysis. In conclusion, the proposed Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines establish evaluation criteria for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis (County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines; 2020), which is tailored to the regional and environmental context of the County of Riverside based on guidance from the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation in CEQA,* December 2018 (Governor's Office of Planning and Research; 2022). The County's Guidelines identify screening criteria for certain types of projects that typically reduce VMT and may be presumed to result in a less-than-significant VMT impact. One of the types of projects that is screened is a local essential service project, which includes local or community parks. Because the proposed Project

as a proposed 9.8-acre park is expected to serve the local community and is not large enough to be regionally significant. Impacts would be less than significant.

c – d. Less than Significant Impact. Primary access to the proposed Project site will be provided by Olive Street which is designated as a Collector 74' (Riverside County General Plan; 2015). A second access point to the proposed Project site would be provided on Church Street, which forms the northern border of the proposed Project site. Emergency access control system will be designed to the satisfaction of the City/County Fire Marshall. The Riverside County Fire Department, City Fire Services, and the City Police Department will review the proposed site plan to ensure that all safety design features and measures related to emergency access and geometric design are compliant with existing standards prior to final project approval; therefore, with implementation of the on-site roadway and site access improvements listed above, the proposed Project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design and would not result in inadequate emergency access. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.17.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.17.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

3.18.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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)	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

i-ii. Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources,* a Cultural Resources Survey Program was completed by BFSA on October 12, 2022 and revised on January 30, 2023 (Appendix D, Cultural Resources Survey; 2023). A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search was completed as part of the survey. A response was received February 2, 2022 from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) stating that the SLF search was negative. However, the NAHC also stated that the absence of specific site information in the SLF does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any project area, and the NAHC recommended that 18 tribes be contacted for information regarding known and recorded sites (Cultural Resources Survey; 2023). The tribes were contacted by the Desert Recreation District and as of October 25, 2022, one response was received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians on August 24, 2022. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office noted that there is a TCR near the proposed project, requested copies of all project documents, and requested:

- The presence of an approved Cultural Resource Monitor(s) during any ground-disturbing activities (including archaeological testing and surveys). Should buried cultural deposits be encountered, the Monitor may request that destructive construction halt and the Monitor shall notify a Qualified Archaeologist (Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines) to

investigate and, if necessary, prepare a mitigation plan for submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer. See Appendix I, *AB-52 Letters and Responses*.

The Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians have indicated through the consultation process that there are multiple known village sites and TCRs within the project vicinity. As such, they have indicated that TCRs may be impacted by the project. To mitigate this potential, they have requested that a CRMTP be prepared prior to any ground-disturbing activities to establish that a plan is in place should any resources be inadvertently discovered during the development process, and that the Tribe be able to review the subsurface excavation within the project for potentially buried resources.

Additionally, the District received a response from the Desert Cahuilla Indians, who requested a consultation on November 16, 2022.

As previously discussed in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, given that the prior development within the proposed Project area might mask archaeological deposits including Tribal Cultural Resources, and the proximity to known features exploited by the prehistoric inhabitants of the area such as Lake Cahuilla and the Whitewater River, there is a potential that buried archaeological deposits are present within the proposed Project boundaries (Cultural Resources Survey; 2022). Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed Project implement a cultural resources monitoring program conducted by an archaeologist and Native American representative during grading of the property as outlined in the mitigation discussion below.

3.18.2 Mitigation

With the implementation of CUL-1 through CUL-9, impacts to TCRs would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

3.18.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

3.19.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a-e. Less than Significant Impact.

Domestic Water

The proposed Project will tie into existing domestic water lines on Church Street, which forms the northern boundary of the site, and Olive Street, which forms the western boundary of the site. No new wells or additional water infrastructure or entitlements will be required. As discussed in section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the CVWD will provide domestic water service to the proposed Project and is a participant in the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group that prepared an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (WMP) in 2018 (Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group; 2018). The 2018 Integrated Regional WMP determined that long-term regional demand for potable water is expected to increase; however, with continued conservation measures and replenishment of groundwater, sufficient supplies would be available to meet the projected demand. Therefore, proposed Project water demands have already been accounted for within the 2018 Integrated Regional WMP and sufficient water supplies exist to serve the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Waste Water

Wastewater generated from the proposed Project site would be treated through the CVWD. The proposed Project includes bathroom facilities and would therefore generate wastewater. CVWD's wastewater reclamation system collects and treats approximately 17 million gallons per day from approximately 95,000 user accounts (2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan; 2020). The proposed Project would not significantly increase wastewater generation in the CVWD. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Stormwater

The proposed Project will comply with County requirements by including on-site retention basins to ensure stormwater is retained on-site. Additional measures to address onsite stormwater management are described in Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*. Project-related impacts to stormwater management systems are expected to be less than significant.

Solid Waste

Implementation of the proposed Project would generate an incremental increase in solid waste volumes requiring off-site disposal during short-term construction and long-term operational activities. The proposed Project would be required to comply with AB 939, which requires a minimum of 50 percent recycling of all project construction waste and debris. Additionally, the proposed Project would be required to comply with mandatory waste reduction requirements as described below. Solid waste generated by the proposed Project would be disposed at the Coachella Valley Transfer Station, which currently receives an average of 328 tons of waste per day and has a capacity of 1,100 tons of waste per day.

Construction Impact Analysis

Solid waste requiring disposal would be generated by the construction process. CalGreen requires that a minimum of 65% of all construction waste be diverted from landfills (by recycling, reusing, and other waste reduction strategies) (CalRecycle; 2022). Construction waste is expected to be processed by Burrtec Waste Industries, Inc., and non-recyclable construction waste generated by the proposed Project would be disposed at the Coachella Valley Transfer Station, which is located at 87011 Landfill Road, Coachella, CA (Burrtec Waste Industries, Inc., accessed October, 2022). Burrtec Waste Industries was contacted on October 28, 2022 to request additional information but no response had been received as of November 1, 2022. Construction waste generated by the proposed Project is not anticipated to cause the landfill to exceed its maximum permitted daily disposal volume. Furthermore, the Coachella Valley Transfer Station is not expected to reach its total maximum permitted disposal capacities during the proposed Project's construction period. The Coachella Valley Transfer Station has sufficient daily capacity to accept solid waste generated by the proposed Project's construction phase; therefore, impacts to landfill capacity associated with the proposed Project's near-term construction activities would be less than significant.

Operational Impact Analysis

Non-recyclable solid waste generated during long-term operation of the proposed Project would be disposed at the Coachella Valley Transfer Station. Waste generated by the proposed Project's operation is not anticipated to cause the landfill to exceed its maximum permitted daily disposal volume. Additionally, pursuant to AB 939, at least 50 percent of the proposed Project's solid waste is required to be diverted from landfills (California Legislative Information; 1990). Because the proposed Project would generate a relatively small amount of solid waste per day as compared to the permitted daily capacities at receiving landfills, impacts would be less than significant.

3.19.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.19.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.20 Wildfire

3.20.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a-d. No Impact. A State Responsibility Area (SRA) is the area in the state where the State of California has the primary financial responsibility for the prevention and suppression of wildland fires (California Fire Prevention Fee; 2022). Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) are incorporated cities, urban regions, agriculture lands, and portions of the desert where the local government is responsible for wildfire protection. This is typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, counties, and by CAL FIRE under contract (Office of the State Fire Marshall; 2022). Classification of a wildland zone as Moderate, High or Very High fire hazard is made by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL Fire) and is based on the average hazard across the area included in the zone, which have a minimum size of 200 acres (Office of the State Fire Marshall; 2022).

The proposed Project site is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or within a high, moderate, or (VHFHS) Very High Fire Hazard Severity zone (VHFHS) (Office of the Sate Fire Marshall; 2022) as the closest Responsibility Area is approximately 11 miles southwest of the proposed Project site. Therefore, the proposed Project would not exacerbate wildfire hazard risks or expose people or the environment to adverse environmental effects related to wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant.

3.20.2 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

3.20.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Not applicable.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

3.21.1 Impacts

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

a. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. All impacts to the environment, including impacts to habitat for fish and wildlife species, fish and wildlife populations, plant and animal communities, rare and endangered plants and animals, and historical and pre-historical resources were evaluated as part of this Initial Study. Impacts to Cultural, Paleontological, and Tribal Resources are discussed in Sections 3.5, 3.7.1f, and 3.18 respectively. Compliance with applicable rules and regulations as well as implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the following section would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

b. Less than Significant Impact. No known planned or pending projects are located in the immediate site vicinity that would substantially contribute to any additive effects in conjunction with the proposed Project. The proposed Project's contribution to cumulative impacts with respect to such issues as aesthetics, air quality, GHG emissions, water quality, population growth, public services, and noise would not be substantial due to the proposed Project size, location, and design. Therefore, the proposed Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to any of the issues areas. Impacts would be less than significant.

c. Less than Significant Impact. As detailed in the preceding sections, the proposed Project has the potential to result in impacts to Cultural, Paleontological, Tribal Resources, and Recreation. Compliance with applicable rules and regulations and the implementation mitigation measures outlined in the following section would reduce potential impacts on human beings to less than significant.

3.21.2 Mitigation

With the implementation of CUL-1 through CUL-9, and PAL-1 impacts to TCRs would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

3.21.3 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Less than Significant.

4.0 Report Preparers

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