Initial Study

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

Prepared for

City of Desert Hot Springs
65-950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240

Prepared by

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December 2013

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SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSES OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study has been prepared to provide a preliminary determination of the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed *West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan* ("WDHS MDP"), which includes three components: (1) administration of the WDHS MDP*;* (2) future construction of the various flood control facilities contained within the WDHS MDP*;* and (3) future operations and maintenance of the flood control facilities; hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Project." Throughout this Initial Study, the phrase "Project implementation" refers to the administration, future construction, and future operations and maintenance of the flood control facilities proposed in the WDHS MDP.

The WDHS MDP includes regional and local storm drainage facilities for an approximate 47-square-mile area that includes the alluvial plains formed by the Garnet Wash, Mission Creek, Dry Morongo, Big Morongo, and Little Morongo Wash Watersheds. The Project area includes the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs, portions of unincorporated Riverside County to the west of the City of Desert Hot Springs, and a small area at the northern end of the City of Palm Springs.

Section 15050 et seq. the State CEQA Guidelines defines the Lead Agency as the public agency with the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. Land use authority for the implementation of the WDHS MDP lies with the local jurisdictions (i.e. City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside). Because the majority of the large regional facilities lie within the boundaries of the City of Desert Hot Springs, in compliance with Section 15051(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the Responsible Agencies have agreed that the City of Desert Hot Springs will serve as the Lead Agency and would be responsible for complying with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFC&WCD) would implement the regional flood control facilities, and may also implement local flood control facilities within the unincorporated County, proposed in the WDHS MDP and would serve as a Responsible Agency. The City of Palm Springs would implement components of the WDHS MDP within its jurisdiction and would serve as a Responsible Agency.

Section 15063(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines identifies the purposes of an Initial Study as follows:

(1) To provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a Negative Declaration;

(2) To enable an applicant or Lead Agency to modify a project, mitigating adverse impacts before an EIR is prepared, thereby enabling the project to qualify for a Negative Declaration;

(3) To assist in the preparation of an EIR, if one is required, by focusing the EIR on the effects determined to be significant, identifying the effects determined not to be significant, explaining the reasons for determining that potentially significant effects would not be significant, and identifying whether a program EIR, tiering, or another appropriate process can be used for analysis of the project's environmental effects;

(4) To facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of a project;

(5) To provide documentation of the factual basis for the finding in a Negative Declaration that a project would not have a significant effect on the environment;

(6) To eliminate unnecessary EIRs; and

(7) To determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used with the project.

1.2 FINDINGS OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study identifies the appropriate environmental documentation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (*California Public Resources Code* §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, *California Code of Regulations* §15000 et seq.). The preliminary analysis in Section 4.0 of this Initial Study indicates that, while the approval and administration of the WDHS MDP would, by itself, not be accompanied by environmental impacts, the construction, operation and maintenance of the flood control improvements outlined in the Project would result in potentially significant environmental impacts. Therefore, it has been determined that a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the most appropriate environmental document to provide a more detailed analysis of these environmental impacts. Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines states:

(a) General. A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:

(1) Geographically,

(2) As logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,

(3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or

(4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The impacts of Project implementation will be analyzed in the Program EIR with respect to the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Transportation and Traffic

- Utilities and Service Systems

The preliminary analysis in this Initial Study indicates that Project implementation would either have no impact or a less than significant impact on a number of environmental issues and thus, no further evaluation or analysis is needed on these issues. If it is determined through the Program EIR preparation process that these issues warrant additional analysis, they will be brought forward into the Program EIR. However, based on the analysis set forth in this Initial Study, issues that would not require analysis in the Program EIR include:

- Aesthetics: Threshold d) Regarding Light and Glare
- Agriculture and Forest Resources: All Thresholds
- Air Quality: Threshold e) Regarding Odors
- Geology and Soils: All Thresholds
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Thresholds e) and f) Regarding Airports and Airstrips, and Threshold h) Regarding Wildland Fires
- Hydrology and Water Quality: Threshold g) Regarding Placing Housing within the 100-Year Flood Plain, and Threshold j) Regarding Mudflow, Tsunami, and Seiche Hazards
- Land Use: Threshold a) Regarding Dividing a Community
- Mineral Resources: All Thresholds
- Noise: Threshold c) Regarding a Permanent Noise Increase, and Thresholds e) and f) Regarding Airports and Airstrips
- Population and Housing: Threshold c) Regarding Displacing Substantial Numbers of People
- Public Services: All Thresholds
- Recreation: All Thresholds
- Transportation and Traffic: Threshold c) Regarding Air Traffic and Threshold f) Regarding Alternative Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems: Thresholds a), b), d), e), f) and g) Regarding Water and Wastewater Treatment Standards and Facilities, Water Supplies, and Landfill Disposal.

1.3 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City of Desert Hot Springs has prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Program EIR, in accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines to inform responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties of the Program EIR preparation and to solicit their input into issues that would need to be analyzed in the Program EIR. A 30-day public review and comment period from Wednesday, December 18, 2013, through Monday, January 20, 2014, was established for the NOP. At the start of this review period, the Initial Study and NOP were mailed out to responsible and trustee agencies and other interested organizations and individuals for review and comment.

The Initial Study and NOP were made available for hardcopy and electronic (i.e. CD) public review at the following locations:

City of Desert Hot Springs
65-950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240

Desert Hot Springs Library
11691 West Drive
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240

Riverside County Flood Control and
Water Conservation District
1995 Market Street
Riverside, California 92501

Palm Springs Library
300 S. Sunrise Way
Palm Springs, California 92262

The Initial Study and NOP were also made available for online viewing at the following websites:

- City of Desert Hot Springs http://www.cityofdhs.org/
- City of Palm Springs at http://www.palmspringsca.gov/index.aspx?page=2
- Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District at http://www.rcflood.org

During the public review period, the City of Desert Hot Springs will be accepting written comments on the Initial Study and NOP. Written comments may be sent to:

Mr. Martín Magaña
Community Development Director
City of Desert Hot Springs
65950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
or
MMagana@cityofdhs.org

1.4 SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to Section 15206 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Project is of statewide, regional, or area wide significance; therefore, a scoping meeting is required. Two Scoping Meetings will occur on Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at the Carl May Community Center: and afternoon meeting from 2:00 to 4:00 PM and an evening meeting from 6:00 to 8:00 PM.

The purpose of the Scoping Meetings is to present an overview of the proposed Project and to solicit comments and input from attendees on the issues that should be considered and evaluated in the Program EIR.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is organized into the following sections:

Section 1.0 – Introduction: This section provides an introduction to the CEQA process and an overview of the findings of the preliminary environmental analysis.

Section 2.0 – Environmental Setting and Project Baseline: This section provides a description of the area covered by the Project and the existing environmental setting, which serves as the baseline for the impact analysis.

Section 3.0 – Project Description: This section lists the objectives of the proposed Project; provides a description of the proposed flood control improvements; and identifies the approvals needed for adoption and implementation of the Project.

Section 4.0 – Environmental Checklist: The completed CEQA checklist form provides the analysis of the potential impacts that may result from Project implementation. The environmental checklist form also includes "mandatory findings of significance", in compliance with CEQA requirements.

Section 5.0 – References and Preparers: This section identifies the references used in preparation of the Initial Study and the individuals responsible for preparing the Initial Study.

SECTION 2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND PROJECT BASELINE

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The *West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan* is located in the central section of Riverside County, at the northwestern corner of the Coachella Valley. The Project includes the administration, construction, and operation/maintenance of regional and local flood control facilities in the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs and the adjacent unincorporated County area (within the Spheres of Influence[1] of the Cities of Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs), and a small area at the northern end of the City of Palm Springs, as shown in Exhibit 2-1, Regional Location and Local Vicinity. The Project area covers an approximate 47-square-mile alluvial plain that is bound by the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and west, Interstate 10 (I-10) to the south, and the general alignment of Palm Drive to the east. State Route 62 (SR-62) runs north-south within the western portion of the Project area. Exhibit 2-2, Project Area Boundaries, shows the extent of the land contained within the Project boundaries.

2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE PROJECT AREA

This section provides an overview summary of the existing conditions in the Project area, which serves as the baseline condition from which all Project-related impacts are assessed.

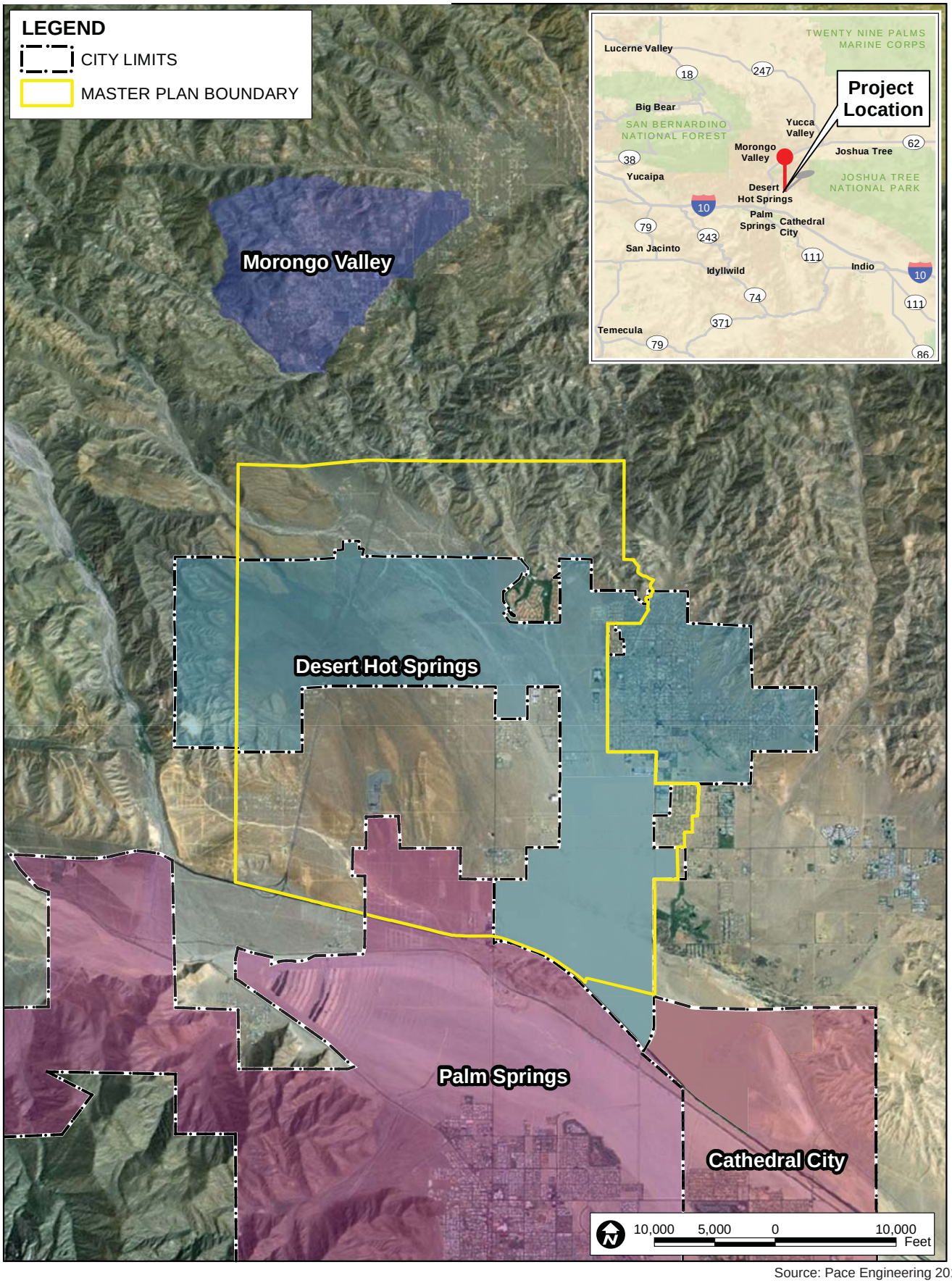
2.2.1 EXISTING DRAINAGE PATTERNS

The Project area is located at the base of the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains on large coalescing alluvial fans formed by washes and creeks from the surrounding mountains. Major streams in this area include Little Morongo Wash, Big Morongo Wash, Dry Morongo Wash, Mission Creek, and Garnet Wash. The Desert Hot Springs Channel (also called the Line E drainage) is a storm drain facility that drains Blind Canyon and other smaller canyons to the east, with southwesterly flows toward Morongo Wash. Exhibit 2-3, Watersheds, shows the boundaries of the watersheds that drain into the Project area.

Mission Creek and Big Morongo Wash, along with several smaller canyons that drain the eastern and southern slopes of Mount San Gorgonio (which is a part of the San Bernardino Mountains) and the Little San Bernardino Mountains, form a large alluvial plain that extends southeasterly from SR-62, approximately 4 miles west of the City of Desert Hot Springs to the Whitewater River confluence. This plain is supplemented by numerous alluvial cones[2] from smaller canyons (e.g., White House Canyon and Little Morongo Canyon) that drain Mount San Gorgonio to the northwest and west and the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast. Little Morongo Wash joins Big Morongo Wash and Dry Morongo Wash at the northern section of the Project area to become Morongo Wash. Garnet Wash and other small canyons drain Whitewater Hill, Painted Hill, and Mount San Gorgonio, which are located at the eastern end of the San Bernardino Mountains and west of the Project area. Within the Project area, these watersheds combine together to form one alluvial plain.

[1] A Sphere of Influence is the area that a City or special district is expected to provide services to through future annexation or changes in local government boundaries. The County's Local Agency Formation Commission designates the Spheres of Influence of individual cities to resolve uncertainty concerning the availability and source of services for undeveloped or unincorporated land; to promote orderly land use and service planning by public agencies; and to provide direction to landowners when and if they seek additional or higher level services.

[2] An alluvial cone is a fan-shaped deposit of alluvial soils where a fast moving stream flattens and spreads out.



Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Regional Location and Local Vicinity

Exhibit 2-1

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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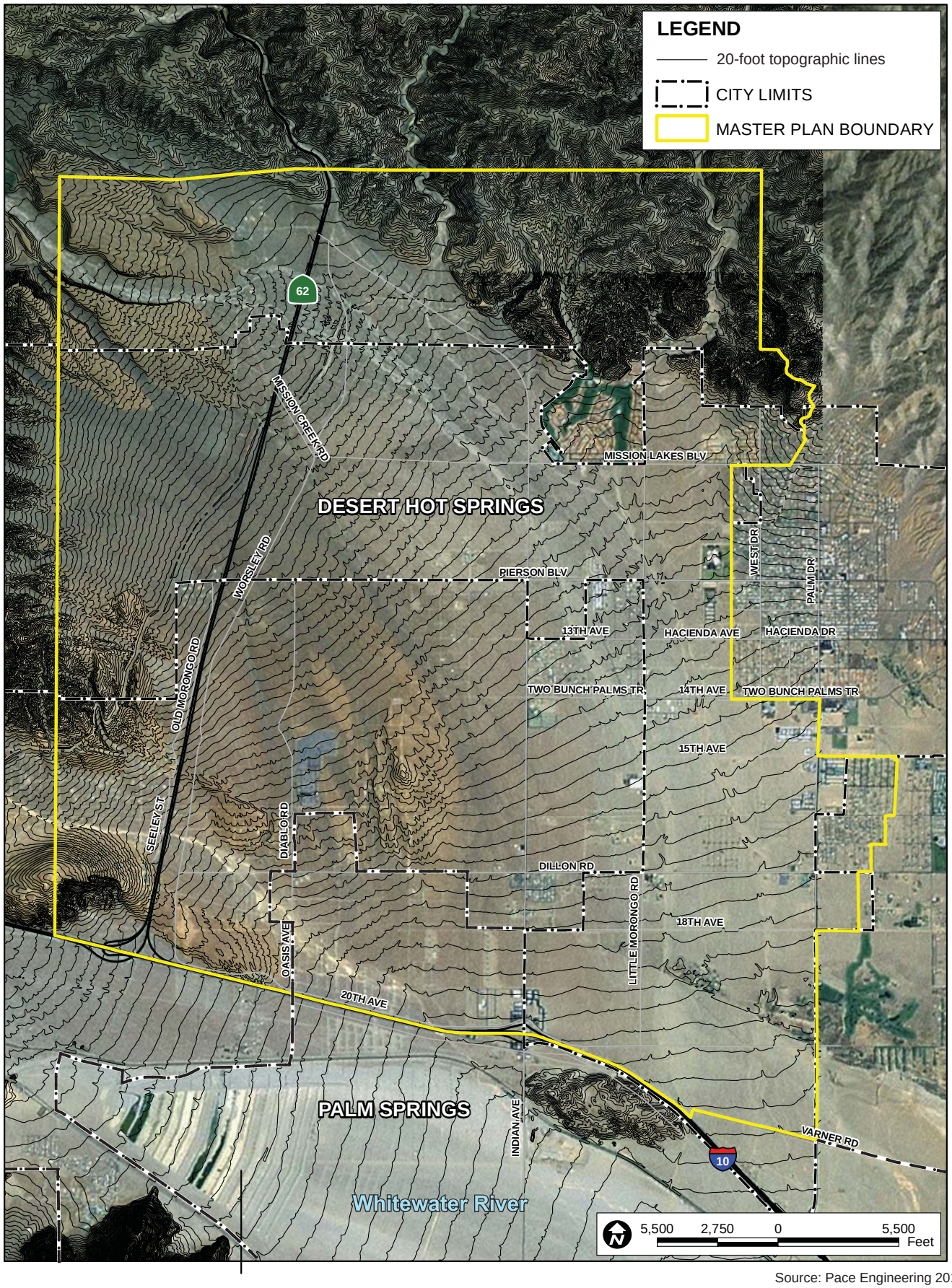

Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Plan Area Boundaries

Exhibit 2-2

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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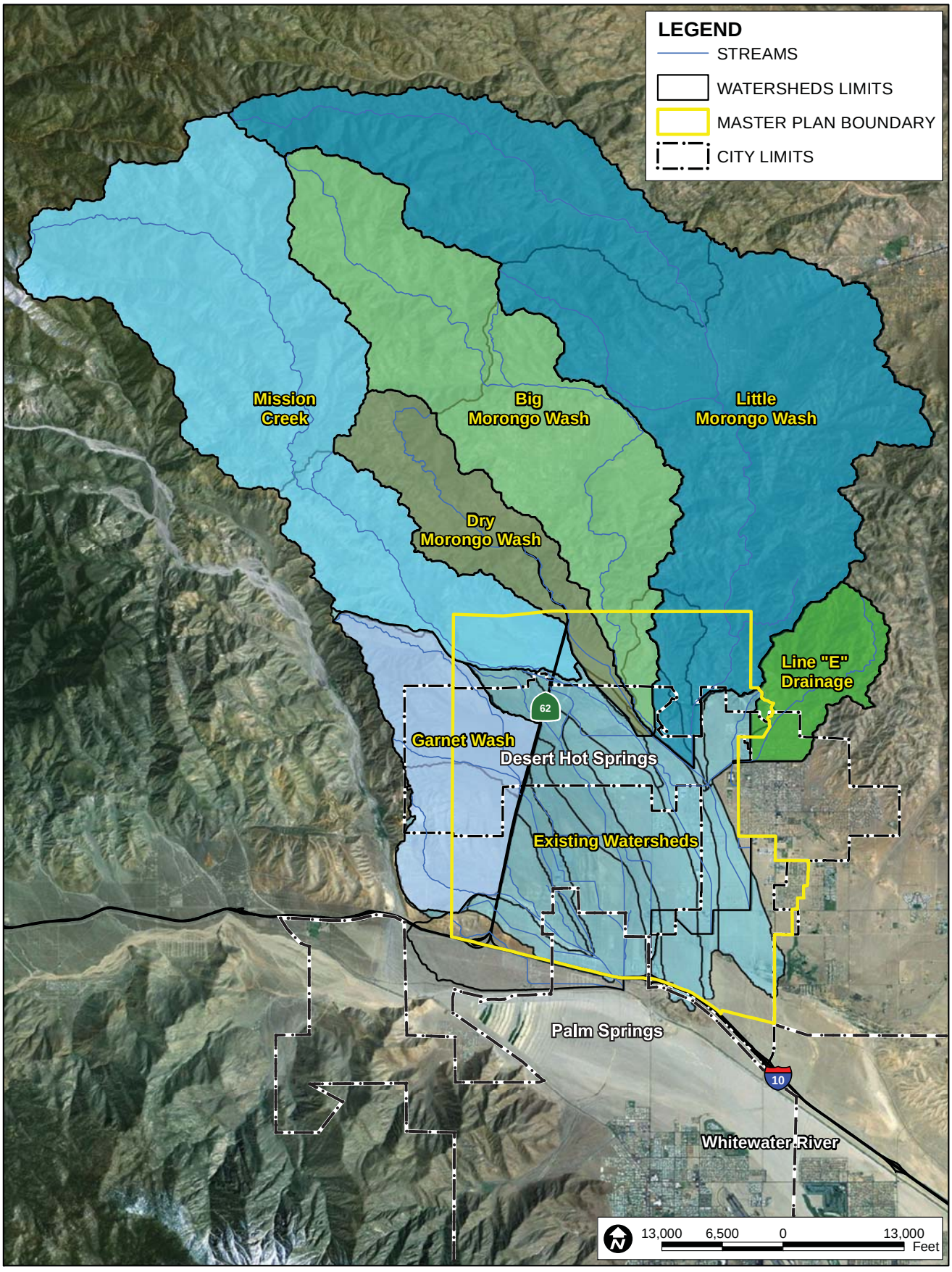

Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Watersheds

Exhibit 2-3

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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Storm water originating from the surrounding hills and mountains moves through the canyons and across the alluvial plain as washes and creeks that flow in southerly and southeasterly directions toward the Whitewater River. Exhibit 2-4, Existing Flood Hazards, shows the extent of the 100-year and 500-year floodplains in the Project area. As shown, existing development is located within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains and is subject to flooding during severe weather events. Exhibit 2-4 does not show any flood hazards west of SR-62 since SR-62 served as the western limit for the floodplain mapping by FEMA.

2.2.2 EXISTING LAND USES

Exhibit 2-5, Aerial Plan View and Existing Facilities, provides an aerial view of the existing development, flood control infrastructure, roadways, and freeways in the Project area. I-10 runs along the southern boundary of the Project area and SR-62 runs through the western section. While the Project area is largely undeveloped open space, the existing land uses include scattered rural residences, residential tracts, mobile home parks, schools, parks, scattered commercial uses, recharge basins, an electrical substation, wind farms, solar farms, and industrial/storage uses. The Mission Lakes Country Club is located at the northern section of the Project area, with other residential areas located at the northeastern and eastern edges of the Project area, near the City center.

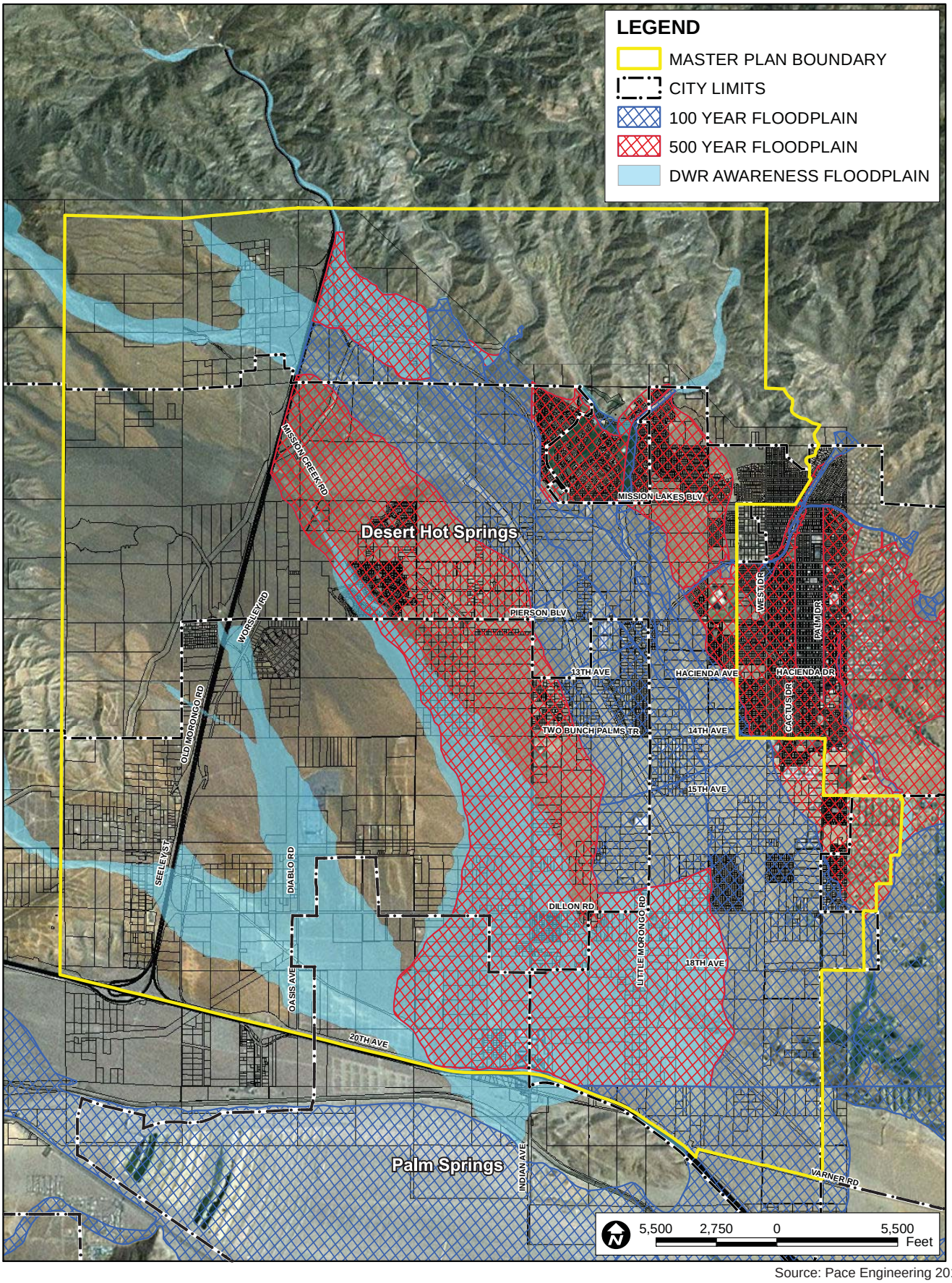
Land uses that surround the Project area include undeveloped open space lands in Mount San Gorgonio to the west and in the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast, with the I-10, Whitewater River, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the south. Developments to the east of the Project area include residential, commercial, and public uses within the City of Desert Hot Springs; the Desert Dunes Golf Club; vacant parcels; and Verbena Wash.

2.2.3 EXISTING STORM DRAIN FACILITIES

The streams in the Project area are mostly natural open channels, but the RCFC&WCD and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) have constructed a number of channel improvements for storm water and flood-control management. As shown on Exhibit 2-5, the Mission Lakes Levee and White House Canyon Levee provide flood protection for the Mission Lakes Country Club at the northern section of the Project area. The Desert Hot Springs Channel that serves the northeastern section of the Project area has a 48-inch reinforced concrete pipe at the Verbena Drive crossing and a double 10-foot by 5-foot reinforced concrete box culvert under Palm Drive. The Desert Hot Springs Channel is concrete-lined between 12th Street and 8th Street.

Mission Creek drains a large area of the eastern slope of Mount San Gorgonio and flows across the same alluvial plain where Big Morongo and Little Morongo Canyons flow (see Exhibit 2-3). As shown on Exhibit 2-5, a 250-foot-wide earthen trapezoidal channel has been constructed with the flow line between 3 and 4 feet below ground and levees that are between 5 and 6 feet high across the Project area. Due to lack of upstream control, high velocity flows, and unpredictable patterns of alluvial flow, this channel does not have the capacity to contain the 100-year flood event. A levee maintained by the RCFC&WCD and located on the right bank of Mission Creek is approximately 0.5 mile upstream of SR-62 (at the northwestern section of the Project area), and prevents overtopping of flood flows from a low area along the south side of the creek.

As shown on Exhibit 2-5, Caltrans constructed a channel along the west side of SR-62, with several culverts, bridges, and reinforced concrete box culverts on I-10 and SR-62, which direct flows under the freeways toward the Garnet Wash Channel and the Whitewater River. The Devil's Garden Storm Channel (Garnet Wash North) and the Garnet Wash Channel



Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Existing Flood Hazards

Exhibit 2-4

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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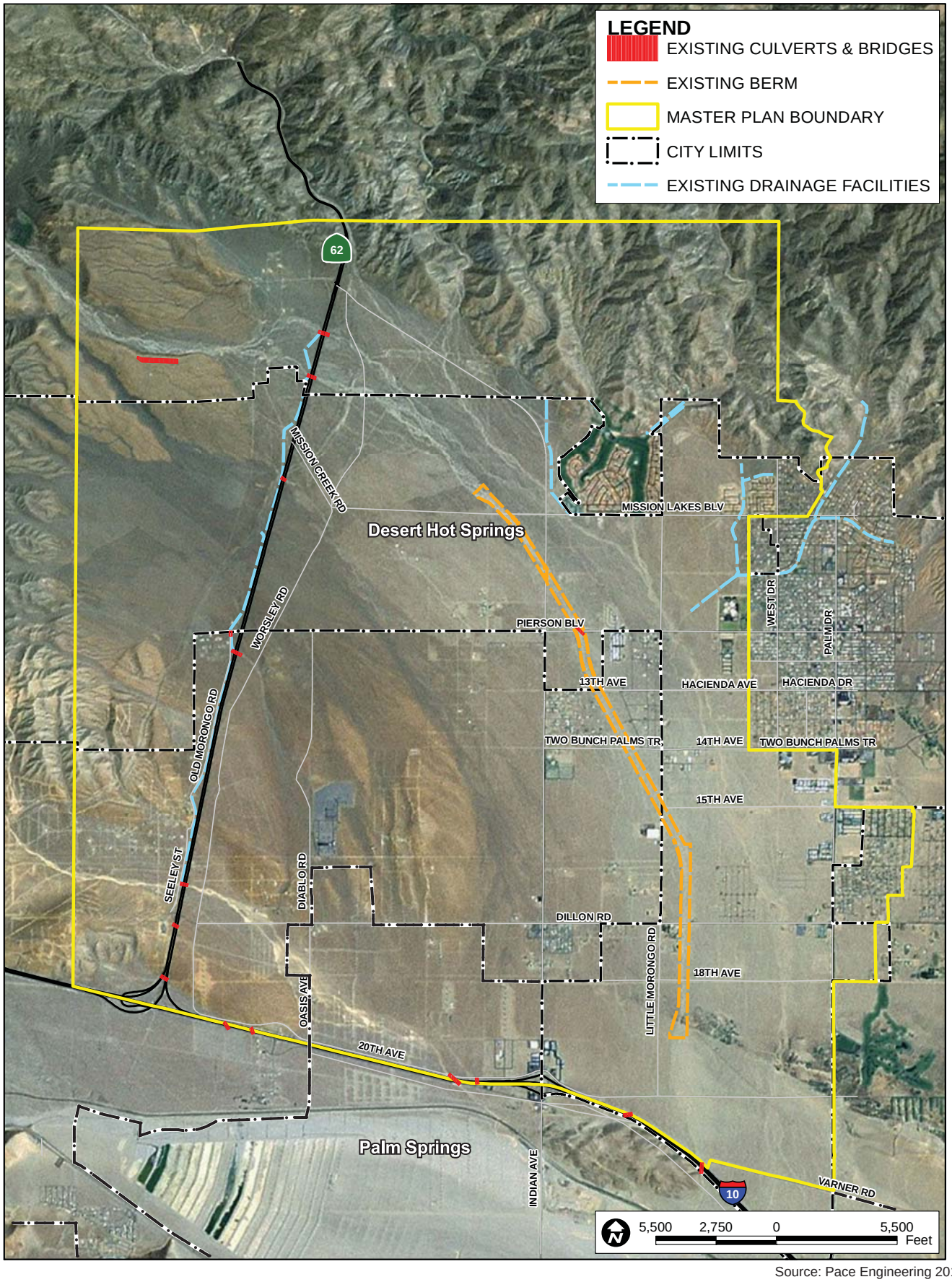

Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Aerial Plan View and Existing Facilities

Exhibit 2-5

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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(Garnet Wash South) are earthen channels extending southeasterly from SR 62, with the Devil's Garden Storm Channel join the Garnet Wash Channel near the intersection of Lotker Lane and Dillon Road.

SECTION 3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 BACKGROUND

Flood hazards associated with storm water runoff sheet flows on alluvial plains have unique qualities when compared to normal riverine floodplains since alluvial fan flows are characterized by high velocity; unpredictable changes in direction; and a large amount of sediment. The existing flood hazards along Mission Creek, Morongo Wash, and Garnet Wash affect a large portion of the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs and adjacent unincorporated County lands, as well as the northern portion of the City of Palm Springs.

The RCFC&WCD and the City of Desert Hot Springs initiated the preparation of the *West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan* (WDHS MDP) to effectively manage existing flood hazards in this area by providing for the future development of effective storm water management/drainage conveyance. After the completion of several studies, alternatives analyses, workshops and steering committee reviews, the RCFC&WCD has developed a plan for the Project area's storm drainage that allows for the construction of regional and local storm drainage facilities to provide flood protection for a 100-year flood event.

3.2 PLAN OBJECTIVES

The WDHS MDP was developed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Local and Regional Flood Protection,
- Water Quality Protection,
- Water Conservation,
- Sediment Transport Control,
- Environmental Resource Protection,
- Cost Efficiency,
- Recreational Opportunities, and
- Economic Benefits.

3.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project consists of three components: (1) administration of the WDHS MDP; (2) future construction of the various flood control facilities proposed in the WDHS MDP; and (3) future operations and maintenance of the flood control facilities; hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Project."

3.3.1 ADMINISTRATION OF THE WDHS MDP

The first component of Project implementation consists of the adoption and administration of the WDHS MDP as a long-range planning document. The WDHS MDP would serve as a guide for the alignment, type, and size of regional and local flood control facilities within the Project area's watershed to address current and future drainage needs. The WDHS MDP would be relied upon by the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and the RCFC&WCD to guide the review and approval of proposed future developments in the Project area. The WDHS MDP would be used by local jurisdictions for planning purposes as well as for the identification of flood control improvements for inclusion in capital improvement programs. Administration of the

WDHS MDP would not involve any environmental impacts; however, future construction, operation and maintenance of the flood control facilities in the Project area, as guided by the WDHS MDP, would result in environmental impacts.

3.3.2 FUTURE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WDHS MDP

The second component of the WDHS MDP includes the reasonably forseeable environmental impacts associated with the construction activities for the development of the flood control facilities. The WDHS MDP boundary includes portions of the watersheds that contribute to the drainage problems in the Project area. The flood control facilities set forth in the WDHS MDP would be designed to contain storm flows from the 100-year storm event. The recommendations in the WDHS MDP include (1) regional flood-control improvements for Morongo Wash and Mission Creek; (2) local drainage facilities throughout the Project area; and (3) revised regional flood hazard mapping and proposed floodplain management measures. Proposed drainage infrastructure facilities are shown in Exhibit 3-1, Proposed Master Drainage Plan and include:

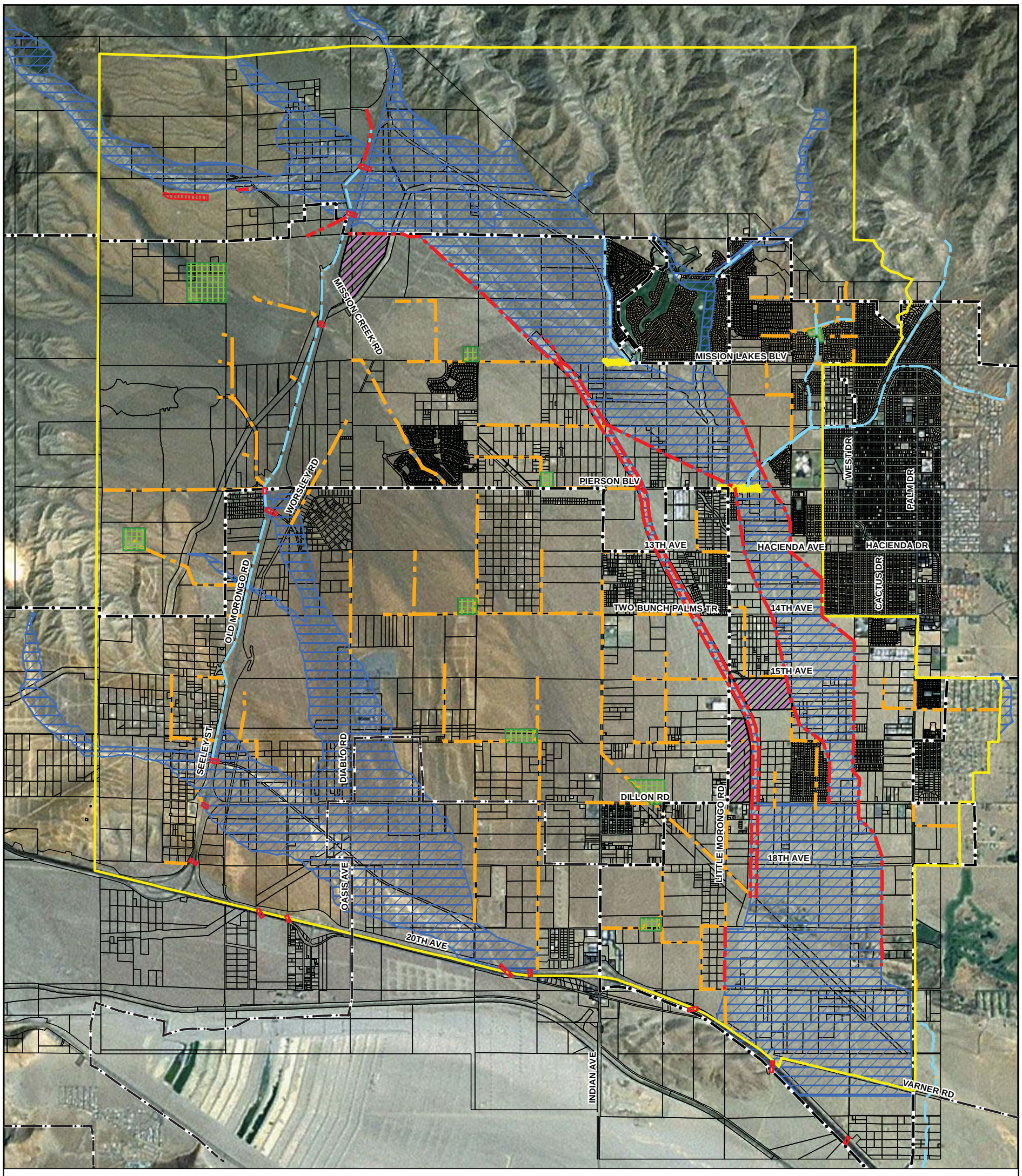
Regional Flood Control Facilities

- Approximately 10.6 miles of concrete-slope-lined earthen levee systems along both Morongo Wash (8.5 miles) and Mission Creek (2.1 miles).
- Widening and slope lining channel improvements for 4.7 miles of Mission Creek.
- 3 regional water conservation basins on approximately 218 acres for groundwater recharge.
- 4 water quality basins for existing urban drainage from the existing developed portions of the City to the regional drainage system.
- 2 new and 1 replacement all-weather bridges to allow for unobstructed access during heavy rains.
- Floodplain management control measures (e.g. land use restrictions) for the Garnet Wash flood hazard area (approximately 1,400 acres).

Local Drainage Facilities

- Approximately 49.9 miles (i.e. 37 major storm drains) of open drainage channels for the local watershed and the urban drainage/storm water management system.
- 9 storm water detention basins on approximately 126 acres (ranging in size from 7.4 acres to 51.5 acres) for the local watershed systems.

Typically, regional facilities would be constructed by the RCFC&WCD, while local facilities would be constructed by the RCFC&WCD, local jurisdictions, or by private developers. When fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain, as currently mapped with flood hazards associated with flows in Mission Creek and Morongo Wash.



Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Proposed Master Drainage Plan

Exhibit 3-1

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

BonTerra CONSULTING

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Regional Storm Drainage Facilities

Mission Creek Channel System

The Project includes the widening of the existing drainage channel along Mission Creek through the construction of a concrete slope-lined levee at the eastern and western edges of the RCFC&WCD right-of-way for this creek, which ranges in width from 305 to 400 feet. Exhibit 3-2, Proposed Levee Cross Sections, shows the cross section of the levees proposed along Mission Creek. The channel would feature a 158- to 244-foot-wide earthen bottom, concrete slope lining with a 1.5:1 slope on each side and a 20-foot-wide access road on top of each levee. The top of the levee would be approximately 11 to 13 feet higher than the channel bottom elevation and would extend from north of Mission Lakes Boulevard to south of Dillon Road. At the upstream end of Mission Creek north of Mission Lakes Boulevard (where the floodplains for Big Morongo Wash and Mission Creek are combined), only the southwest side of the creek would feature a concrete-sloped training levee and access road, approximately eight feet high above the channel bottom. To the east and north, existing levees already protect existing developments.

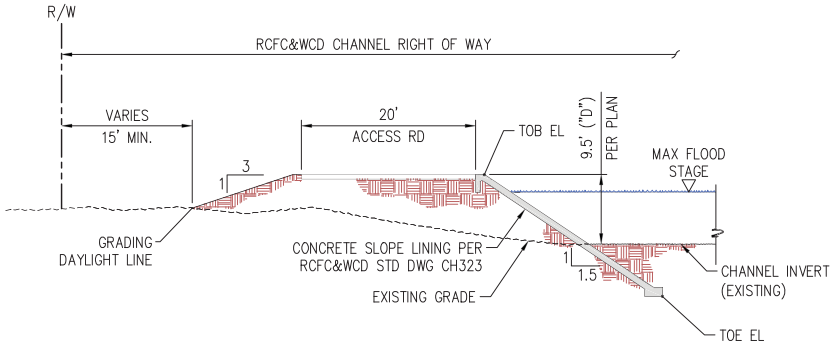
A levee headworks system would be constructed upstream of Mission Lakes Boulevard in order to intercept the unconfined floodplain and distribute the flows to Mission Creek. The headworks would include several box culverts or a bridge structure in order to hydraulically limit the flows discharging downstream to the Mission Creek channel to the maximum limiting hydraulic capacity of the channel system.

Morongo Wash Levee System

The Project includes the construction of levees along the eastern and western edges of Morongo Wash as it passes through the Project area. As shown on Exhibit 3-2, the wash would feature an approximate 900- to 1,700-foot-wide earthen bottom, concrete slope lining with a 1.5:1 slope on each side and a 20-foot-wide access road on top of each levee. The top of the levees would be approximately 11 to 15 feet higher than the channel bottom elevation and would extend from south of Mission Lakes Boulevard to Dillon Road. South of Dillon Road (where the floodplains for Morongo Wash and Mission Creek are combined), only the east side of the wash would feature a concrete-sloped levee and access road. The west side of the floodplain would be unconfined in some places, with the levee for Mission Creek in other sections.

The levees would be located outside of the designated Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area for biological/environmental preservation under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The levee alignments have been adjusted to follow a hydraulically smooth alignment through the elimination of “square corners”, while minimizing the amount of encroachment into the designated biological/environmental lands. The “smoothed” levee alignment would result in a straightened levee along the wash but places some land into the biological reserve and some designated environmental areas outside of the floodplain. However, this “smoothed” alignment would reduce problems associated with sedimentation, flow impingements, increased scour, and ineffective flow areas with reduced or blocked velocity that could otherwise occur if the alignment followed parcel lines. The maximum height of the levees and depth of flows is based on the estimated flow depth from a “self-forming channel” on an alluvial fan.

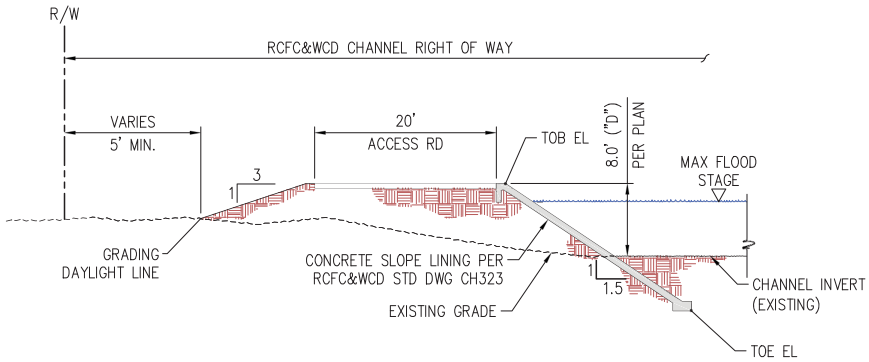
MORONGO WASH



TYPICAL SECTION A

N.T.S.

WEST BANK - FROM STA. 80+00 TO STA. 245+00

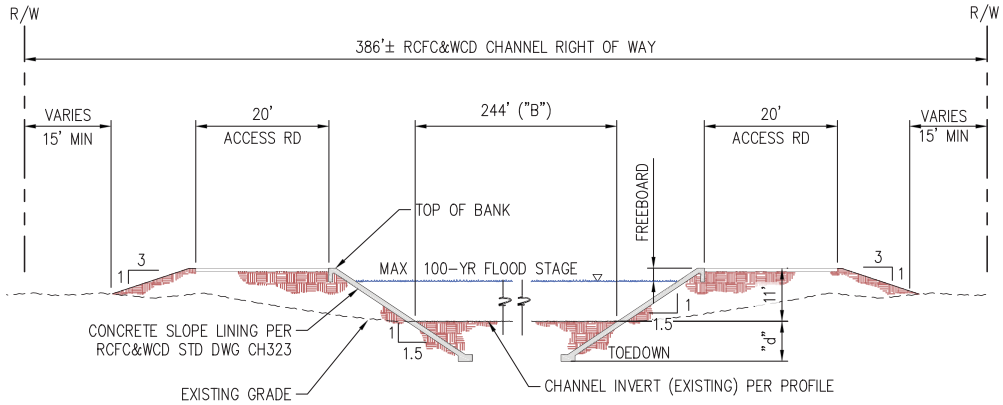


TYPICAL SECTION B

N.T.S.

WEST BANK - FROM STA. 245+00 TO STA. 283+85.30

MISSION CREEK



TYPICAL SECTION A

NTS

FROM STA 12+00 TO STA 68+64.83

Source: Pace Engineering 2013

Proposed Levee Cross Sections

Exhibit 3-2

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

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Water Conservation Basins

Three regional water conservation basins (or infiltration basins) are proposed on vacant land adjacent to Mission Creek to recharge the underlying groundwater basin. Storm water from the creek would be diverted to these basins for infiltration. These basins would benefit local water resources by capturing flows and enhancing the water supply, but would not provide a perceptible regional flood-control benefit because they would not result in any flood attenuation.

Water Quality Basins

Four water quality basins are proposed on vacant land along Morongo Wash in order to remove pollutants in the storm water coming from the developed areas of Desert Hot Springs. Water quality treatment of urban stormwater will be provided through "extended detention" developed through the basin geometry and specialized outlet structure. The basins would improve water quality primarily through extended storage or detention times of the runoff, which allows sediments along with different pollutants to settle out within the basin because of the low-velocity and almost dormant conditions. The outlet structures would be hydraulically designed to restrict the outflow to a very low amount, which would result water storage in the basin and extended detention times.

Bridges and Creek Crossings

Two bridges, which would be all-weather crossings, are proposed: one on Mission Lakes Boulevard crossing Mission Creek and another on Pierson Avenue across Morongo Wash. These bridges would be built above the floodplain elevation to allow for unobstructed access during heavy rains. The existing all-weather crossing bridge on Pierson Avenue across Mission Creek would also be replaced to span over the wider creek bed and to match the levee height.

Other streets crossing Mission Creek and Morongo Wash would feature dry-weather crossings, in that they would rise up to the levee elevation when crossing the levees, but would match the creek bed elevation when passing through the creek or wash.

Garnet Wash Floodplain Management

Due to the existing land uses at the southwestern section of the Project area, including wind farms and solar farms, only floodplain management control measures (e.g. land use regulations) are proposed for the floodplain along Garnet Wash.

Local Storm Drainage Improvements

Storm Drain Channels

The Project includes approximately 49.9 miles (i.e. 37 major storm drains) of storm drains (i.e., open drainage channels) to provide for storm water management on individual parcels. The open channels would be constructed within the adjacent roadway's right-of-way and/or within a drainage easement to accommodate the channel, and would be sized to accommodate storm water runoff from a 100-year storm event.

Detention Basins

Nine local detention basins on approximately 126 acres (ranging in size from 7.3 acres to 36.5 acres) would be constructed in connection with the local storm drain channels to reduce peak flow rates and volumes. These basins would provide storage volume for attenuation of the peak flows and would serve to reduce the sizes of downstream facilities.

3.3.3 FUTURE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE WDHS MDP

The final component of the WDHS MDP consists of the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts associated with future operation and maintenance activities. Ongoing maintenance activities would be required for all flood control facilities in order to retain functionality and capacity. It is anticipated that the RCFC&WCD would operate and maintain all of the regional WDHS MDP facilities, while local facilities may be maintained by the RCFC&WCD or the local jurisdiction.

The RCFC&WCD would conduct regular inspections of earthen channels, levees and basins. The routine maintenance of these facilities would include removal of accumulated debris and sediment, repair of eroded slopes, access roads and fences, as required, and periodic removal of vegetation to ensure the continued designed hydraulic capacity as well as to reduce fire hazards associated with brushy vegetation.

The frequency of operation and maintenance activities is a function of several factors, including the number and magnitude of storm events, the number of pieces of mechanical equipment requiring regular maintenance, and the amount of human interference with the facilities (e.g. graffiti, damage). On rare occasions, major repairs may be required following damaging storm events or seismic groundshaking. Earthen facilities (i.e. levees and open channels) would be more susceptible to damage by high velocity peak flows and more frequent storm events. While major repairs are expected to be relatively infrequent, the RCFC&WCD would occasionally need to substantially grade and repair the earthen facilities.

3.4 WDHS MDP IMPLEMENTATION

The Project's proposed storm drain improvements would not be implemented upon adoption of the Plan or built together at one time at a set future date. The WDHS MDP is a planning level document that sets forth the backbone drainage infrastructure to satisfy the anticipated requirements for flood control both at a local and regional watershed level. Additional detailed engineering would be required, addressing all the RCFC&WCD's applicable criteria and procedures, before a flood control facility would be constructed. Prior to implementation of any Project facility, additional environmental review pursuant to CEQA may be required.

Regional storm drainage facilities would be constructed incrementally over time by the RCFC&WCD. Because alluvial fan flood flows tend to spread out during a storm event, the regional drainage improvements would be constructed starting upstream to capture the flows and then convey them downstream.

The local drainage improvements would be constructed as parcels are developed or as the adjacent street system is constructed. However, since storm drainage is designed to work as a "system", building a "piece" of a system would not provide the full benefit until the entire system is implemented. Thus, construction of drainage facilities may require the construction of additional interim facilities at the upstream and downstream portions of the constructed segment to ensure that drainage facilities function correctly on an interim basis. In addition, the development could be required to construct temporary regional flood-protection improvements

until all master planned regional improvements are constructed to remove the existing flood hazard in each watershed.

The necessary interim storm drainage facilities are not known at this time and are not analyzed in this Initial Study. Based on future circumstances, these interim facilities would be subject to additional environmental review in compliance with CEQA.

3.5 DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

3.5.1 PRIMARY DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

A discretionary action is a decision taken by a government agency that calls for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve or deny a project. For the proposed Project, the government agencies with discretionary approval authority include the City of Desert Hot Springs, the RCFC&WCD, and the City of Palm Springs. The following discretionary approvals would be required (from these agencies):

1. **City of Desert Hot Springs**

   - Certification of the Program EIR
   - Adoption of the WDHS MDP

2. **Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District**

   - Certification of the Program EIR
   - Adoption of the WDHS MDP

3. **City of Palm Springs**

   - Certification of the Program EIR
   - Adoption of the WDHS MDP

3.5.2 SUBSEQUENT DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

Upon approval of the Project, a number of discretionary actions would be needed prior to implementation of the proposed flood control improvements. These include:

1. **City of Desert Hot Springs**

   - Revision of Capital Improvement Programs to include proposed storm drainage facilities.
   - Approval of flood control improvements within the City.
   - Approval of private land acquisition or land dedication needed for the proposed storm drainage facilities, including parcels within the Morongo Wash levees.

2. **Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District**

   - Revision of Capital Improvement Programs to include proposed storm drainage facilities.

- Approval of improvements that would affect RCFC&WCD facilities (e.g., Mission Creek levees) that would be located within or near RCFC&WCD properties or easements.
- Approval of private land acquisition or land dedication needed for the construction of WDHS MDP facilities.
- Execution of the cooperative agreement and approval of plans for developer constructed storm drainage facilities that would require RCFC&WCD maintenance.

3. City of Palm Springs

- Revision of Capital Improvement Programs to include proposed storm drainage facilities.
- Approval of land acquisition or land dedication needed for the proposed storm drainage facilities.
- Approval of flood control improvements within the City.

3.5.3 OTHER RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

In addition, a number of permits and authorizations would be needed prior to construction of Project flood control facilities. These permits may include:

Federal Agencies

- Federal Emergency Management Agency: A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) to revise the floodplains for Mission Creek and Morongo Wash and a LOMR after the improvements are implemented.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Section 404 permits for dredge and fill activities within "waters of the U.S.".
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Section 7/Section 10a Take Authorizations for impacts to federally listed "Endangered" or "Threatened" species outside the CVMSHCP boundaries.

State Agencies

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreements for diversions, obstructions, or changes to the natural flow or bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; and an Incidental Take Permit from the CDFW for projects that could result in the "Take" of a State-listed Threatened or Endangered species outside the CVMSHCP boundaries.
- California Department of Transportation: Encroachment permits for work in or near I-10, SR-62, and other Caltrans facilities (i.e., drainage channels, bridges, culverts and reinforced concrete box culverts).
- California Water Resources Control Board: A Waste Discharge Identification No. from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit for construction activities.

Regional or Local Agencies

- Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board: Section 401 Water Quality Certification for dredge and fill activities within "waters of the U.S.".
- Coachella Valley Conservation Commission: Consistency Determination for improvements proposed within CVMSHCP-designated Conservation Areas.
- County of Riverside: Encroachment, demolition, grading, and building permits for work within public rights-of-way.
- City of Desert Hot Springs: Encroachment, demolition, grading, and building permits for work within public rights-of-way.
- City of Palm Springs: Encroachment, demolition, grading, and building permits for work within public rights-of-way.

SECTION 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section includes the completed environmental checklist form, which is used to assist in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project. The checklist form identifies the degree of impacts from the proposed project on various environmental issues, and an explanation of each checklist response is provided under each issue.

1. Project Title:	West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan
2. Lead Agency Name and Address:	City of Desert Hot Springs 65-950 Pierson Boulevard Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
3. Contact Person and Phone Number:	Mr. Martín Magaña (760) 329-6411
4. Project Location:	47-square-mile area at the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs and the adjacent unincorporated Riverside County area, including a small portion of the City of Palm Springs at its northern boundary.
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	City of Desert Hot Springs 65-950 Pierson Boulevard Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
6. General Plan Designation:	Various land use designations in the Land Use Plans of the Cities of Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs and the County of Riverside.
7. Zoning:	Various zoning districts in the Zoning Maps of the Cities of Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs and the County of Riverside.
8. Description of the Project:	The *West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan* proposes the administration, construction, and operation/maintenance of a flood control and storm drain system along Mission Creek, Morongo Wash and Garnet Wash, including local drainage channels, detention basins, levees, water quality basins, water conservation basins, and all-weather crossings (bridges).
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:	Undeveloped land in the San Bernardino National Forest to the west and in the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast, with the I-10, Whitewater River, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the south. Developments to the east of the Project area include residential, commercial, and public uses within the City of Desert Hot Springs; the Desert Dunes Golf Club; vacant parcels; and Verbena Wash.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required (e.g. permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):

As discussed in Section 3.5 Discretionary Actions, the following responsible and trustee agencies must issue permits and authorizations prior to the construction of Project flood control facilities:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Transportation
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
- Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- County of Riverside
- City of Desert Hot Springs
- City of Palm Springs

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

☒ Aesthetic/Visual	☐ Agriculture and Forest Resources	☒ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology/Soils
☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☒ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☒ Hydrology/Water Quality
☒ Land Use/Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☒ Noise
☒ Population/Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☒ Transportation/Traffic	☒ Utilities/Service Systems	☒ 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 would be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there would 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 would 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 project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

[signature], ACTING PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR	11 DEC 13
Signature	Date
RUDY ACOSTA	City of Desert Hot Springs
Printed name	Lead Agency

4.1 AESTHETICS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☒	☐	☐	☐
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 Project area is located within the northern portion of the Coachella Valley, which is known to contain important visual resources including the Whitewater River, surrounding mountains, and undeveloped open space desert landscapes, which could be considered as scenic vistas. Project-related construction and operation/maintenance activities could have a short-term aesthetic impact on scenic vistas in the Project area due to ground disturbance, stockpiles, and construction equipment. The creation of new storm drainage facilities, such as levees, drainage channels, detention basins, and new bridges, would permanently change the public views of the Project area and could affect scenic vistas of the upper Coachella Valley and desert floor, as seen from I-10, SR-62, and major roadways. It is anticipated that impacts would be less than significant because Project-related construction and operation/maintenance activities would be short-term, and the presence of new storm drain facilities would be low-profile and would not obstruct views of the adjacent mountains. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, impacts to scenic vistas will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

SR-62 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway, which passes along the western edge of the Project area (Caltrans 2011). Project-related construction and operation/maintenance activities could have a short-term aesthetic impact on scenic resources in the Project area due to ground disturbance, stockpiles, and construction equipment. The creation of new storm drainage facilities, such as levees, drainage channels, detention basins, and new bridges, would permanently change the public views of the Project area and could affect scenic resources. Impacts on scenic resources, including resources located along SR-62, will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

The existing visual character of the Project area can be characterized as sparsely developed open space desert that gently slopes towards the undeveloped foothills of the San Bernardino and Little Bernadino Mountains. The existing visual character would be altered by Project implementation. Views of temporary construction activities and long-term views of levees and bridges would affect the sparsely developed rural character of the Project area. Impacts related to changes in visual character or quality will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Less than Significant Impact

The Project does not propose the installation of lights as part of the flood control improvements. The storm drain channels, levees, detention basins, water quality basins, water conservation basins, and bridges would not be constructed of reflective materials, such as glass or glazed materials. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to light or glare associated with the long-term operation and maintenance of the proposed drainage facilities.

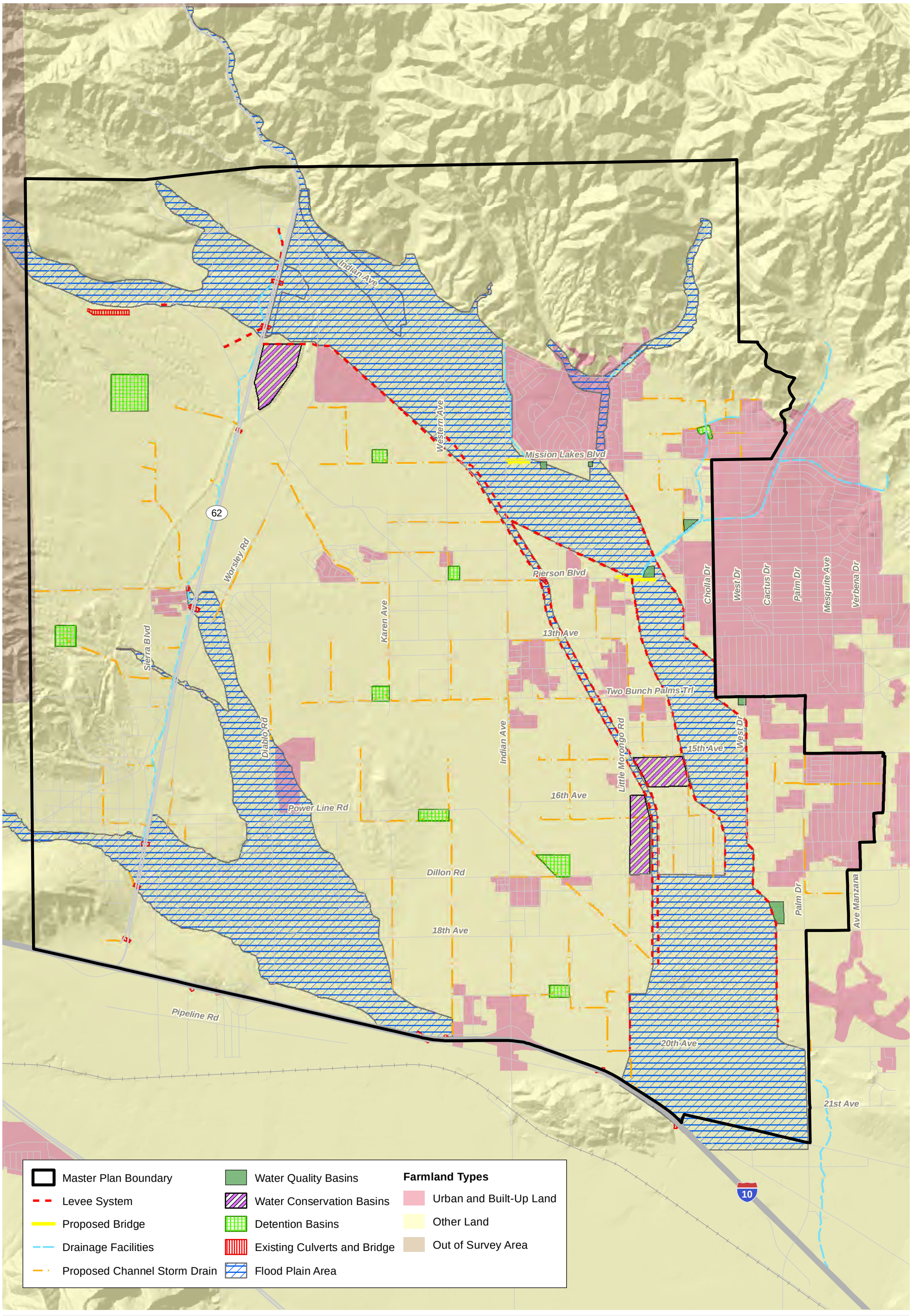
Construction activities associated with the various Project facilities would be temporary and are not expected to occur during the nighttime hours. Nighttime lighting would be limited to security motion-sensor lighting of the individual construction site and/or staging areas only and would not illuminate adjacent properties. Therefore, construction impacts related to light or glare would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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, b, e) No Impact

The California Department of Conservation administers the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) pursuant to Section 65570 of the *California Government Code.* The Project area, which includes the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs, the adjacent unincorporated Riverside County area (within the Cities of Desert Hot Springs' and Palm Springs' Spheres of Influence), and the northern end of the City of Palm Springs is designated as "Urban and Built Up Land" and "Other Land" in the 2010 Important Farmland Maps for Riverside County (FMMP 2012). The FMMP designated lands, overlaid by the WDHS MDP flood control improvements, are depicted in Exhibit 4-1, California Department of Conservation Important Farmland. Other Land is defined by the FMMP as land not included in any other mapping category that is generally not suitable for agricultural activities, while Urban and Built-Up Land is used for non-agricultural activities. Neither of these designations support sensitive agricultural lands and impacts would not require mitigation.

Project implementation would not convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses because there are no agricultural activities or FMMP-designated Farmland in or near the Project area. Additionally, according to the Riverside County Land Information System (RCTLIS 2013), there is no Williamson Act Contract or agricultural preserve in the Project area. The proposed Project would not cause changes in the environment that could indirectly result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses as there are no agricultural activities on adjacent lands. No impact on agricultural resources would occur and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.



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California Department of Conservation Important Farmland

Exhibit 4-1

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

N W E S

4,000 2,000 0 4,000 Feet

BonTerra CONSULTING

(Rev: 12-05-2013 MMD) Projects\Pace\J023\Graphics\InitialStudy\ex_farmland.pdf

c, d) No Impact

The Project area does not contain lands zoned as "forest land" as defined by Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 1220(g), "timberland" as defined by PRC Section 4526, or "timberland production" as defined by PRC Section 51104(g). The Project area is not located within or adjacent to forest land. The San Bernardino National Forest is located approximately five miles southwest and eight miles west of the Project area (USFS 2012). Thus, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause the rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Also, no loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use would occur with implementation of the proposed Project. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.3 AIR QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) Potentially Significant Impact

The main purpose of an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) is to bring an area into compliance with the requirements of federal and State air quality standards. For a project to be consistent with the AQMP, the pollutants emitted by the project should not exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD's) CEQA air quality significance thresholds or cause a significant impact on air quality. If Project construction, operation and/or maintenance activities would result in an exceedence of significance thresholds, then the Project would be in conflict with the AQMP. Additionally, for consistency with an AQMP to be maintained, a project should not exceed the AQMP's population growth projections, which are largely based on local land use plans. Because full implementation of the Project may result in the removal of land from the 100-year floodplain and indirectly induce growth by reducing flood hazards and by allowing more development in the Project area, the consistency of the Project with the SCAQMD 2012 AQMPs will be evaluated in the Program EIR to determine if Project implementation would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

The Salton Sea Air Basin is a State nonattainment area for ozone (O_3) and inhalable particulate matter (PM10) (CARB 2013). While approval and administration of the Project would not generate air pollutants, flood control facility construction activities (e.g., grading and emissions from construction equipment/trucks) would generate pollutants that could add to existing violations of the State standards for O_3 and PM10 in the Salton Sea Air Basin. Operation/maintenance activities of the flood control facilities would be intermittent and would occur at scattered locations, but could generate pollutant emissions that would add to existing air quality violations in the Salton Sea Air Basin. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

As indicated above, the Salton Sea Air Basin is a State nonattainment area for O_3 and PM10 (CARB 2013). Temporary construction activities associated with the proposed flood control facilities would generate pollutant emissions that may occur simultaneously with other construction activities and add to existing violations of the State standards for O_3 and PM10 in the Salton Sea Air Basin. Although operation/maintenance activities would also generate emissions, these activities are anticipated to be minor and periodic, and are not anticipated to

considerably contribute to cumulative impacts. Cumulatively considerable increases in criteria pollutants due to Project implementation will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Potentially Significant Impact

A significant impact related to criteria pollutants (i.e., nitrogen dioxide [NO_2], carbon monoxide [CO], PM10, and fine particulate matter [PM2.5]) and toxic air contaminants (TACs) would occur if construction or operation/maintenance activities would generate pollutant concentrations that would significantly affect sensitive receptors. Project construction and operation/maintenance activities could generate TACs or lead to criteria pollutant concentrations that may adversely affect sensitive receptors, including diesel exhaust that would be generated by the use of heavy equipment that may affect residences, schools, parks, and other sensitive receptors located adjacent to individual construction sites. Exposure of sensitive receptors to criteria pollutants and TACs will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e) Less than Significant Impact

Objectionable odors that could affect substantial numbers of people are generally associated with agricultural activities, landfills, transfer stations, sewage treatment facilities, manufacturing/industrial operations, food processing, or other activities that generate unpleasant odors. Once built, the operation of the flood control improvements would not generate any objectionable odors because there would be no handling or processing of any materials.

However, construction equipment and trucks would generate odors from diesel exhaust emissions, painting, and paving operations. Construction odors could be noticeable to residents, visitors, employees, and passersby adjacent to construction activities, but these odors would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance. The odors would be temporary and would occur at scattered construction sites in the Project area and on separate construction schedules during the Project's implementation timeframe. Similarly, operation/maintenance-related odors from trucks and equipment would be short-term and would occur periodically at scattered locations throughout the Project area. Therefore, construction- and operation/maintenance-related odor impacts would be temporary and would not be objectionable to a substantial number of people. There would be a less than significant impact and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, 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 Game 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (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) Potentially Significant Impact

The Project area is largely undeveloped and there are many special status plant and wildlife species potentially occurring within the region. In addition, there are several designated critical habitat areas for sensitive species within and/or near the Project area, such as the desert tortoise, Coachella valley milk-vetch, Coachella valley fringed-toed lizard, and peninsular big horned sheep. There are several conservation areas in and near the Project area that support sensitive and special status species. These conservation areas include the Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area, the Willow Hole Conservation Area, the Whitewater Floodplain Conservation Area, and the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area. Implementation of the Project has the potential to have an adverse effect on special status plant and animal species within or near occupied habitats. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

The Project area contains mostly native vegetation communities. Due to the size and natural condition of the Project area, riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities are expected to occur. Morongo Wash, Mission Creek, and Garnet Wash are some of the larger drainages that pass though the Project area and may support riparian habitats and sensitive

natural communities. Project implementation would be located in or at the edges of these riparian habitats and may result in substantial adverse effects on riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities. Therefore, these impacts will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

Morongo Wash, Mission Creek, Garnet Wash, and many of the drainages scattered throughout the Project area may support federally and State protected wetland areas (i.e. jurisdictional resources) that may be disturbed or removed by Project implementation. At the same time, proposed water conservation basins, water quality basins, and detention basins may create wetland areas with long-term use. The location and extent of existing protected wetland areas and potential impacts to these areas through Project implementation will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Potentially Significant Impact

Creeks and washes in the Project area may serve as wildlife corridors of varying degrees. Proposed levees, bridges, culverts, and drainage channels could obstruct these potential wildlife corridors and may affect regional wildlife movement. Potential impacts on wildlife corridors will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e) Potentially Significant Impact

The *Desert Hot Springs General Plan* includes a Biological Resources Element that contains goals, policies, and programs for the preservation of the area's important biological resources. There is a potential for inconsistency of the proposed flood control improvements to the goals, policies, and programs of the Desert Hot Springs' Biological Resources Element. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR. The General Plan of the City of Palm Springs considers the southern section of the Project area to be biologically sensitive (Palm Springs 2007). Consistency of the proposed flood control improvements to the goals, policies, and programs in the Palm Springs General Plan that relate to sensitive biological resources would also be analyzed in the Program EIR. The County of Riverside has adopted oak tree management guidelines for the protection of oak woodlands. The presence of oak woodlands in the Project area and potential impacts on oak trees will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

f) Potentially Significant Impact

The Project area is partly located within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP; the City of Desert Hot Springs opted out of the CVMSHCP when it was initially adopted in 2008. Under the CVMSHCP, several Conservation Areas have been identified in the Project area, including the Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area, the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area, and the Willow Hole Conservation Area. Currently, land within the City of Desert Hot Springs, except for the I-10 Annexation Area,[3] are not subject to the provisions of the CVMSHCP. However, the City and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) are in the process of updating the CVMSHCP to have the entire City of Desert Hot Springs covered by the CVMSHCP. Consistency of the Project with the CVMSHCP and the currently ongoing Major Amendment of the CVMSHCP will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

[3] This area was part of the unincorporated County area and was covered by the CVMSHCP when the CVMSHCP was adopted in 2008. After the annexation of this area to the City of Desert Hot Springs in 2010, it remained covered under the CVMSHCP.

4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☒	☐	☐	☐

a) Potentially Significant Impact

There may be structures in the Project area that are over 50 years old. Implementation of the Project, including land acquisition/easement and the construction of levees, water conservation basins, water quality basins, and detention basins, storm drain channels, bridges, and other flood control improvements, could lead to the demolition or alteration of structures that may have historical significance. Operation/maintenance would have no impact on historic structures since all affected flood control facilities would be new. The presence of historical structures, if any, in areas where flood control improvements are proposed would be determined and potential adverse impacts to historically significant structures will be evaluated in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

Ground disturbance (e. g., grading and excavation) associated with construction of the proposed flood control improvements would have the potential to disturb archaeological resources, if present. Operation and maintenance activities would have a negligible impact on archaeological resources, if present, because no or minimal ground disturbance into native soils would be required for these activities. A record search and consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission and local Native American tribes will be conducted to determine if there are sacred lands or sites considered to have a high likelihood for the presence of archaeological resources. Impacts to archaeological resources will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

Ground disturbance (e.g., grading and excavation) associated with construction of the proposed flood control improvements would have the potential to disturb paleontological resources in the Project area. Operation and maintenance activities would have a negligible impact on archaeological resources, if present, because no or minimal ground disturbance into native soils would be required for these activities. The sensitivity of the area for paleontological resources and the impacts of proposed flood control improvements on paleontological resources will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Potentially Significant Impact

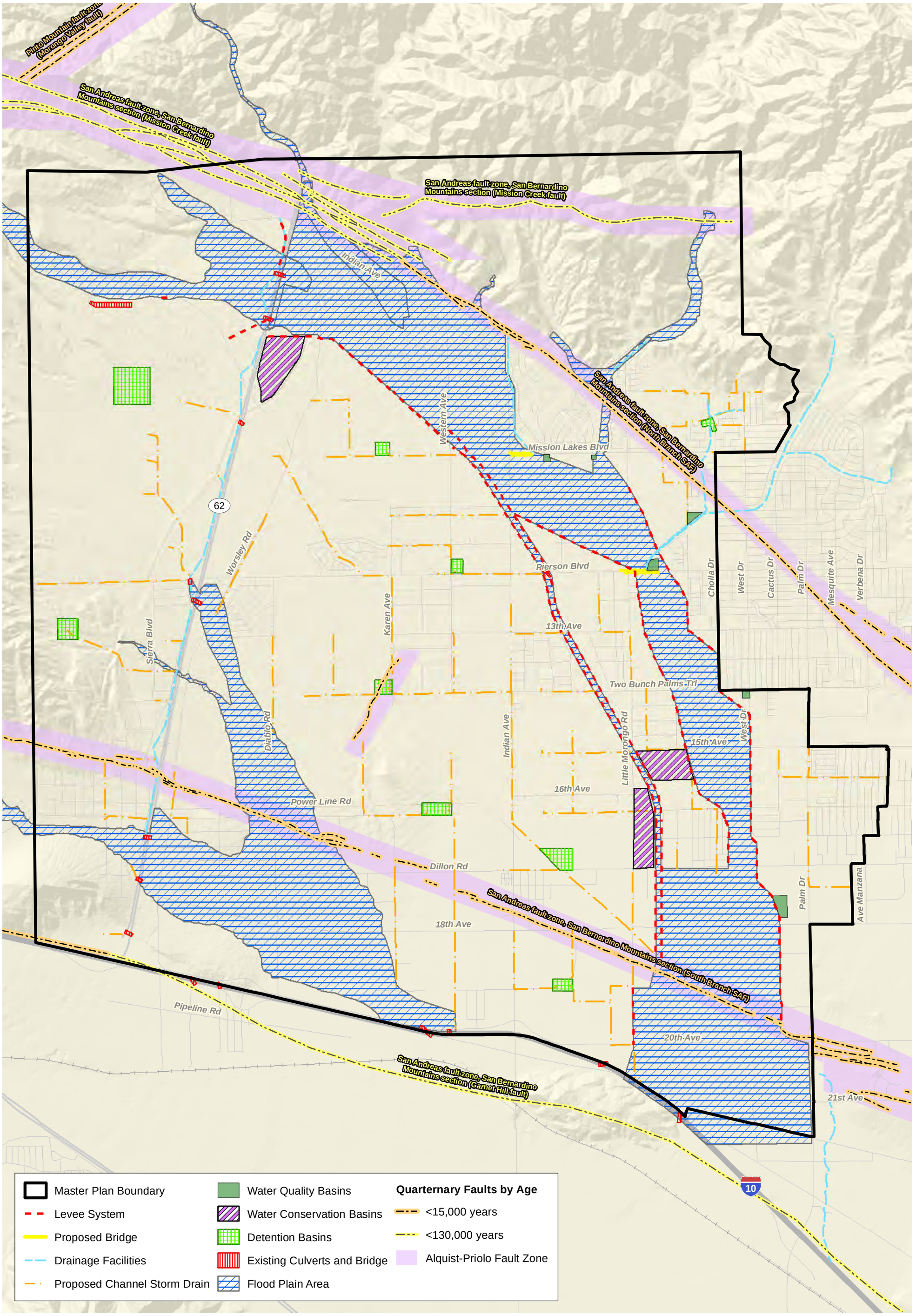
The potential for human remains in the Project area is unknown. Grading and excavation for construction of the proposed flood control improvements may unearth unknown human remains or unknown burials. Operation and maintenance activities would have a negligible impact on human remains, if present, because no or minimal ground disturbance would be required for these activities. These potential impacts will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

4.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to 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 onsite or offsite 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 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) i. and ii. Less Than Significant Impact

An Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone has been designated for the San Andreas Fault. As depicted on Exhibit 4-2, Fault Map, the South Branch of the San Andreas Fault (Banning Fault) runs through the southern section of the Project area and the North Branch of the San Andreas Fault (Mission Creek Fault) runs through the northern section of the Project area. Other earthquake faults in the Project area include the Garnet Fault, the Morongo Valley Fault, and Dillon Fault.

As shown on Exhibit 4-2, the proposed WDHS MDP facilities that are located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone include some local drainage channels and portions of a few regional facilities, including Detention Basin "H" and portions of the levee systems between 18th Avenue and 20th Avenue. An earthquake event on any of these faults may cause surface rupture in the Project area and lead to the damage of proposed flood control improvements. In addition to the fault lines within the Project area, earthquakes from other faults in southern California have the potential to result in groundshaking within the Project area. Depending on the magnitude of the groundshaking, there is the potential that flood control facilities could be damaged during a seismic event. While there are no habitable structures or permanent users of the flood control facilities and bridges, surface rupture and/or severe groundshaking could



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Fault Map

Exhibit 4-2

West Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan

N W E S

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BonTerra CONSULTING

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compromise the stability and function of these facilities to provide flood control and all-weather access in the Project area.

In the case of damage to a detention basin and/or levee during a seismic event, it is possible that a rupture could indirectly expose adjacent properties to water released through the damaged portion of the facility. However, the likelihood of a significant seismic event occurring simultaneously with a large storm event, when detention basins and/or the levee system would contain storm water flows, is remote. The short duration of stormwater contained within a detention basin, which would be limited to approximately three or fewer days, would further reduce the possibility of indirect flooding impacts to adjacent properties.

All WDHS MDP flood control facilities must be constructed in compliance with applicable State and local building code restrictions. California has adopted statewide, mandatory codes based on International Code Council (ICC) Uniform Codes. Local jurisdictions may only amend the California Building Code (CBC) to make it more stringent because of unique local climatic, geological or topographical conditions.

The City of Desert Hot Springs (see Municipal Code Chapter 16.64, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act) and the County of Riverside (see Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.60, Earthquake Fault Area Construction Regulations) require that all projects comply with the requirements of the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 2621 et seq.) and the adopted policies and criteria of the State Mining and Geology Board. The City's Code requires that all projects that lie within an earthquake fault zone must have a report from a State Geologist to address potential surface fault displacement before a project can be approved. The City of Palm Springs (see Municipal Code Chapter 8.04) incorporates the California Seismic Safety Commission Model Ordinance into the Palm Springs Building Code.

The Riverside County General Plan has policies mandating geotechnical studies, including Policy S2.1 regarding required geologic studies near faults, and Policy S2.5 regarding site-specific engineering for seismically- induced failure. The City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan has policies mandating geotechnical studies, including Policy 2 regarding required geotechnical analyses along Blind Canyon Fault. The City of Palm Springs General Plan has policies mandating geotechnical studies, including Policy SA1.2, regarding required geotechnical investigations for areas of potential seismic hazards, such as fault rupture, seismic shaking, liquefaction, and slope failure.

Compliance with State and local requirements related to seismic hazards and for facility-specific geotechnical reports within the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside, which would inform and guide the design of the Project's proposed infrastructure improvements, would ensure that hazards associated with surface displacement/fault rupture and severe groundshaking would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

a) iii. Less Than Significant Impact

The liquefaction potential of the alluvial deposits found in the Project area would depend on severity of ground shaking during an earthquake; the presence of groundwater near the ground surface; and the amount of clay in the soils. Project flood control facilities could be exposed to liquefaction hazards, resulting in damage to these improvements. While there are no habitable structures or permanent users of the flood control improvements that would be exposed to liquefaction hazards, liquefaction could lead to the damage of these facilities.

The Riverside County General Plan has policies mandating geotechnical studies, including Policy S2.2 regarding required geotechnical investigations for earthquake-induced liquefaction, landsliding, or settlement, Policies S2.3 and S2.4 regarding a State-licensed professional to investigate liquefaction in all areas designated as underlain by "susceptible sediments" and "shallow groundwater, for all general construction projects and critical facility projects. The City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan requires all development within Landslide Susceptibility areas to include subsurface geotechnical investigations. The City of Palm Springs General Plan has policies mandating geotechnical studies, including Policy SA1.2, regarding required geotechnical investigations for areas of potential seismic hazards, such as fault rupture, seismic shaking, liquefaction, and slope failure.

Compliance with State and local requirements related to seismic hazards for facility-specific geotechnical reports within the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside, which would inform and guide the design of the Project's proposed infrastructure improvements, would ensure that hazards associated with liquefaction would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

a) iv. Less Than Significant Impact

The majority of the Project area has a slightly sloping terrain leading to the foothill areas of Mount San Gorgonio to the west and northwest and the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and northeast of the Project area. Considering the relatively flat local topography near the proposed flood control facilities and the limited grading and excavation needed to construct the proposed flood control improvements , no landslide hazards would be created by the proposed flood control improvements. However, the Project would be subjected to effects from off-site landslides and rock falls that could occur in elevated terrain; however, the Project is not anticipated to be adversely affected because the proposed improvements would be at-grade and would be designed to convey both runoff and sediment from the mountains to downstream areas. Compliance with State and local requirements related to seismic hazards and for facility-specific geotechnical reports within the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside, which would inform and guide the design of the Project's proposed infrastructure improvements, would ensure that hazards associated with landslides would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

There is a high potential for wind erosion in the Coachella Valley due to occurrence of high winds and the presence of loose soils. Project implementation would involve ground disturbance and the removal of existing vegetation that, in turn, could lead to a greater temporary potential for wind erosion and storm water erosion during construction activities. Operation/maintenance activities could also result in exposed soils. Compliance with applicable law related to dust control and erosion, including compliance with the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity (State Board Order No. 99-08-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002); implementation of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); and applicable local requirements for facility-specific geotechnical reports within the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside, which would inform and guide the design of the Project's proposed infrastructure improvements, would ensure that hazards associated with erosion would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

c) Less Than Significant Impact

Geologic characteristics of the soils in the Project area could pose hazards (i.e., unstable soils, off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse) to proposed flood control improvements , as discussed in Threshold 4.6a) above. Compliance with State and local requirements related to seismic hazards and for facility-specific geotechnical reports within the City of Desert Hot Springs, City of Palm Springs, and County of Riverside, which would inform and guide the design of the Project's proposed infrastructure improvements, would ensure that hazards associated with unstable soils, off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

d) Less Than Significant Impact

Expansive soils contain clays that can absorb or release (i.e. shrink or swell) water depending on changes in the moisture content of the soil. Expansive soils that may underlie the Project area could pose structural hazards to proposed Project facilities. While there are no permanent users of the flood control improvements that would be exposed to soil expansion hazards, the damage of Project facilities due to soil expansion could adversely affect the flood-control function of proposed flood control improvements. The presence of expansive soils would be determined through the site-specific geotechnical evaluations discussed under Threshold 4.6a). Compliance with applicable State and local requirements related to seismic hazards, including required geotechnical analyses/reports, would ensure that all flood control facilities would be appropriately designed and constructed to account for potential hazards associated with expansive soils. There would be a less than significant impact and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

e) No Impact

Project implementation would not involve any habitable structures that would include a kitchen, bathroom, or toilet facilities that would generate wastewater requiring septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, no impacts associated with soils that are incapable of supporting septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would occur with flood control improvements implemented under the Project. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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) Potentially Significant Impact

Significant changes in global climate patterns have been associated with global warming, which is an average increase in the temperature of the atmosphere near the Earth's surface; this is attributed to an accumulation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere. Adoption of the Project and maintenance of the storm drainage system, once built, would generate GHG emissions; additionally, construction of the flood control improvements would generate GHG emissions that may contribute to climate change. It is accepted as very unlikely that any individual development project would have GHG emissions of a magnitude to directly impact global climate change; therefore, any impact would be considered on a cumulative basis. GHG emissions from both the construction and the operation/maintenance of the proposed Project could have a potentially significant cumulative impact on the environment. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

Project implementation would result in GHG emissions during construction of the flood control improvements. There are a number of plans and regulations related to GHG emissions, including the California Global Warming Solutions Act and the Desert Hot Springs Climate Action Plan, which apply to the Project area. The City of Palm Springs is also in the process of adopting its Green for Life Climate and Energy Action Plan; while the County of Riverside is developing a Climate Action Plan that is scheduled for adoption in mid-2014. It is possible that Project implementation could conflict or be inconsistent with the California Global Warming Solutions Act, the Desert Hot Springs Climate Action Plan, and other plans relating to GHG emissions. Consistency of the Project with relevant GHG plans and regulations will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

4.8 HAZARDS/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Section 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 for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact

The short-term construction and the long-term operation/maintenance activities for the Project would involve the transport, use and disposal of common hazardous materials and wastes that could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. It is anticipated that compliance with standard safety practices and local/State regulations would ensure that potential impacts would be less than significant. Although this issue is anticipated to be less than significant, the routine transport, use, and/or disposal of hazardous materials from implementation of the Project will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

Construction activities as well as operation/maintenance activities would require the use of heavy equipment, which make use of hazardous materials such as oil and grease, solvents, diesel gasoline, and other chemicals in vehicles, trucks, and heavy equipment that pose risks to construction workers and adjacent land uses, or lead to soil and groundwater contamination, if not properly stored, used, or disposed. Demolition and excavation activities may also disturb

existing hazardous wastes or existing soil contamination. In addition, there are high pressure gas lines near SR-62 and I-10 near the Project area (PHMSA 2012). Excavation activities associated with the construction of proposed storm drain channels, detention basins, water conservation basins, and culverts near the pipelines may result in accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment. Impacts associated with the accidental release of hazardous materials and wastes will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Less than Significant Impact

There are schools in and near the Project area and Project implementation would occur on roadways near these schools. Potential hazards to these schools due to the use of hazardous materials associated with construction and operation/maintenance of the flood control improvements are expected to be less than significant with compliance with applicable federal and State hazardous materials regulations. Although this issue is anticipated to be less than significant, potential impacts on nearby schools will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Potentially Significant Impact

There are a number of sites in and near the Project area that are identified as hazardous material users, hazardous waste generators, clean-up sites, or sites subject to investigation and that transport, use, and/or dispose of hazardous materials and wastes. Demolition and construction activities associated with Project implementation near these developments may create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. This impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e, f) No Impact

There are no airports or airstrips in the Project area. The nearest airport is the Palm Springs International Airport, located 3.5 miles south of the southeastern corner of the Project area. The Project area is not located within the airport influence area of this airport. The flood control improvements would generally be at grade or at relatively low elevations and therefore, Project implementation would not adversely affect aircraft or airport operations. There would be no impact and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

g) Less than Significant Impact

Project implementation would include the construction of two new all-weather bridges, one crossing over Mission Creek at Mission Lakes Boulevard, and one crossing over Morongo Wash at Pierson Boulevard. Additionally, the existing bridge over Mission Creek at Pierson Boulevard would be replaced to span the widened flood control channel. These bridges would provide emergency access and evacuation to and from the Project area during major storms or other disasters. Therefore, beneficial impacts on emergency response and evacuation would occur with the operation/maintenance of the Project. During Project construction of the local and regional facilities, local roadways used for emergency response or evacuation could have temporarily traffic lane closures and roadway detours. Additionally, the existing bridge over Mission Creek at Pierson Boulevard would be temporarily unavailable during construction. While this impact would be temporary, required traffic-control measures to ensure the safe flow of traffic during construction would be discussed in the Program EIR.

h) Less than Significant Impact

The steeper sloped areas at the northeastern section of the Project area are located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire 2009). However, the Project does not propose the development of any new facilities or improvements within this zone. The Project facilities located outside of this zone would not be habitable or otherwise flammable structures that could be substantially impacted by brushfires or other wildfire hazards. Additionally, the improvements would consist mainly of earthen, asphalt, or concrete facilities and would not be constructed with explosive, flammable, or combustible materials that could create wildfire hazards to the surrounding developments.

Construction activities would involve the use of mechanical equipment and flammable materials (e.g., paint and diesel fuel for equipment) that have the potential to result in fire through accidental conditions; however, construction sites would be cleared and grubbed of existing vegetation prior to grading and construction. All construction activities would need to be conducted in compliance with local/State regulations regarding fire safety, including compliance with *California Fire Code* restrictions for fire safety during construction. Impacts related to wildland fires would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding onsite or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of pollutant runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☒	☐	☐	☐
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☒	☐	☐	☐
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact

The long-term operation/maintenance of the proposed flood control improvements would not generate discharges that may affect long-term storm water quality in the Project area. Also, Mission Creek, Morongo Wash, and Garnet Wash are not designated as impaired water bodies under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (SWRCB 2011).

Short-term construction of the proposed flood control improvements would have the potential to contribute sediment and pollutants into Mission Creek, Morongo Wash, and Garnet Wash. Grading and excavation activities would generate loose soils that may enter local storm drains and creeks. In addition, construction activities and equipment could generate accidental leaks of oil and grease, vehicle fluids, and other solvents into the ground, which may then be washed down into the creeks. Potential water quality impacts during construction would be temporary at scattered construction sites. It is anticipated that all potential impacts to water quality would be

avoided by compliance with applicable local/State requirements, including compliance with the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity (State Board Order No. 99-08-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002); implementation of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); and compliance with the Whitewater River Watershed Municipal Storm Water Permit (Order No. R7-2013-0011; NPDES No. CAS617002). While no violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements are anticipated, this potential impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

The Project area overlies the Upper Coachella Valley Ground Water Basin, which is divided into four sub-basins defined by faults: Garnet Hill, Whitewater River, Mission Creek, and Desert Hot Springs. Runoff from the surrounding mountainous areas drains into these sub-basins from intermittent creeks, supplying most of the groundwater recharge for the groundwater basin. Long-term operation and maintenance of the Project would not impact underlying groundwater supplies since no habitable structures requiring the use of potable water supplies would be constructed. However, water supplies would be needed during construction activities for dust control, equipment cleaning, concrete mix, and other similar uses.

The Project would construct impervious surfaces a narrower floodplain for the Morongo Wash that could reduce groundwater recharge; however, Project implementation would also create storm water detention basins, water quality treatment basins, and water conservation basins that would increase groundwater recharge. It is anticipated that due to the Project's water conservation basins and detention basins, maintenance of floodplain for the 2- through 25-year flood events, and increase soft-bottomed area within Mission Wash, Project implementation would result in beneficial impacts to groundwater recharge. While impacts to groundwater recharge are anticipated to be beneficial as a result of Project implementation, this issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Less Than Significant Impact

The watersheds of Garnet Wash, Mission Creek, and Morongo Wash cover approximately 200 square miles on Mount San Gorgonio, in the Little San Bernardino Mountains, and in the western portion of the Coachella Valley, which are tributaries to the Whitewater River. Storm water from the surrounding mountains flows through canyons and alluvial plains, across the Project area, resulting in sheet flows that have the potential to generate flooding during large storm events. The proposed Project would change drainage patterns in the area by directing storm water into storm drain channels, detention basins, water quality basins, water conservation basins, and levees. These improvements would redirect storm water flows into a smaller area and could result in increased flow rates that may lead to erosion and siltation. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, this impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Less Than Significant Impact

As stated above, the proposed flood control improvements would redirect storm water flows through the alteration of the course of the Mission Wash and Morongo Wash, which could result in increased flow rates that result in flooding downstream. The Project infrastructure improvements are specifically intended to substantially reduce flooding hazards in the Project area. When fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain, as currently mapped with flood hazards associated with flows in Mission Creek and Morongo Wash, through the creation of a regional levee system and detention basins that would control runoff during large storm events. However, the centralization

of flows within the levee system has the potential to increase flow rates to downstream facilities. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, this impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e) Less Than Significant Impact

The long-term operation/maintenance of the flood control improvements would not generate runoff that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems. Rather, the Project would accommodate runoff from upstream watersheds and the Project area. However, the exact staging of the construction of regional and local facilities is not known. Since storm drainage is designed to work as a "system", building a "piece" of a system would not provide the full benefit until the entire system is implemented. Thus, construction of drainage facilities along a development site would require the construction of additional interim facilities at the upstream and downstream portions of the constructed segment to ensure that drainage facilities function correctly on an interim basis. In addition, the development could be required to construct temporary regional flood-protection improvements until all master planned regional improvements are constructed to remove the existing flood hazard in each watershed. Changes in floodwater flows would occur due to construction of the Project, as well as temporary interim facilities, possibly resulting in impacts to storm drain capacity. Additionally, construction of the improvements would have the potential to introduce pollutants into the runoff, as discussed under 4.9(a) above. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, this impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

f) Less Than Significant Impact

No long-term adverse change in storm water runoff quality are anticipated to occur with the proposed Project, as the flood control improvements would not create new land uses or sources of runoff pollutants that could substantially degrade water quality, but would convey storm water through the Project area. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, this impact will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

g) No Impact

When fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain, as currently mapped with flood hazards associated with flows in Mission Creek and Morongo Wash. Thus, the proposed Project would not place habitable structures or housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Rather, widening of the Mission Creek Channel and construction of the Morongo Wash levee system would reduce flood hazards to nearby properties. Since no flood hazard impacts to residences would be created by the Project, no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

h) Potentially Significant Impact

Large portions of the Project area are located in the 100-year floodplains of Mission Creek and Morongo Wash (FEMA 2008). The Project would result in a storm drainage system that would reduce flood hazards to existing and future developments. Once the Project has been fully implemented, the limits of the 100-year floodplains of Mission Creek and Morongo Wash would be revised with the proposed Project.

However, short-term construction activities would place structures within a 100-year flood hazard area that could impede and/or redirect flows. Additionally, as discussed under Threshold 4.9e) above, construction may require the use of additional interim facilities at the upstream and downstream portions of the constructed segment to ensure that drainage facilities function

correctly on an interim basis. In addition, the local infrastructure development could be required to construct temporary regional flood-protection improvements until all master planned regional improvements are constructed to remove the existing flood hazard in each watershed. Impacts resulting from development within a 100-year floodplain will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

i) Potentially Significant Impact

There are no dams upstream of the Project area that may pose inundation hazards in the event of failure during construction activities (RCIP 2000). However, the Colorado River Aqueduct runs through the western and northern sections of the Project area. An earthquake on the San Andreas Fault segments in the Project area may cause damage to the aqueduct and result in the release of large volumes of water and associated inundation hazards to areas downstream of the aqueduct break. Also, there are existing levees along Mission Creek (west of SR-62) and the Mission Lakes Country Club development, and levees are proposed at other sections of Mission Creek and along Morongo Wash in the Project area that could pose hazards to construction workers within the floodplain. Additionally, the Project includes construction of levees along Mission Creek and Morongo Wash. If the existing and proposed levees fail, inundation hazards may occur in the Project area. Inundation impacts related to aqueduct and levee failure will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

j) Less than Significant Impact

The Project area is located more than 50 miles inland and would not be exposed to tsunami hazards along the coast. The Project area has a slightly sloping terrain and may be subject to mudflow hazards from the adjacent mountains during large storm events; however, the proposed flood control improvements would contain sediment flows within Mission Creek and Morongo Wash through the proposed levee system and infiltration, water quality, and detention basins. Reduction of the area subject to flood hazards would also reduce potential mudflow hazards in the areas along Mission Creek and Morongo Wash.

There are no large open bodies of water upstream of the Project area that may pose seiche hazards. While the proposed flood control improvements would be exposed to mudflow hazards, these improvements would not create public safety hazards related to a tsunami, seiche, or mudflow. Also, there are no permanent users of the flood control improvements that would be exposed to tsunami, seiche, or mudflow hazards. Less than significant impacts would occur and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☒	☐	☐	☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact

The existing flood control channel along Mission Creek is a linear facility that could be perceived as being a structural barrier between the properties and homes along Peirson Boulevard to the west and the denser neighborhoods associated with the City of Desert Hot Springs to the east. The creation of additional above-ground linear flood control facilities, including the expanded Mission Creek channel and the proposed Morongo Wash levee system, would not physically divide an established community or exacerbate any existing barriers within the Project area. Under the current conditions, when a large storm event occurs, residents east of Morongo Wash can be separated from the City of Desert Hot Springs through floodwaters that flow down the alluvial wash. The Project's proposed two new all-weather bridge crossings, including the Mission Lakes Boulevard crossing of Mission Creek and the Pierson Avenue crossing of Morongo Wash, would be built above the floodplain elevation to allow for unobstructed access during heavy rains. Therefore, Project implementation would result in better connectivity for properties on the east and west side of Morongo Creek, resulting in less than significant impacts. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

The consistency of the proposed Project with the General Plans and Zoning Ordinances of the Cities of Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs and the County of Riverside would be analyzed to determine if changes in land use policy are needed to implement the proposed Project. Consistency with applicable land use regulations, including the Desert Hot Springs General Plan update[4] and the Riverside County General Plan update, would be discussed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

The Project area is partly located within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP and, under the CVMSHCP, the Morongo Wash floodplain is located within the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area. However, the City of Desert Hot Springs opted out of the CVMSHCP when it was initially adopted in 2008. Thus, land within the City of Desert Hot Springs, except for the southeastern section (I-10 Annexation Area) that was annexed in 2010, are not subject to the provisions of the CVMSHCP. At this time, the City and CVAG are in the process of updating the CVMSHCP to have the entire City of Desert Hot Springs covered by the CVMSHCP. To account

[4] The hydrology analysis in the proposed Master Drainage Plan utilizes the proposed Land Use Plan of the City of Desert Hot Springs.

for the City's future participation in the CVMSHCP, the levee system along Morongo Wash was designed to follow a hydraulically smooth alignment of the CVMSHCP's Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area. Consistency of the Project with the CVMSHCP and the currently ongoing Major Amendment of the CVMSHCP will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

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

There are aggregate resources (sand and gravel resources) at the Whitewater River, which runs along the southern boundary of the Project area and west of SR-62, as identified by the California Department of Conservation (CGS 2007). This resource area is located outside the Project area and no impact on existing mining activities near the Whitewater River would occur. There are also aggregate resources in Little Morongo Canyon at the northeastern section of the Project area. No flood control improvements are proposed in this area. Therefore, no impact on aggregate resources would occur from the proposed flood control improvements.

While there are subsurface mineral resources in and near the Project area, no mining activities are occurring in or near the Project area. Project implementation would not result in the extraction or mining of these resources, nor would the Project preclude the future extraction of these resources within or near the Project area. There are no mineral resources, as identified by CGS and DOGGR, in areas where the proposed flood control improvements are proposed. Should resources be found in these areas, they could be recovered from adjacent parcels/areas as the proposed flood control improvements would be linear (e.g., levees, bridges, and storm drain lines) or would consist of small scattered basins. Thus, the Project implementation would not result in any measurable loss of availability of regional mineral resources. Impacts would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

b) Less than Significant Impact

The Project area is located near the Desert Hot Springs geothermal field, where natural springs occur (DOGGR 2001). Several active geothermal wells are located at the base of the Little San Bernardino Mountains, northeast of the Project area (DOGGR 2013). The Desert Hot Springs General Plan also identifies the hot mineral waters, wind and solar energy, and sand and gravel resources as local resources to conserve and properly manage (Desert Hot Springs 2000). Of these resources, only a couple of geothermal wells are located at the eastern edge of the Project area within private properties. These wells would not be affected by proposed flood control improvements. Impacts to geothermal resources would be less than significant.

The Riverside County General Plan seeks to manage wind resources in the San Gorgonio Pass (including the southeastern section of Project area) and hot mineral water resources in an area southeast of Desert Hot Springs (outside the Project area). Wind resources would not be affected by proposed flood control improvements, which would be at-grade. There is an idle oil well located east of Diablo Road and north of 16th Avenue, in the unincorporated area of the County. No flood control improvements are proposed on or near the well location. Therefore, no impact would occur on this well. Project implementation would not result in any measurable loss of availability of locally important mineral resources.

The Palm Springs General Plan identifies wind resources in the southern section of the Project area and sand and gravel resources in Whitewater River, south of the Project area. The proposed flood control improvements in the southern section of the Project area would be at-grade and would not affect the availability of wind resources, and would not affect resources within the Whitewater River. Impacts would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.12 NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☒	☐	☐	☐
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Potentially Significant Impact

Construction of the Project improvements would generate temporary noise primarily from the use of heavy equipment and from trucks powered by diesel engines on local streets. Noise sensitive receptors (e.g. residences, hospitals, schools) near construction sites would be exposed to noise that could temporarily increase ambient noise levels and exceed applicable standards established in general plans and/or noise ordinances. Noise from operation/maintenance activities would be intermittent and would depend on the type of work needed (e.g., repaving of access road, reconstruction of levees, bridges, and basins). This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

Groundborne vibration and noise may occur during construction of the proposed drainage channel, levees, bridges, and other storm drainage facilities, as associated with excavation, earth-moving, the use of heavy equipment, pile driving or blasting, if occurring adjacent to sensitive structures or occupied buildings. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Less than Significant Impact

Project implementation would not generate a permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Construction activities would be temporary and no new noise-generating land uses would be associated with Project implementation. Long-term operation/maintenance activities for these storm drainage facilities would be intermittent and would occur at scattered sites and thus, would only add minimally to existing vehicle noise and stationary noise levels in the Project area. Since noise impacts would be temporary, intermittent, and would occur at scattered sites, no permanent increase in ambient noise levels would occur with the proposed flood control

improvements. Impacts would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

d) Potentially Significant Impact

The construction and maintenance of the storm drainage facilities would generate noise impacts from vehicle trips, the use of construction equipment, demolition and construction activities, and other similar sources. The noise impact would depend on the number and type of equipment, the duration of use, the time of day, distance from sensitive receptors, and the presence of buffers or intervening structures. Temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e, f) No Impact

There are no airports or airstrips in the Project area. The nearest airport is the Palm Springs International Airport, located 3.5 miles south of the southeastern corner of the Project area. The Project area is not located within this airport's influence area. While aircraft overflights would be audible in the Project area, the proposed flood control improvements would not be affected by excessive aircraft noise levels. There would be no impact and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through the extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Potentially Significant Impact

When fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain, as currently mapped with flood hazards associated with flows in Mission Creek and Morongo Wash, and would allow for additional and more intensive land uses than currently anticipated or allowed. Thus, Project implementation may indirectly induce growth. Impacts related to direct or indirect population growth would need to be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

There are existing scattered properties, including residences, within the existing floodplains for Garnet Wash, Mission Creek, and Morongo Wash. Homes that may be located within the proposed floodplain and main channels of the Mission Creek and Morongo Wash levee systems, and associated regional detention basins, would be removed as part of the Project implementation. It is anticipated that the number of properties affected by the Project's flood control facilities, and/or the altered floodplain boundaries, would be minimal. However, even a minimal loss of residential homes would temporarily reduce the housing capacity of the Project area.

When fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain, as currently mapped with flood hazards associated with flows in Mission Creek and Morongo Wash, and would allow for additional future development in the region. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, the availability of housing and housing sites to accommodate the existing and future housing needs of the Project area, as well as the demand for housing that would be generated by displaced households, will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) No Impact

The Project area is largely undeveloped open space with scattered rural land uses and a few clusters of residential development, largely located adjacent to the City of Desert Hot Springs. There are no locations within the Project area that consist of high-density urban development that would be impacted by the implementation of the Project facilities or could result in the displacement of substantial numbers of people. The regional facilities, including the levee systems and detention basins, have been located in areas where the least possible disturbance to existing land uses would occur. There would be no impact associated with the displacement

of substantial numbers of people and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.14 PUBLIC SERVICES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered government facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) i. Less than Significant Impact

Project implementation would not involve the construction of habitable structures or directly lead to population growth that could generate new demands for fire protection services. Therefore, the Project would not require the provision of new or altered fire protection facilities or negatively affect service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The Project facilities would not be constructed of flammable, combustible, or explosive materials that could pose a fire hazard requiring additional fire protection services. The issue of indirect growth-inducing impacts will be discussed in the Program EIR; however, direct impacts to public services would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

a) ii. Less than Significant Impact

Project implementation would not involve the construction of habitable structures or directly lead to population growth that could generate new demands for police protection services. Therefore, the Project would not require the provision of new or altered police protection facilities or negatively affect service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The issue of indirect growth-inducing impacts will be discussed in the Program EIR; however, direct impacts to public services would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

a) iii. through v. Less than Significant Impact

Project implementation would not involve the construction of habitable structures or directly lead to population growth that could generate new demands for schools, parks, or other public facilities, such as libraries. While facilities may be built near schools, parks, or libraries, no direct effects on these services are expected. The issue of indirect growth-inducing impacts will be discussed in the Program EIR; however, direct impacts to public services would be less than significant and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.15 RECREATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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

There are existing parks and open spaces in the Project area. Also, City parks and a trail along Mission Creek are proposed in the Project area (Desert Hot Springs 2013). However, Project implementation would not generate a resident population that could increase the use of existing parks and recreational facilities. Potential indirect impacts to recreational facilities due to additional future development in the region will be analyzed under Public Services thresholds. No impacts related to an increase in demand for recreational facilities would occur and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

b) No Impact

The Project would not include the construction of parks or recreational facilities. Although future recreational opportunities could be accommodated along proposed levees and within the creeks and washes, the Project itself would not construct any recreational facilities, nor would it affect existing recreational facilities. The *Desert Hot Springs General Plan* calls for multi-use trails along flood control facilities; but any future trail system would not be built as part of the Project. At the same time, Project implementation would not preclude the access roads along the levees from accommodating multi-use trails. Potential indirect impacts to recreational facilities due to additional future development in the region will be analyzed under Public Services thresholds. Thus, no impacts related to the construction of recreational facilities would occur and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.16 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system. Including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decreased the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact

Project implementation would not involve the construction of any new roads. Also, no roadways would be widened or vacated with the Project. However, construction of Project facilities, including storm drain channels, bridges, culverts, and levees, would occur within public rights-of-way and may involve the temporary closure of select roadway segments and the need for detours. In addition, levees along the edges of Morongo Wash would involve the vertical realignment of the roads where the levees would cross the roads. However, no changes in the capacities of existing roadways are proposed. Impacts on traffic volumes and intersection operations would be temporary and would occur at scattered sites during construction of individual storm drain facilities and are anticipated to be less than significant. Vehicle trips from maintenance activities would also be incremental and dispersed throughout the Project area. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, impacts to the circulation system will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

As indicated above, traffic impacts would be temporary and would occur at scattered sites during construction of individual storm drain facilities. Thus, impacts on the level of service (LOS) on a Riverside County Congestion Management Program (CMP) facility, such as I-10 and SR 62 (both operating at LOS C according to 2011 CMP data), would also be temporary and dispersed. Neither construction-related traffic nor long-term operations and maintenance traffic, are anticipated to affect the LOS on CMP facilities. Although these impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, they will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) No Impact

There are no airports or airstrips in the Project area. The nearest airport is the Palm Springs International Airport, located 3.5 miles south of the southeastern corner of the Project area. The Project area is not located within the airport's influence area. The storm drain improvements would not generate air traffic, nor would it require air transportation. Therefore, the Project implementation would not change air traffic levels at the Palm Springs International Airport and would not create safety risks or obstructions to air navigation. There would be no impact and no further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

d) Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed levees would alter the vertical alignments of several roadways in the Project area through the construction of bridges over Mission Creek and Morongo Wash; the reconstruction of roadway grades where existing roads cross the proposed levees; and construction of dry-weather crossings where roads cross the creek beds of Mission Creek and Morongo Wash. These facilities will be constructed in accordance with all applicable State and local requirements regarding roadway design and construction. Although traffic hazards associated with new roadway levee-crossings and bridges would be less than significant, they will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

e) Less Than Significant Impact

Project construction activities would temporarily result in traffic lane closures and roadway detours during construction of the dry-weather crossings and bridges where roads cross the creek beds of Mission Creek and Morongo Wash. However, all construction-related activities will be conducted in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which sets forth standards, guidance, options, and support materials for transportation professionals to use regarding the proper use of traffic control devices on streets, highways, and bikeways. Proper implementation of traffic control devices in compliance with MUTCD and the maintenance of emergency access for all parcels will ensure that temporary construction activities would have a less than significant impact on emergency access. Regarding long-term operational impacts, the proposed bridges over Mission Creek and Morongo Wash would improve emergency access and evacuation in the Project area by providing all-weather access, especially during major flood events. Although impacts to emergency access associated with new roadway levee-crossings and bridges would be less than significant, they will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

f) Less than Significant Impact

Proposed storm drain lines on roads that serve as SunBus routes could temporarily affect bus stops and schedules during the construction phases. Proposed bikeways and trails on these roads could also be affected if they are built prior to the flood control improvements. However, existing roadway improvements, including bike lanes, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings, would be reconstructed to their existing conditions as part of the flood control improvements.

As stated earlier, the *Desert Hot Springs General Plan* calls for multi-use trails along flood-control facilities, but trails would not be built as part of the proposed levees along the creek. At the same time, Project implementation would not preclude the development of trails on the access roads along the levees. Thus, no impact to proposed trails would occur with Project implementation. Impacts to bus routes, bikeways, and trails would be considered temporary and less than significant. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a, b, e) No Impact

Project implementation would not generate either construction-related or long-term operational wastewater that would require treatment or disposal. During construction activities, workers would be served by portable toilets that would be brought to the construction site treated at local wastewater treatment facilities in accordance with existing treatment standards. No impact on sewer line capacity, wastewater treatment requirements, or wastewater treatment facilities would occur with the Project implementation. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

The Project would not require long-term potable water supplies or infrastructure expansion because the drainage facilities would not include landscaping, habitable structures, or other facilities that would connect to water supply pipelines. Construction-related water demand would occur for dust control, equipment cleaning, concrete mix, and other similar uses, which would be provided by water trucks that would come to the construction sites. No permanent water service connections, pipelines, or new water treatment facilities would be needed. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

The Project facilities would serve the western section of the City of Desert Hot Springs; adjacent unincorporated County lands; and the northern end of the City of Palm Springs. The proposed flood control improvements include storm drain lines, drainage channels, levees, detention basins, water quality basins, water conservation basins, and bridges that would redirect storm

water runoff into the planned facilities and reduce sheet flow and flood hazards. The proposed Project would have beneficial impacts on storm drainage because when fully implemented, the Project would remove approximately 2,820 acres of land along Mission Creek and Morongo Wash from the 100-year floodplain. The Project would provide all-weather crossings to allow for emergency access and evacuation between the western section and the central eastern sections of the City during major floods. However, construction of the proposed facilities may have a significant impact on the environment, as described within this Initial Study. This issue will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

d) Less than Significant Impact

The Project would not include landscaping, habitable structures, or other facilities that would connect to water supply pipelines. Construction of the Project facilities, as well as some operation/maintenance activities, would require the use of potable water for dust suppression (in compliance with South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 403) and for concrete mixing, where cement is utilized. For dust suppression, water is generally applied at a construction site via a water truck that is filled prior to traveling to the site. Similarly, a concrete truck is filled with water and concrete mix at the source location prior to traveling to the site. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the both water trucks and concrete trucks would be from local businesses within the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) service area and therefore the water would be derived from MSWD supplies.

MSWD's *2010 Urban Water Management Plan* (UWMP) states there will be adequate water supplies through the year 2035 in a normal year, a single dry year, and all multiple dry year scenarios. In the worst case projected in the UWMP (Multiple Dry Years 2011-2015), the total water demand in year 2011 is estimated to be 75.5 percent of the available water supplies (see Table 4.2-4 of the UWMP). All other scenarios have a water demand that is approximately 73 percent or less of available supplies, meaning that, at worst, there is an approximate 24 percent surplus of water based on current projections of available groundwater.

The water demand for Project construction activities would occur periodically, during implementation of each improvement, rather than continuously and would be finite, occurring only during the phase of construction when necessary. While the total quantity of water for dust suppression and cement production for implementation of all proposed improvements cannot be feasible quantified, but it would be a negligible amount in comparison to any new, long-term water demand such as a residential or industrial land use. Also, based on the conclusions of the UWMP, it is anticipated that there would be sufficient water supplies for Project implementation and that this water demand would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies. There would be a less than significant impact. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

f) Less than Significant Impact

The Riverside County Waste Management Department (WMD) is responsible for the design, permitting, construction, operation and/or maintenance of 39 municipal landfills (6 active and 32 closed), has a contract agreement for solid waste disposal with 1 private landfill that is open to the public, and administers leases for several privately-owned transfer stations that are open to the public. Class III (i.e., non-hazardous) landfills accept non-hazardous municipal waste. Additionally, the Riverside County WMD landfills may conditionally accept selected wastes, other than non-hazardous solid waste, such as demolition and renovation waste, food wastes, low level hydrocarbon contaminated soil, ash, gypsum board, and treated wood waste (Riverside County WMD 2013). The location and capacity of the seven Class III landfills that could serve the Project area is provided in the table below.

TABLE 1
CLASS III LANDFILLS

Facility Name and Location	Approximate Distance to Plan Area	Permitted Daily Capacity
Badlands 31125 Ironwood Avenue, Moreno Valley, CA 92555	30 miles	4,000 tons
Blythe 1000 Midland Road, Blythe, CA 92225	110 miles	400 tons
Desert Center 17-991 Kaiser Road, Desert Center, CA 92239	60 miles	60 tons
Lamb Canyon 16411 Lamb Canyon Road, Beaumont, CA 92223	25 miles	3,000 tons
Mecca II 95250 66th Avenue, Mecca, CA 92254	40 miles	400 tons
Oasis 84-505 84th Avenue, Oasis, CA 92274	45 miles	400 tons
El Sobrante (privately-owned) 10910 Dawson Canyon Road, Corona, CA 92883	100 miles	16,054 tons
Source: California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. 2013 (last viewed October 29). *Solid Waste Information System (SWIS): Facility/Site Search*. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/Search.aspx		

The Project facilities would not be occupied by a permanent user population and would not generate a long-term waste disposal stream requiring landfill disposal. However, the construction of improvements would generate wastes during the demolition of any existing structures (where necessary) and the building of the new facilities. Short-term waste generation would consist primarily of non-hazardous, construction waste, including: concrete, metal, wood, excavated soils, and green waste. The combined permitted daily capacity of the Badlands, Lamb Canyon, and El Sobrante landfills, which are the landfills with the largest daily intakes, is approximately 23,054 tons per day. According to the *2013 Five-Year Review Report on the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan*, prepared by the Riverside County WMD for submittal to the California Department of Resources and Recycling (CalRecycle), the most current publicly available information-the County of Riverside has 56.3 million tons of available permitted disposal capacity as of December 31, 2011, which provides more than 15 years of projected disposal capacity (Riverside County WMD 2013).Therefore, there is ample existing capacity for the periodic, finite volumes of construction wastes associated with individual improvements and implementation of the Project would not result in the need for additional permitted landfill capacity.

While the majority of the Project area is comprised of undeveloped open space, there is the potential to generate a small quantity of waste that would be considered hazardous. Earth moving activities may encounter localized areas of contaminated soils, such as soils impacted by petroleum hydrocarbons from past land uses. Also, implementation of the Project would require the demolition of some existing structures. Depending on the age of these structures, asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint may be present and would require abatement and disposal in accordance with State and regional requirements. These types of wastes, though commonly encountered during construction and demolition activities, would require disposal at a facility that specializes in that type of waste(s).

The volume of potential hazardous waste cannot be feasibly quantified; however, it would be a nominal proportion of the total construction waste stream. Also, as noted above, the Class III landfills serving the Project area can conditionally accept soils with low-level petroleum contamination. Implementation of the Project is not expected to generate any unusually

hazardous or otherwise uncommon solid waste that could not be safely disposed at an appropriate facility in the region such that the permitted capacity of these facilities would be exceeded.

Therefore, the Project would be served by landfills with sufficient permitted capacity and there would be a less than significant impact. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

g) Less than Significant Impact

As discussed under Threshold f), although the Project would not generate a long-term waste disposal stream, the construction of improvements would generate solid wastes during the demolition of any existing structures, and the building of the new facilities. All construction activities would have to be conducted in compliance with applicable local/state laws and regulations, including the California Green Building Standards Code, which includes mandatory construction and demolition (C&D) waste recycling; SCAQMD Rule 1403, which requires notification of demolition activities; and the Riverside Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, which includes the County's waste management policies. Therefore, implementation of the Project would comply with applicable statutes and regulations related to solid waste, and there would be a less than significant impact. No further evaluation of this issue is necessary in the Program EIR.

4.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to 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, reduce the number or restrict the range of 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 would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☒	☐	☐	☐

a) Potentially Significant Impact

As discussed throughout this Initial Study, the construction and operation/maintenance of the Project could result in potentially significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment, including biological resources and cultural resources. These issues will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

b) Potentially Significant Impact

The construction and operation/maintenance of the Project may result in cumulatively significant adverse impacts when considered with the impacts of past, current and proposed projects in the Project area and surrounding areas. Cumulative impacts will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

c) Potentially Significant Impact

As discussed throughout this Initial Study, the construction and operation/maintenance of the Project could result in potentially significant adverse impacts on human beings, either directly or indirectly. These impacts will be analyzed in the Program EIR.

SECTION 5.0 REFERENCES AND PREPARERS

5.1 REFERENCES

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