

Exhibit "A"

Environmental Impact Report for the Mid-County Project Area

Memorandum for file:

December 23, 2008

The following letter was received from the Coachella Valley Water District in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mid-County Project Area, Amendment No. 2 – Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet.

The review period ended on December 15, 2008, and the letter was received on December 23, 2008. The late arrival of the response letter meant that it was not included in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). It is included here to acknowledge its receipt in response to the DEIR.



Established in 1918 as a public agency

Coachella Valley Water District

Directors:

Peter Nelson, President
Patricia A. Larson, Vice President
Tellis Codekas
John W. McFadden
Russell Kitahara

Officers:

Steven B. Robbins, General Manager-Chief Engineer
Julia Hernandez, Secretary
Mark Beuhler, Asst. General Manager
Dan Parks, Asst. To General Manager
Redwine and Sherrill, Attorneys

December 19, 2008

File: 1150.013
1150.17

Ernest W. Glover
Urban Futures, Inc./GRC Redevelopment Planning
3111 North Tustin, Suite 230
Orange, CA 92865

Dear Mr. Glover:

**Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mid-County Project Area, Amendment No. 2 – Cherry Valley, Garnet and West Garnet
Proposed by the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside**

Thank you for affording the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mid-County Project Area, Amendment No. 2 – Cherry Valley, Garnet and West Garnet proposed by the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside. CVWD provides domestic water, wastewater, recycled water, irrigation/drainage, regional stormwater protection and groundwater management services to a population of 265,000 throughout the Coachella Valley in Southern California.

At this time, we submit the following comments regarding the proposed project:

1. Page 110, Existing Conditions, Water- In the second paragraph on page 110, please revise the last three sentences to read: *"In addition to groundwater supplies, CVWD and Desert Water Agency (DWA) obtain water from the SWP and Metropolitan. CVWD and DWA Table A amount total 194,100 af/yr. CVWD and DWA do not receive this allotment directly, rather it is delivered to Metropolitan, which in turn delivers to CVWD and DWA an equal amount of Colorado River water."*
2. Page 112, Wastewater- Please revise the last three sentences of the second paragraph to read: *"Three of the reclamation plants generate recycled water, two at a tertiary (three-stage) level. CVWD recently completed capacity expansion at one reclamation plant and process improvements at another. Demand is compounded by the conversion in some areas from septic tanks to sewer systems, which are better for groundwater quality."*

Ernest W. Glover
Urban Futures, Inc.
GRC Redevelopment Planning

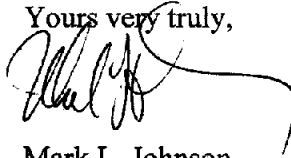
2

December 19, 2008

And please revise the first sentence of the third paragraph to read: "*The collection system consists of 1,078 miles of piping to collect raw sewage and transport it to the closest treatment facility.*"

If you have any questions, please contact Luke Stowe, Senior Environmental Specialist, at extension 2545.

Yours very truly,



Mark L. Johnson
Director of Engineering

LS:ch/eng/env/08/dec/ Ernest Glover-DEIR Mid County Project

December 22, 2008

**Final Program
Environmental Impact
Report for the Mid-County
Project Area – Amendment
No. 2, Garnet and West
Garnet**

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF
RIVERSIDE

SCH NO. 2008031016

**URBAN
FUTURES**

UFI/GRC

UFI | GRC Redevelopment Planning
3111 North Tustin Street, Suite 230
Orange, CA 92865
(714)283-9334 • FAX (714)283-5465
www.urbanfuturesinc.com

FINAL

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

for the

**Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West
Garnet**

(SCH NO. 2008031016)

December 22, 2008

Prepared for:
Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400,
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 955-8916

Prepared by:
URBAN FUTURES INC./GRC
Redevelopment Planning
3111 North Tustin, Suite 230
Orange, CA 92865
714 283 9334



Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Mid- County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet

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INTRODUCTION

This document, when combined with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), constitutes the Final EIR (FEIR) for the proposed Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet, referred to herein as the "Project", pursuant to Section 15132 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines ("CEQA Guidelines").

The DEIR contains a complete description of the proposed Project. The DEIR was circulated for public review and comment between from November 2, 2008 to December 17, 2008.

One agency submitted comments on the DEIR: State of California Public Utilities Commission.

Also contained in this FEIR is description of changes made to the Project and the Mitigation Monitoring Report for the Project.

The comment received did not identify new substantial impacts or require changes to the analyses or findings of the DEIR. The changes made involve the removal of the Cherry Valley Sub-Area from the Project, thereby reducing the size of the Amendment Area and potential impacts associated with its implementation. Therefore, there is no requirement to recirculate the DEIR.

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CHANGES TO THE PROJECT

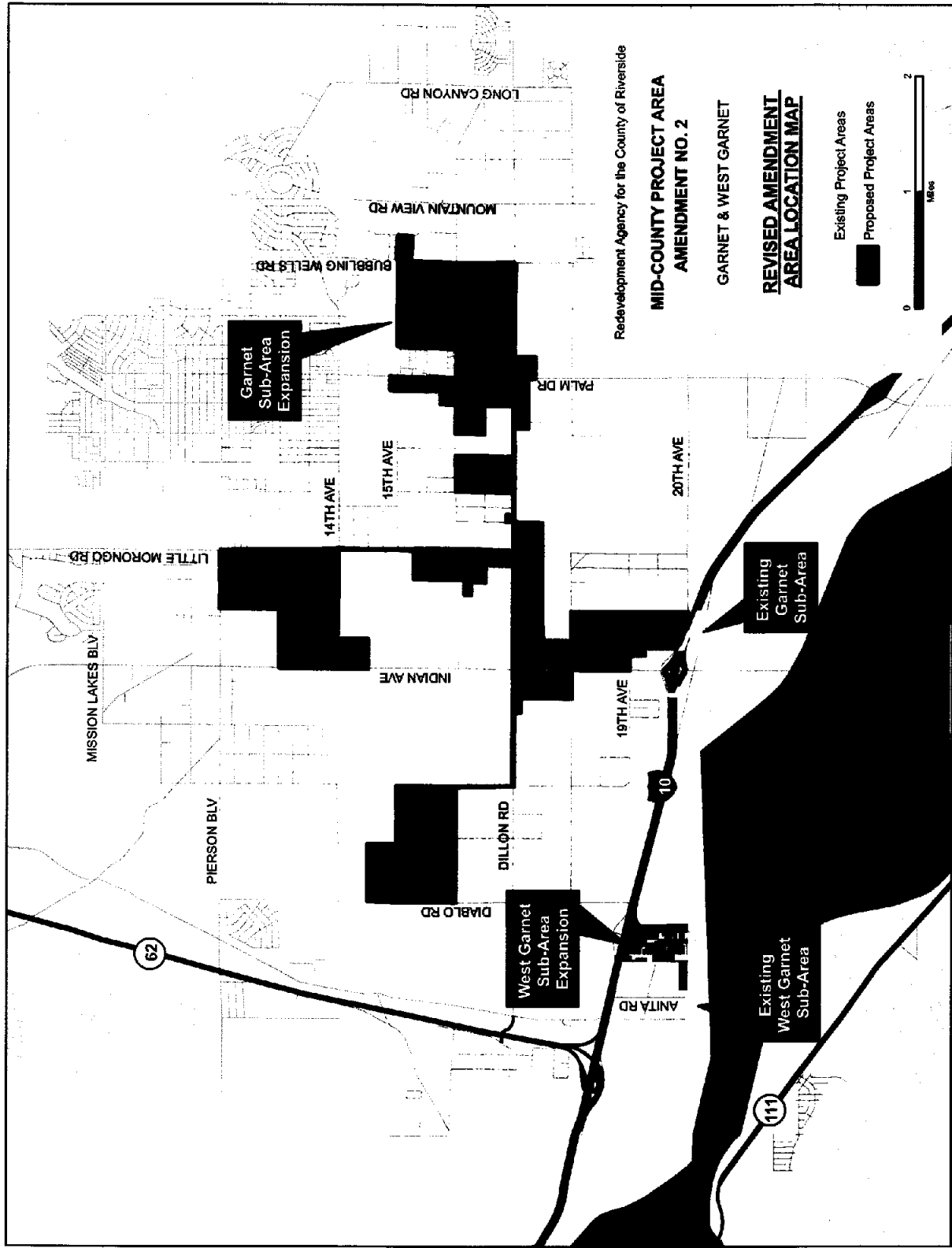
Following distribution of the DEIR for this document, concerns were raised by members of the community regarding the suitability of the Cherry Valley sub-area for inclusion in the Amendment Area. Although the redevelopment planning process identified conditions of blight in the Cherry Valley sub-area, the Agency agreed with community concerns that it is appropriate to address Garnet and West Garnet separate from Cherry Valley. Consequently, the Agency has removed Cherry Valley from the Amendment Area. The Agency will develop alternative strategies for addressing blighting conditions in Cherry Valley separate from the Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2 for Garnet and West Garnet.

The removal of Cherry Valley from the Amendment Area results in the removal of 1,807.56 acres. This removal reduces the size of the Amendment Area from 4,511.88 acres to 2,704.32 acres. The sizes of the two remaining sub-areas remain the same: Garnet, consisting of 2,618.16 acres; and West Garnet, consisting of 86.16 acres.

The removal of Cherry Valley also results in the change to Figure 1 of the DEIR, Amendment Area Location Map (revised Figure 1 attached); the removal of Figure 2, Cherry Valley Boundary Map; and the subsequent renumbering of the balance of the DEIR figures.

Similarly, the removal of Cherry Valley results in the removal of Table 2, Cherry Valley – Existing Land Use & General Plan Land Use; and the subsequent renumbering of the balance of the DEIR tables.

This change to the Project results in a smaller Amendment Area. Because of the reduced size of the Amendment Area, there could fewer impacts associated with Project implementation. The change to the Project does not substantially alter the findings of the DEIR. It does not result in any changes to the mitigation measures presented in the DEIR. Therefore, there is no requirement to recirculate the DEIR.



RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

The comment letters and responses to the comments are included in this section. Each comment letter is provided, then a reiteration of the relevant comment, and a response to the relevant comment.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 WEST 4TH STREET, SUITE 500
LOS ANGELES, CA 90013



RECEIVED

DEC 08 2008

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

December 5, 2008

Rohini Dasiki
Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400
Riverside, CA 92507

Dear Ms. Dasiki:

Re: SCH# 2008031016; Mid-County Redevelopment Project Amendment No. 2-Cherry Valley,
Garnet, and West Garnet

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) has jurisdiction over the safety of highway-rail crossings (crossings) in California. The California Public Utilities Code requires Commission approval for the construction or alteration of crossings and grants the Commission exclusive power on the design, alteration, and closure of crossings.

The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) is in receipt of the *Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal-DIER* from the State Clearinghouse for the redevelopment project. RCES recommends that the County add language to the amendment plan so that any future planned development adjacent to or near the Union Pacific Railroad Company (not Southern Pacific, as mentioned on notice) right-of-way be planned with the safety of the rail corridor in mind. New developments may increase traffic volumes not only on streets and at intersections, but also at at-grade highway-rail crossings. This includes considering pedestrian circulation patterns/destinations with respect to railroad right-of-way.

Mitigation measures to consider include, but are not limited to, the planning for grade separations for major thoroughfares, improvements to existing at-grade highway-rail crossings due to increase in traffic volumes and continuous vandal resistant fencing or other appropriate barriers to limit the access of trespassers onto the railroad right-of-way.

If you have any questions, please contact Varouj Jinbachian, Senior Utilities Engineer at 213-576-7081, vsj@cpuc.ca.gov, or me at rxm@cpuc.ca.gov, 213-576-7078.

Sincerely,


Rosa Muñoz, PE
Utilities Engineer
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection & Safety Division

C: Dan Miller, UPRR

COMMENTER: Rosa Muñoz, PE, Utilities Engineer, Rail Crossings Engineering Section State of California Public Utilities Commission ("PUC"); in a letter dated December 5, 2008.

Comment #1: The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section recommends that the County add language to the amended plan so that any future planned development adjacent to or near the Union Pacific Railroad Company (not Southern Pacific, as mentioned on notice) right-of-way be planned with the safety of the rail corridor in mind.

Response to Comment #1: As discussed in Section 4.2.3 of the DEIR, the General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2002051143) recommended a mitigation measure that requires project proponents to make a "fair share" contribution to required intersection and/or roadway improvements. This measure and applicable General Plan policies are added to the EIR for the Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2 for Garnet and West Garnet Project as Mitigation Measures TR-1 and TR-2 to ensure that future traffic in the Amendment Area is reduced to less than significant levels.

Regarding rail crossing, review and consideration of rail safety, including safe pedestrian crossings at railroad lines, are followed by the County as part of its normal course of business. Any development project in the Amendment Area would be required to comply with appropriate rail safety measures.

The Project provides a financing tool with which to facilitate implementation of the General Plan. It does not propose construction or alteration of a structure adjacent to a rail crossing. No further response to PUC's comment is required, and there is no requirement to revise or recirculate the DEIR.

MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Section 15097 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires all state and local agencies to establish monitoring or reporting programs for projects approved by a public agency whenever approval involves the adoption of either a “mitigated negative declaration” or an EIR that proposes mitigation measures.

The following is the Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP) for the Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet EIR. The intent of the MMP is to prescribe and enforce a means for properly and successfully implementing the mitigation measures as identified within the project EIR.

This MMP is intended to be used by Agency staff and mitigation monitoring personnel to ensure compliance with mitigation measures during project implementation.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting

The following MMP Table is the primary tool for implementing the MMP. The table includes a topical listing of all mitigation measures identified in the EIR. For each measure, the table identifies the party responsible for its implementation, the timing of its implementation, and the method for determining its implementation. The table is intended to serve as a checklist to assist the Agency with Project development and its ongoing implementation.

Each project applicant shall secure a signed verification for each of the mitigation measures, which indicates that mitigation measures have been complied with and implemented, and fulfills the Agency's environmental and other requirements. Final clearance shall require all applicable verification as included in the following table. The Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside will have primary responsibility for monitoring and reporting the implementation of the mitigation measures.

Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet

MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

(SCH NO. 2008031016)

PROJECT NAME: Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet

APPROVAL DATE: _____ FILE NUMBER: _____

The following environmental mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the Project as conditions of approval, as appropriate, and as applicable pursuant to County General Plan policies, ordinance provisions and related policies. Each project applicant shall secure a signed verification for each of the mitigation measures indicating that a mitigation measure has been complied with and implemented, and fulfills the County's environmental requirements. (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6.) Final clearance shall require all verifications included in the form.

MITIGATION MEASURE	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
			Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
TRAFFIC					
TR-1: Future development entitlement proposals in the Amendment Area (including tracts, plot plans, public use permits, conditional use permits, etc.) shall be required to prepare a traffic study for County review and approval to identify project related traffic impacts and determine the "significance" of such impacts in compliance with CEQA.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and Traffic Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; Traffic Engineer	

*Final Environmental Impact Report for the
Mid-County Project Area -- Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet*

MITIGATION MEASURE	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
			Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
TR-2: As part of its review of land development proposals, the County shall require project proponents to make a "fair share" contribution to required intersection and/or roadway improvements. The required intersection and/or roadway improvements shall be based on maintaining the appropriate level of service (LOS D within Community Development Areas designated by the 2002 Riverside County General Plan and within adjacent jurisdictions; LOS C within those portions of unincorporated Riverside County outside of Community Development Areas). The fair share contribution shall be based on the percentage of project-related traffic to the total future traffic.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and Traffic Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; Traffic Engineer	
AIR QUALITY					
AQ-1: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with the established SCAQMD regulations, which may include air quality impact studies and subsequent CEQA analysis.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director	
AQ-2: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall include appropriate and feasible mitigation measures to address global warming as specified by County ordinance or, if no ordinance exists, as specified by relevant regulating authority, which could include mitigation measures provided by the Office of the California Attorney General.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director	

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside

MITIGATION MEASURE	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
			Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
AQ-3: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with a County adopted "green design" or "sustainable development" ordinance should such ordinance be adopted prior to project development. If such ordinance is not adopted prior to project development, each development shall be encouraged to incorporate any or all of current available energy-conservation features and "green" technologies into the project design.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director	
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES					
BIO-1: Prior to issuance of any grubbing, grading or building permit on a vacant parcel over one-acre in size and adjacent to another vacant parcel, the applicant shall submit for review and approval by the County Planning Director, a biological resource survey prepared by a qualified biologist acceptable to the County. Should the parcel be found to contain potentially significant biological resources, mitigation measures recommended by the resources consultant shall be considered for inclusion in the project.	Prior to issuance of any grubbing, grading or building permit on a vacant parcel over one-acre in size and adjacent to another vacant parcel	Applicant, County Planning Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director	
CULTURAL RESOURCES					
CUL-1: If potential archaeological resources, paleontological resources or human remains are uncovered during any grading activities, the contractor shall halt work in the immediate area of the find, inform the Planning Department immediately and retain a qualified professional acceptable to the County to examine the material to determine whether it is a unique resource or human remain. If this determination is positive, the contractor shall be required to comply with all applicable General Plan policies and mitigation measures. No further work shall occur in the immediate location of the find until all information recovery has been completed and a report concerning same filed with and accepted as complete with the County.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director	

*Final Environmental Impact Report for the
Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet*

MITIGATION MEASURE		TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
				Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
HYDROLOGY						
HYD-1: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards shall adhere to the flood proofing, flood protection requirements, and Flood Management Review requirements of the Riverside County Ordinance No. 458 Regulating Flood Hazard Areas.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning and Engineering Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer		
HYD-2: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential, or sheet flow shall be submitted to the Coachella Valley Water District. Such developments shall not proceed until the District and County are satisfied that adequate flood abatement measures are in place.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning and Engineering Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer		
PUBLIC SERVICES						
PS-1: Future development shall pay their fair share toward sheriff services and facilities as determined by the Sheriff Department and County.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning and Sheriff Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Sheriff		
PS-2: Future development shall pay their fair share toward fire protection services and facilities as determined by the Fire Department and County.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning and Fire Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; Fire Chief		

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside

MITIGATION MEASURE	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
			Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
PS-3: Future development shall pay applicable park fees and incorporate private and public park and recreational facilities consistent with County policies.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning and Parks and Recreation Department staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; Parks Services Director	
UTILITIES					
UTL-1: Future development shall comply with County policies regarding water conservation, including: provision of drought tolerant landscaping; and use of non-potable water, if determined by the County to be available, for landscaped and other outdoor areas.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	
UTL-2: Future development shall prepare water supply assessments consistent with County policies and state laws, prior to project approval.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	
UTL-3: Future developments below state and County water supply assessment criteria, with an estimated annual water use of 250 a.f. or less, shall demonstrate to the County that compliance with the Urban Water Management Plan for the area in which the development is located.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	

*Final Environmental Impact Report for the
Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Garnet and West Garnet*

MITIGATION MEASURE	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
			Monitoring Action:	Monitoring Responsibility	Date Completed
UTL-4: Future development shall comply with County requirements regarding NPDES requirements.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	
UTL-5: Future development shall contribute its fair share to fund wastewater facilities as required by the County.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	
UTL-6: Future development shall design storm drain improvements consistent with County policies.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	
UTL-7: Future commercial, industrial and multifamily residential development shall provide adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials.	During staff review of a proposed development project	Applicant, County Planning Department and County Engineering staff	Review of project applications and preparation of Initial Studies and other environmental documentation as may be required	Planning Director; County Engineer	

October 27, 2008

**Draft Program
Environmental Impact
Report for the Mid-County
Project Area – Amendment
No. 2, Cherry Valley Garnet,
and West Garnet**

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF
RIVERSIDE**



UFI | GRC Redevelopment Planning
3111 North Tustin Street, Suite 230
Orange, CA 92865
(714)283-9334 • FAX (714)283-5465
www.urbanfuturesinc.com

DRAFT

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

for the

**Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Cherry Valley, Garnet, and
West Garnet**

(SCH NO. 2008031016)

Prepared by:

URBAN FUTURES, INC.

In Cooperation with the:

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400,
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 955-8916

October 2008



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Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet

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PREFACE

This document is a program-level Environmental Impact Report (the "EIR") prepared on behalf of the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside (the "Agency") in accordance with the statutes and guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), Section 21000 et seq. of the Public Resources Code and Section 15000 et seq. of Title 14 of the California Code Regulations, CEQA Guidelines, and Agency and County of Riverside ("County") requirements. The purpose of this EIR is to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of the activities necessary to implement the proposed Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet (the "Project" or "Plan Amendment").

The Plan Amendment would add approximately 4,511.88 acres (the "Amendment Area") to the existing project area ("Existing Project Area") in the County of Riverside. The Amendment Area consists of three sub-areas: Cherry Valley, consisting 1,807.56 acres; Garnet, consisting of 2,618.16 acres; and West Garnet, consisting of 86.16 acres. The three sub-areas are located as follows:

- Cherry Valley is located generally south of Orchard Street, east of Taylor Road, west of Bellflower Avenue and generally north of Cougar Way.
- Garnet is located generally south of Pierson Boulevard, generally east of Serendipity Road, generally east of Avenida Monte Flora, and generally north of 20th Avenue.
- West Garnet is located south of Garnet Avenue, generally east of Kellogg Road, generally west of Diablo, and north of the Southern Pacific Transportation Corridor and Whitewater River.

The adoption and implementation of a redevelopment plan, or redevelopment plan amendment, is classified as a project pursuant to CEQA. This document evaluates the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the Project at a level of detail comparable to that described in the policies and implementation measures of the Project.

Program EIR

Section 21090 of the Public Resources Code specifies that an environmental impact report for a redevelopment plan may be a master environmental impact report, program environmental impact report, or a project environmental impact report. This EIR is a program EIR. The determination to prepare a program EIR was made by the Agency consistent with Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, which state that a program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: (1) geographically, (2) a 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.

In accordance with Section 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines, the level of detail in this EIR corresponds to the level of detail in the Plan Amendment¹. Because the Project does not propose specific development activities and does not propose any land use or activity that is not

¹ Section 15146 and 15146 (b) of the CEQA Guidelines.

in compliance with the County General Plan, this document focuses on the secondary effects that could occur if the Plan Amendment were adopted and implemented. Consequently, the level of detail in this document is not as detailed as a project specific EIR.

Subsequent activities of the Plan Amendment would be examined in the light of this program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared. Because the timing and scope of future improvement projects to be undertaken with Agency funds in the Amendment Area are not known at this time, subsequent projects would likely require additional environmental analyses.

EIR Focus

The focus of this EIR analysis is the potential physical changes that could occur in the Amendment Area should the Project be adopted. Future development assumptions used for this analysis are based on the County of Riverside Integrated Project (the "RCIP"), which is a comprehensive, three-part, integrated program to determine future conservation, transportation and housing and economic needs in Riverside County. It consists of the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), Community & Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP), and the County General Plan (General Plan).

Pursuant to State law², the Project must be consistent with General Plan and applicable RCIP policies. Upon its adoption, the Project would be a tool for implementing the provisions of each of the three RCIP components.

Adoption and implementation of the proposed Plan Amendment is expected to facilitate the continued improvement of the Existing Project Area, which was originally established through the Redevelopment Plan (the "Existing Plan") for the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area³ in 1986. CEQA analyses prepared and subsequently approved for the Existing Plan assessed the potentially significant impacts of redevelopment on the Existing Project Area. The proposed Plan Amendment is not expected to result in potentially significant adverse changes to the Existing Project Area. Consequently, this EIR analysis does not address potential changes to the Existing Project Area that could result from the Project.

EIR Process

In accordance with CEQA, the Agency has chosen to serve as the lead public agency responsible for overseeing the EIR process and approving the Project. The Agency distributed a Notice of Preparation ("NOP") advising others that an EIR would be prepared and listing the issues to be studied. The purpose of the NOP was to solicit comments on the scope and content of the EIR. A copy of the NOP, accompanying Initial Study and distribution list is found in Appendix A of this document. Those receiving copies of the NOP had 30 days to respond; the response period was from March 4, 2008 through April 2, 2008. Five written comments regarding the NOP were submitted to the Agency. These comments were from Riverside County Fire Department, Native American Heritage Commission, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), City of Calimesa and Riverside County Waste Management Department.

² State of California Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code 33000 *et seq.*).

³ The Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area consists of the 3-1986, 3-1987, and 3-1989 Redevelopment Projects, which were merged together in 1999. The earliest project, 3-1986, was adopted in 1986.

This draft Program EIR was prepared following the 30-day NOP response period. The EIR is circulated for a 45-day public review period, as mandated by law. The review period begins on or about October 31, 2008 and ends on or about December 15, 2008. Copies of the EIR will be available for public review at the following locations:

1. Economic Development Agency for the County of Riverside: 1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA; 951-955-8916
2. County of Riverside Clerk Recorder (Moreno Valley office): 2724 Gateway Dr., Riverside, CA; 951-486-7000
3. County of Riverside Clerk of the Board of Supervisors: 4080 Lemon Street, 1st Floor, Riverside CA 9250; 951-955-1060
4. County of Riverside Public Library - Desert Hot Springs Branch: 11691 West Drive, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240; 760-329-5926.

Written comments on the EIR are to be addressed to: Mr. Ernest Glover, Urban Futures Inc./GRC, Inc., 3111 North Tustin, Suite 230, Orange, CA 92865, and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2008. Responses to all written comments or questions on the EIR that are received during the review period will be prepared and included in the final EIR. The Agency will review and consider the final EIR before arriving at a decision to approve, revise or reject the Project.

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1.0 SUMMARY

Following is a summary of the EIR for the Project. The EIR and all Project related materials are available for review at the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside, 1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA 92507.

Characteristics of the Project, its identified significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and potential alternatives are summarized in this chapter. The remaining chapters of the EIR address details of issues outlined in this section.

1.1 SUMMARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project is Redevelopment Plan amendment to three sub-areas in the existing Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, located in the western region of Riverside County. The Amendment Area includes approximately 4,511.88 acres, consisting of three sub-areas: Cherry Valley with 1,807.56 acres; Garnet with 2,618.16 acres; and West Garnet with 86.16 acres.

1.2 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

Two potential alternatives to the Plan Amendment along with the no-project alternative are analyzed. These alternatives were selected to illustrate the range of alternative actions the Agency can take regarding the Project, and the environmental costs and benefits associated with each alternative. Because the Amendment Area is already urbanized as defined by the Community Redevelopment Law ("CRL"), the alternatives generally reflect modest modifications to the proposed Project. The following is a summary of the alternatives that are fully described in Section 6.0:

No Project Alternative

This alternative assumes that the Project is terminated. Under this alternative, the Agency would not proceed with the proposal to adopt the Plan Amendment. If the proposal was terminated, the Agency's authority and powers would not be permitted in the Amendment Area. Existing conditions of blight would be allowed to continue.

Reduced Amendment Area Alternative

Under this alternative, the size of the Amendment Area would be reduced. This reduction could involve the removal of one or more of the sub-areas. If the Amendment Area was reduced in size, the Agency's authority and powers would not be permitted in the sub-area(s) to be removed. Existing conditions of blight in the sub-area(s) to be removed would be allowed to continue.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

The Project has been proposed by the Agency for the primary purpose of eliminating blight in the Amendment Area. Under any of the alternatives, the Agency's ability to reduce blight in the Amendment Area would be restricted. Consequently, none of the alternatives are considered superior to the Project.

1.3 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

Section 15123(b)(2) of CEQA requires that the EIR Summary include a brief statement of areas of controversy associated with the Project and/or EIR process. Prior to preparation of the EIR, five comments were received by the lead agency in response to the Project NOP and Initial Study. These comments, which are located in Appendix B, were submitted by Riverside County Fire Department, Native American Heritage Commission, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), City of Calimesa and Riverside County Waste Management Department.

Correspondence from Fire Department requested that the EIR discuss the cumulative adverse impact of the Project on the Fire Department's ability to maintain the current level of service. This comment raises a potential impact relevant to the proposed Plan Amendment, and is therefore addressed in Section 5.8 this EIR. The Native American Heritage Commission requested that the EIR assess whether the project will have an adverse impact on Native American resources. This comment raises a potential impact relevant to the proposed Plan Amendment, and is therefore addressed in Section 5.5 this EIR. SCAQMD requested that the EIR address potential adverse air quality impacts. This comment raises a potential impact relevant to the proposed Plan Amendment, and is therefore addressed in Section 5.3 this EIR. City of Calimesa had no comments at this time.

The County Waste Management Department requested that the EIR address issues related to solid waste, truck traffic and air quality related to the transport and disposal of solid waste and hazardous waste. Comments regarding solid waste and solid waste transport raise potential impacts relevant to the proposed Plan Amendment, and are therefore addressed in Section 5.2, Traffic, 5.3, Air Quality, and 5.9 Utilities of this EIR.

The County Waste Management Department comment regarding hazardous waste state that any future hazardous waste or household waste need to be properly disposed of at a licensed facility in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. Although there are properties in the Amendment Area that were constructed prior to the abolition of asbestos and lead-based paint, the Project is expected to provide a new source of funding to assist with removal of these materials. Should removal of these hazardous materials occur, these actions would be required to comply with local, state and federal regulations regarding handling and disposal of hazardous waste. The Project does not contain specific actions that would result in adverse impacts related to hazardous waste disposal. No further discussion of this topic within this EIR is required; and no areas of controversy are identified in this EIR.

1.4 ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Section 15123(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the EIR Summary include a brief statement of issues to be resolved. In this proposed Project, the major issues to be resolved include decisions by the Agency as to:

1. Whether this EIR adequately describes the environmental impacts of the Project;
2. Whether there are any alternatives to the Project that would substantially lessen the significant environmental impacts of the proposed Project and achieve most of the basic objectives.

1.5 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The following table summarizes the impacts and mitigation measures discussed in detail in Chapter 4.0. Potential environmental impacts of the Project are summarized in the left column of the table. The mitigation measures necessary for alleviating the impacts due to implementation of the Project are summarized in the second column of the table. The third column summarizes the status of the impacts after the implementation of the mitigation measures.

TABLE 1 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and Status After Mitigation		
LAND USE (See Section 4.1)		
The Project is intended to alleviate existing conditions of blight that were found to exist within the Amendment Area. In turn, elimination of blighting conditions will result in further implementation of the goals and policies of the General Plan, with an expected overall beneficial impact on area land uses.	No mitigation measures are necessary.	None.
TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION (See Section 4.2)		
Future traffic related impacts from future Amendment Area and regional traffic could occur.	TR-1: Future development entitlement proposals in the Amendment Area (including tracts, plot plans, public use permits, conditional use permits, etc.) shall be required to prepare a traffic study for County review and approval to identify project related traffic impacts and determine the "significance" of such impacts in compliance with CEQA. TR-2: As part of its review of land development proposals, the County shall require project proponents to make a "fair share" contribution to required intersection and/or roadway improvements. The required intersection and/or roadway improvements shall be based on maintaining the appropriate level of service (LOS D within Community Development Areas designated by the 2002 Riverside County General Plan and within adjacent jurisdictions; LOS C within those portions of unincorporated Riverside County outside of Community Development Areas). The fair share contribution shall be based on the percentage of project-related traffic to the total future traffic.	Less than significant.

TABLE 1
Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and Status After Mitigation

AIR QUALITY (See Section 4.3)		
Project air quality impacts related to compliance with applicable air quality plans, construction activities, operational activities, global warming, exposure of sensitive receptors and odors could occur.	AQ-1: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with the established SCAQMD regulations, which may include air quality impact studies and subsequent CEQA analysis. AQ-2: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall include appropriate and feasible mitigation measures to address global warming as specified by County ordinance or, if no ordinance exists, as specified by relevant regulating authority, which could include mitigation measures provided by the Office of the California Attorney General. AQ-3: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with a County adopted "green design" or "sustainable development" ordinance should such ordinance be adopted prior to project development. If such ordinance is not adopted prior to project development, each development shall be encouraged to incorporate any or all of current available energy-conservation features and "green" technologies into the project design.	Less than significant.
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (See Section 4.4)		
There is some potential for future development in the Amendment Area to impact biological resources.	BIO-1: Prior to issuance of any grubbing, grading or building permit on a vacant parcel over one-acre in size and adjacent to another vacant parcel, the applicant shall submit for review and approval by the County Planning Director, a biological resource survey prepared by a qualified biologist acceptable to the County. Should the parcel be found to contain potentially significant biological resources, mitigation measures recommended by the resources consultant shall be considered for inclusion in the project.	Less than significant.
CULTURAL RESOURCES (See Section 4.5)		
There is some potential for future development in the Amendment Area to impact archaeological resources, paleontological resources, and human remains.	CUL-1: If potential archaeological resources, paleontological resources or human remains are uncovered during any grading activities, the contractor shall halt work in the immediate area of the find, inform the Planning Department immediately and retain a qualified professional acceptable to the County to	Less than significant.

TABLE 1
Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and Status After Mitigation

	examine the material to determine whether it is a unique resource or human remain. If this determination is positive, the contractor shall be required to comply with all applicable General Plan policies and mitigation measures. No further work shall occur in the immediate location of the find until all information recovery has been completed and a report concerning same filed with and accepted as complete with the County.	
HYDROLOGY (See Section 4.6)		
There is some potential that future development in the Amendment Area could place housing or structures in the 100 year flood plain	HYD-1: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential or sheet flow shall be submitted to the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review. Such developments shall not proceed until the District and County are satisfied that adequate flood abatement measures are in place. HYD-2: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential, or sheet flow shall be submitted to the Coachella Valley Water District or the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review. Such developments shall not proceed until the Districts and County are satisfied that adequate flood abatement measures are in place.	Less than significant.
POPULATION AND HOUSING (See Section 4.7)		
The Project would facilitate implementation of General Plan land use policies, including the transition of certain non-conforming residential structures to non-residential uses. However, the Plan Amendment does not propose to have eminent domain authority over residential properties. Through the Plan Amendment, the Agency would have a new source of funds to facilitate housing improvement programs and to provide relocation assistance to any resident displaced as a result of redevelopment activities.	No mitigation measures are necessary.	None.

TABLE 1

Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and Status After Mitigation

PUBLIC SERVICES (See Section 4.8)		
There is some potential that future development in the Amendment Area could impact police service, fire safety and/or park service ratios or facilities.	PS-1: Future development shall pay their fair share toward sheriff services and facilities as determined by the Sheriff Department and County. PS-2: Future development shall pay their fair share toward fire protection services and facilities as determined by the Fire Department and County. PS-3: Future development shall pay applicable park fees and incorporate private and public park and recreational facilities consistent with County policies.	Less than significant.
UTILITIES (See Section 4.9)		
There is some potential that future development in the Amendment Area could impact utilities.	UTL-1: Future development shall comply with County policies regarding water conservation, including: provision of drought tolerant landscaping; and use of non-potable water, if determined by the County to be available, for landscaped and other outdoor areas. UTL-2: Future development shall prepare water supply assessments consistent with County policies and state laws, prior to project approval. UTL-3: Future developments below state and County water supply assessment criteria, with an estimated annual water use of 250 af or less, shall demonstrate to the County that compliance with the Urban Water Management Plan for the area in which the development is located. UTL-4: Future development shall comply with County requirements regarding NPDES requirements. UTL-5: Future development shall contribute its fair share to fund wastewater facilities as required by the County. UTL-6: Future development shall design storm drain improvements consistent with County policies. UTL-7: Future commercial, industrial and multifamily residential development shall provide adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials.	Less than significant.
AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (See Section 4.10)		
The Amendment Area does not contain qualified agricultural resources.	No mitigation measures are necessary.	Less than significant.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This EIR examines the existing conditions and potential environmental impacts to the Riverside community and surrounding areas from implementation of the Plan Amendment.

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT REQUIRED

The proposed Project involves the adoption and implementation of a redevelopment plan. Adoption and implementation of a redevelopment plan constitutes a project as defined by CEQA, and is thus subject to the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

2.2 PURPOSE, INTENT, AND SCOPE

This EIR has been prepared to comply with the provisions of CEQA, the CEQA Guidelines and the Agency's and County's guidelines for implementing CEQA. The purpose of this document is to identify, evaluate, and propose mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce Project impacts, if required, for significant environmental impacts that may result from adoption of the Project.

This document also seeks to solicit comments from public agencies, other organizations and the public at large. This EIR is intended for use as an informational document, and neither makes any recommendations regarding the Project, nor authorizes any implementing actions by the Agency or the County. Rather, this EIR is oriented toward providing decision makers, their staff, other involved public agencies, interested organizations, and the general public with an objective and impartial assessment of the potential environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the Project.

This document also is intended to provide a forum for the discussion of the Project's potential impacts through the public review, comment and public hearing process. Pursuant to Section 15180 of the CEQA Guidelines, which permits EIRs in support of redevelopment plans to be program EIRs, this EIR is a program EIR. Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a program EIR as that which evaluates the overall effect of a series of actions that are related through the "issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program". Program EIRs are most useful in addressing program-wide impacts, including the secondary or cumulative effects of what would otherwise be a series of individual actions that would be environmentally evaluated separately.

In accordance with the purpose and intent of this EIR and input provided by the applicant, community, public agencies, and technical staff and consultants, the scope of issues to be discussed in this EIR was determined through the following mechanisms:

2.2.1 Initial Study

An Initial Study, pursuant to Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, was prepared to identify potential impacts of the Project. The Initial Study determined that a number of environmental factors would be potentially affected by the Project, and that a Program EIR focused on these identified effects was required. Potentially impacted environmental factors identified through the Initial Study include: agricultural resources, air quality,

biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology, land use/planning, population and housing, traffic, air quality, public services, and utilities

2.2.2 Notice of Preparation

A formal Notice of Preparation (NOP) and a copy of the Initial Study were subsequently circulated to public agencies with potential interest in the Project and neighboring property owners. Appendix A contains a copy of this notice and the Initial Study. As discussed in Section 1.3, comments received in response to the NOP from Riverside County Fire Department, Native American Heritage Commission, SCAQMD and Riverside County Waste Management Department are relevant to the scope of the EIR. (All NOP comment letters received are contained in Appendix B.)

2.2.3 Scope of the EIR

Based on the issues identified through the Initial Study and NOP processes, this EIR encompasses the following environmental topics that correspond to the reference numbers outlined in the Initial Study:

Land Use and Planning:

- Would the Project 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? (Reference Item IX.b of the Initial Study.)

Agricultural Resources:

- Would the Project 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? (Reference Item II.a of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (Reference Item II.b of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? (Reference Item II.c of the Initial Study.)

Traffic:

- Would the Project result in an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system? (Reference Item XV.a of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County or former congestion management agency? (Reference Item XV. b of the Initial Study.)

Air Quality:

- Would the Project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? (Reference Item III.b of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? (Reference Item III.c of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (Reference Item III.d of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? (Reference Item III.e of the Initial Study.)

Biological Resources:

- Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? (Reference Item IV.a of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? (Reference Item IV.b of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project 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? (Reference Item IV.c of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (Reference Item IV.d of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (Reference Item IV.e of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (Reference Item IV.f of the Initial Study.)

Cultural Resources:

- Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Reference Item V.b of the Initial Study.)

- Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (Reference Item V.c of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (Reference Item V.d of the Initial Study.)

Hydrology:

- Would the Project 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? (Reference Item IIIV.g of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? (Reference Item IIIV.h of the Initial Study.)

Population and Housing:

- Would the Project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Reference Item XII.b of the Initial Study.)
- Would the Project displace substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Reference Item XII.c of the Initial Study.)

Public Services:

- Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services? (Reference Item XIII.a of the Initial Study.)
 - a) Fire protection;
 - b) Police protection;
 - c) Schools;
 - d) Parks.

Utilities:

- Would the Project (Reference Item XVI.a-g of the Initial Study.):
 - 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? (Reference Item XVI. b of the Initial Study.)
 - c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? (Reference Item XVI. c of the Initial Study.)

- d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? (Reference Item XVI. d of the Initial Study.)
- e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? (Reference Item XVI. e of the Initial Study.)
- f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? (Reference Item XVI. f of the Initial Study.)
- g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (Reference Item XVI. g of the Initial Study.)

2.2.4 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

The following is a list of issues determined by the preliminary environmental assessment (Initial Study) and confirmed through the NOP process to be "not significant" or "less than significant" (see Appendix A). A "not significant" impact is defined by CEQA as an adverse effect that is not substantial, an effect that is insignificant or an effect that is unlikely to occur. A "less than significant" impact would not exceed identifiable thresholds of significance and would not require mitigation. The "not significant" and "less than significant" issues are consequently not relevant to environmental impacts for the Project, and are not evaluated in this EIR. The following lists the "not significant" and "less than significant" issues excluded from this EIR; the issues are listed by reference numbers outlined in the Initial Study:

- Aesthetics (issues related to Items I.a-d, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Air Quality (issues related to Item III.a, as identified in of the Initial Study.)
- Cultural Resources (issues related to Items V.a, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Geology and Soils (issues related to Items VI.a-e, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (issues related to Items VII.a-h, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Hydrology and Water Quality (issues related to Items VIII.a-f, i-j, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Land Use and Planning (issues related to Item IX.a of the Initial Study.)
- Mineral Resources (issues related to Items X.a-b, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Noise (issues related to Items XI.f, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Population and Housing (issues related to Items XII.a, as identified in the Initial Study).
- Recreation (issues related to Items XIV.a-b, as identified in the Initial Study).

- Transportation/Traffic (issues related to Items XV.c-g, as identified in the Initial Study).

2.3 MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, public agencies are required to establish monitoring programs to ensure that Project mitigation measures are adopted and implemented. A mitigation monitoring program, incorporating the mitigation measures set forth in this document, will be included with the Final EIR and adopted at the time of certification of the EIR.

2.4 PROJECT PROPONENT

The Project is proposed by the Agency, which has an office located at 1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA 92507.

With respect to CEQA, the Agency will serve as lead agency for the proposed Project. The County will serve as a responsible agency. This determination of lead agency is made by mutual consent of the Agency and County pursuant to Section 15051(d) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Once the Project is adopted, there would be no other permits necessary from other public agencies, including responsible agencies, in order for the Plan Amendment to become effective.

2.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines encourages incorporation by reference of other documents to eliminate the need for inclusion of copious technical and other background information into an EIR. Of particular relevance to this EIR are the following documents, all of which are hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR, and are available for inspection at the Agency. Information in this EIR is drawn from these documents, unless otherwise indicated. Brief descriptions of each document follow. (Other documents utilized as references for this document are listed in Section 7.0):

County of Riverside General Plan, (current) – The Riverside County General Plan is part of the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), which in addition to the General Plan includes the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and the Community & Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP). The General Plan sets the direction for the County's land use and development in strategic locations, as well as the development of its economic base, the framework of its transportation system, and the preservation of the extremely valuable natural and cultural resources it contains. Redevelopment projects, including Redevelopment Plans, must be consistent with the General Plan, according to Section 33331 of the CRL. As such, this EIR evaluates the Plan Amendment's relationship to the General Plan goals and policies that are applicable to the proposed Project. The General Plan contains all the statutorily required elements as they pertain to the Amendment Area. (This document is available at the County of Riverside Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor, Riverside, California 92502.)

Western Coachella Valley Area Plan (WCVAP) (current): The Amendment Area is within the WCVAP, one of the County of Riverside General Plan designated planning areas. The area plan boundary is framed by the San Jacinto Mountains and Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument to the west and Joshua Tree National Park to the north and east. The WCVAP establishes General Plan level policies specific to the planning area, including land use, transportation policies, open space and hazard protection policies. As part of the General Plan, the Plan Amendment must be consistent with the WCVAP. (This document is available at the County of Riverside Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor, Riverside, California 92502.)

The Pass Area Plan (PAP) (current): The Cherry Valley sub-area of the Amendment Area is within the Pass Area Plan, one of the County of Riverside General Plan designated planning areas. The Pass, or more specifically the San Geronio Pass Area, is a distinctive geographical area between the Coachella, San Jacinto, and Moreno Valleys. In relation to other area plans, the Pass is bounded by the Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan to the west, the San Jacinto Valley Area Plan and Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan to the south, and the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan to the east. The Pass Plan establishes General Plan level policies specific to the planning area, including land use, transportation policies, open space and hazard protection policies. As part of the General Plan, the Plan Amendment must be consistent with the Pass Plan. (This document is available at the County of Riverside Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor, Riverside, California 92502.)

General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report

Volume I (FEIR) (2002): The General Plan FEIR evaluates the potential impacts of General Plan implementation, describing the existing setting, the proposed project, the potential impacts, and mitigation measures if warranted. Technical information in the FEIR is used as reference material for this EIR. (This document is available at the County of Riverside Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor, Riverside, California 92502.)

Draft Preliminary Report for Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet, July 2008 – This report was prepared by Urban Futures Inc./GRC, Inc. on behalf of the Agency in accordance with CRL Section 33344.5. The Preliminary Report was prepared and distributed to the governmental agencies that levy ad valorem property taxes in the Amendment Area. The Preliminary Report contains the following:

- a) The reasons for the adoption of the Plan Amendment and selection of the Amendment Area
- b) A description of the proposed Amendment Area, which is sufficiently detailed for a determination as to whether the proposed Amendment Area is predominantly urbanized.
- c) A description of the existing physical and economic conditions in the proposed Amendment Area.
- d) A description of the specific project or projects then proposed by the Agency.

- e) A preliminary assessment of the proposed method of financing the redevelopment of the proposed Amendment Area, including an assessment of the economic feasibility of the project and the reasons for including the provision for the division of taxes pursuant to CRL Section 33670 in the Plan Amendment.
- f) A description of how the project or projects to be pursued by the Agency in the proposed Amendment Area would improve or alleviate the conditions described above.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Chapter discusses the Project's background, location, goals, components of the Plan Amendment; and the Amendment Area's existing conditions including blight, urbanization, existing land uses and planned General Plan Land Use Map designations.

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

Regionally, the Amendment Area is located in the County of Riverside in the northern part of Riverside County. The County is about 8 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, and approximately 40 miles north of downtown Riverside. (See Figure 1, *Amendment Area Location Map*.) The Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 – Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet, is located in the central portion of Riverside County and encompasses approximately 4,511.88 acres, of which 1,807.56 acres are in Cherry Valley; 2,618.16 in Garnet; and 86.16 acres in West Garnet.

The Cherry Valley sub-area is generally bordered by Taylor Drive on the west; Bellflower Ave. on the east; Oak Glen Road on the north; and Brookside Ave and Cougar Way on the south. Communities near Cherry Valley include Beaumont, Banning, and Yucaipa. (See Figure 2, *Cherry Valley Boundary Map*.)

The Garnet sub-area is generally bordered by Pierson Blvd. on the north; Twenty-nine Palms Highway on the east; Mountain View Road on the east; and 18th Ave. on the south. (See Figure 3, *Garnet Boundary Map*.)

The West Garnet sub-area is generally bordered by Garnet Ave. on the north; El Dorado Road on the south; Atkins Road on the west; and generally by Gristen Road on the east. Communities near Garnet and West Garnet include Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs. (See Figure 4, *West Garnet Boundary Map*.)

3.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Redevelopment Agency of Riverside County has adopted several redevelopment areas throughout the County. Over the years, the redevelopment areas have been combined, or merged, into five distinct Project Areas:

- Jurupa Valley
- Mid-County
- 1-1986
- Desert Communities
- I-215 Corridor.

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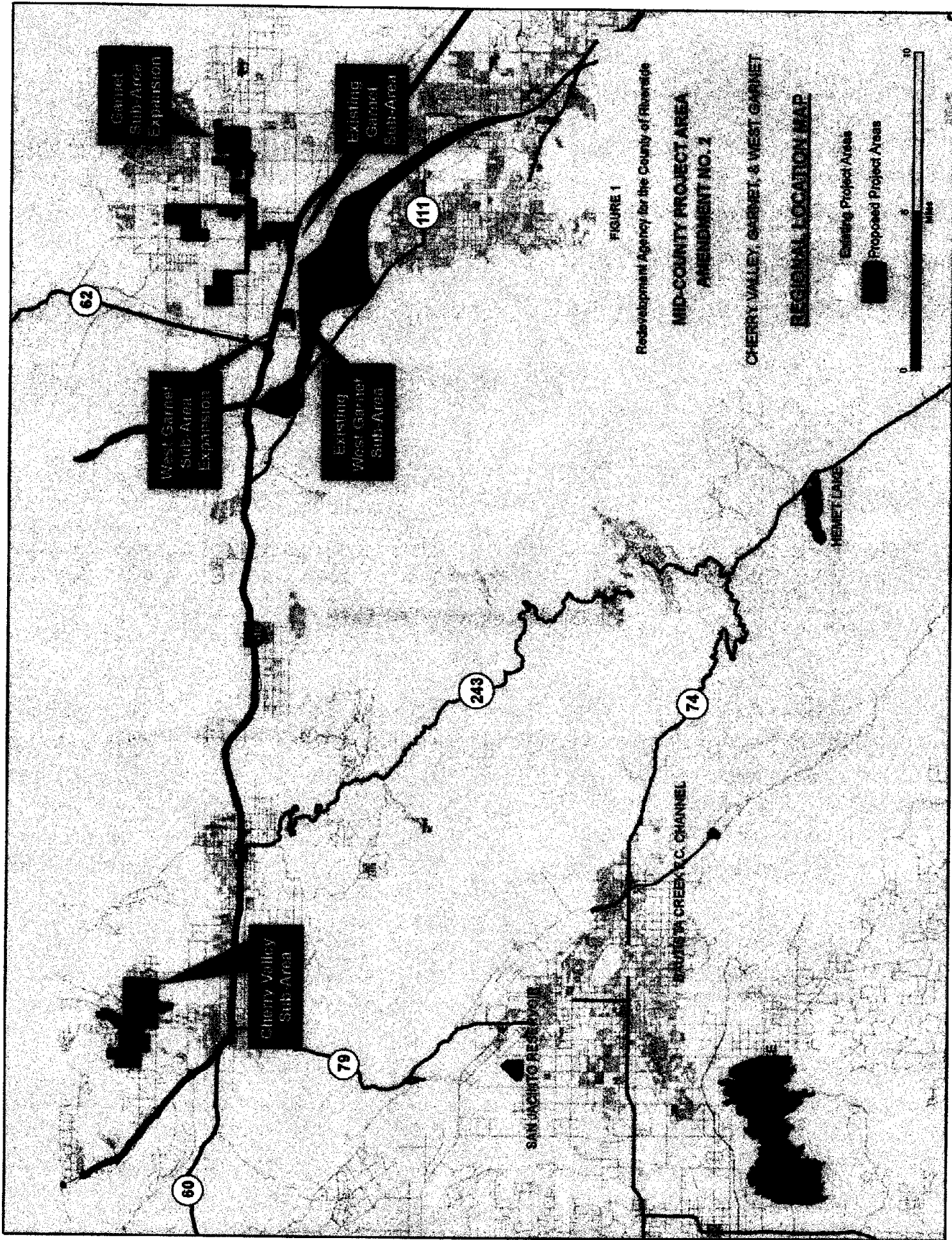


FIGURE 1

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside

**MID-COUNTY PROJECT AREA
AMENDMENT NO. 2**

CHERRY VALLEY, GARNET, & WEST GARNET

REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

Existing Project Areas

Proposed Project Areas





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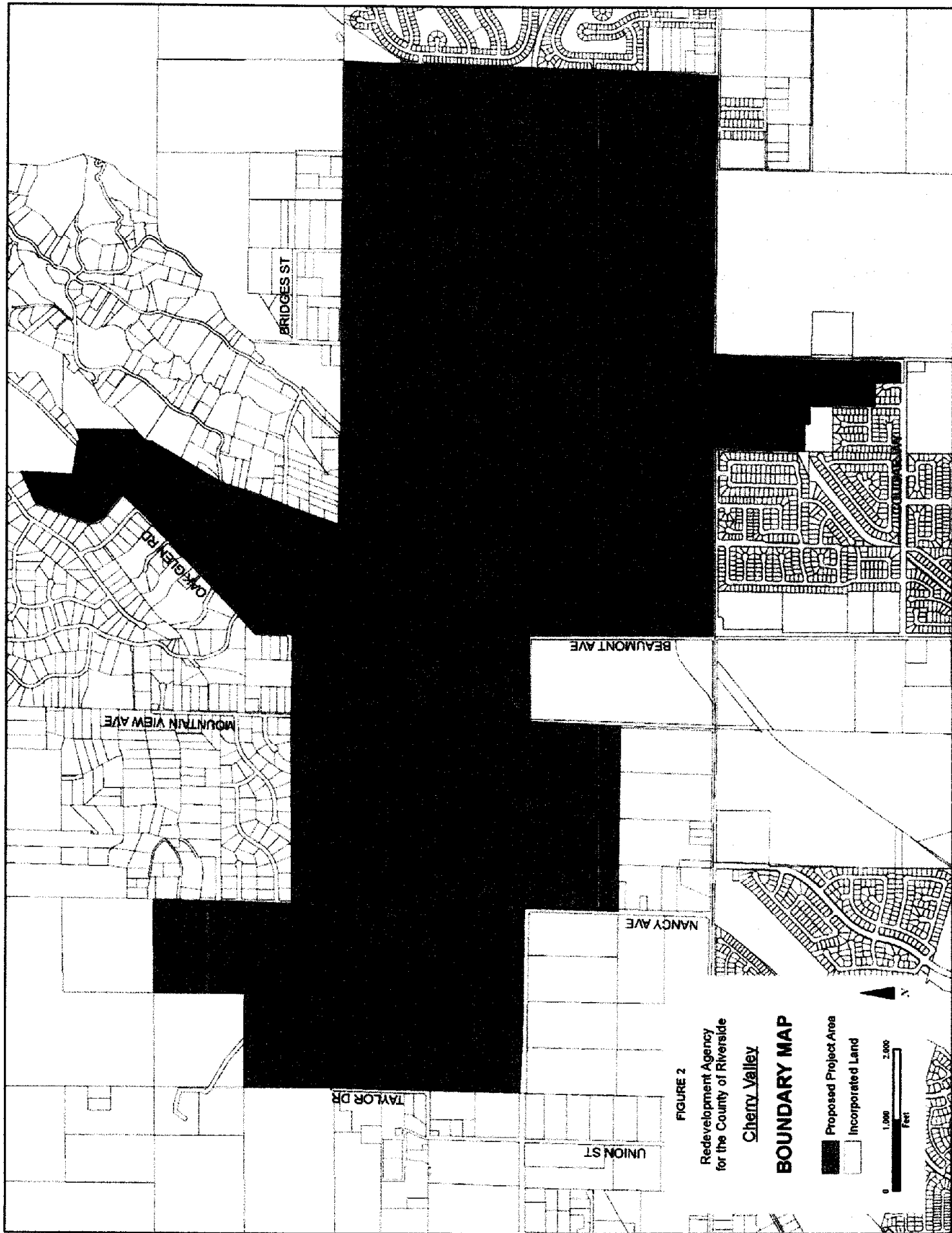
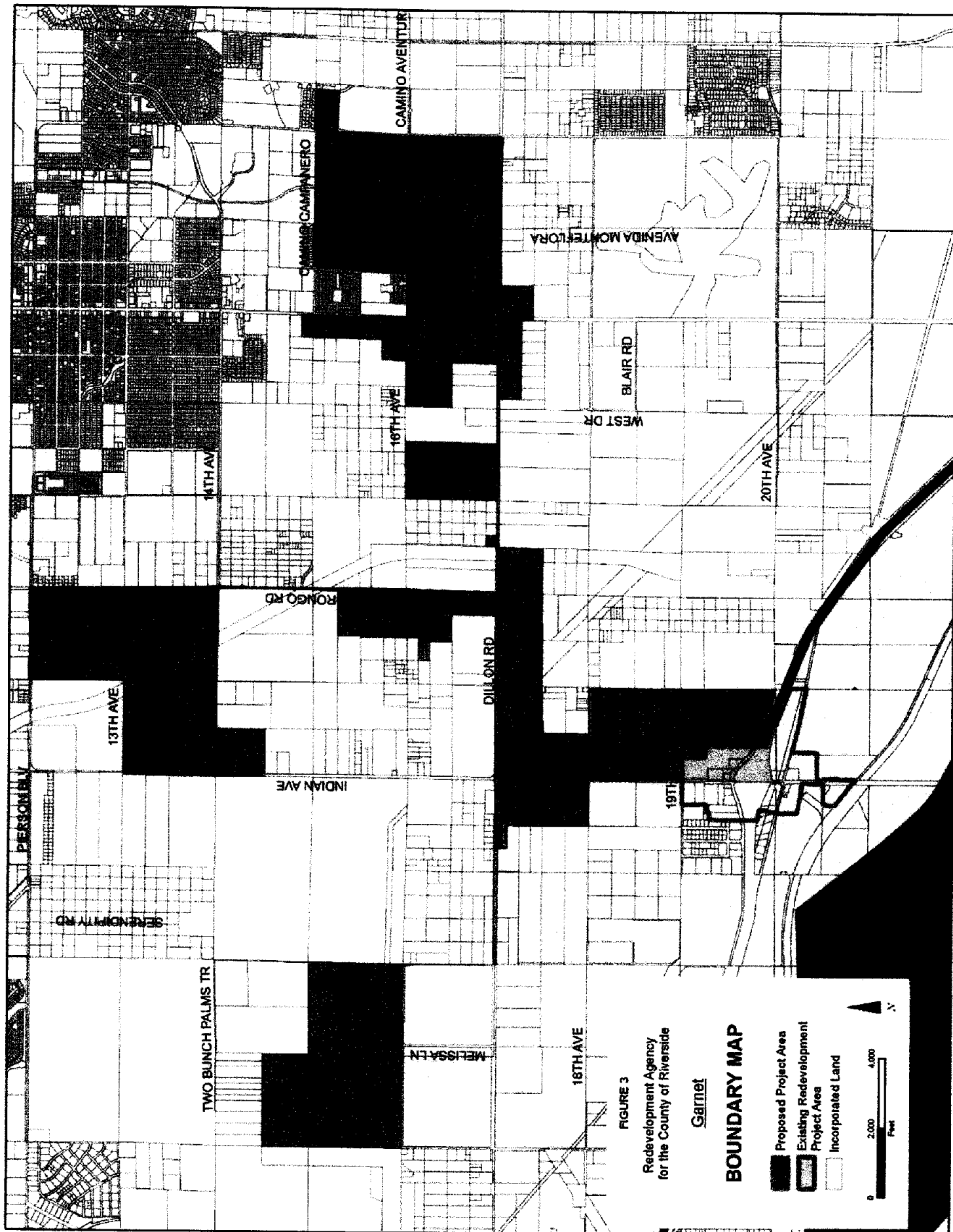


FIGURE 2
Redevelopment Agency
for the County of Riverside
Cherry Valley
BOUNDARY MAP



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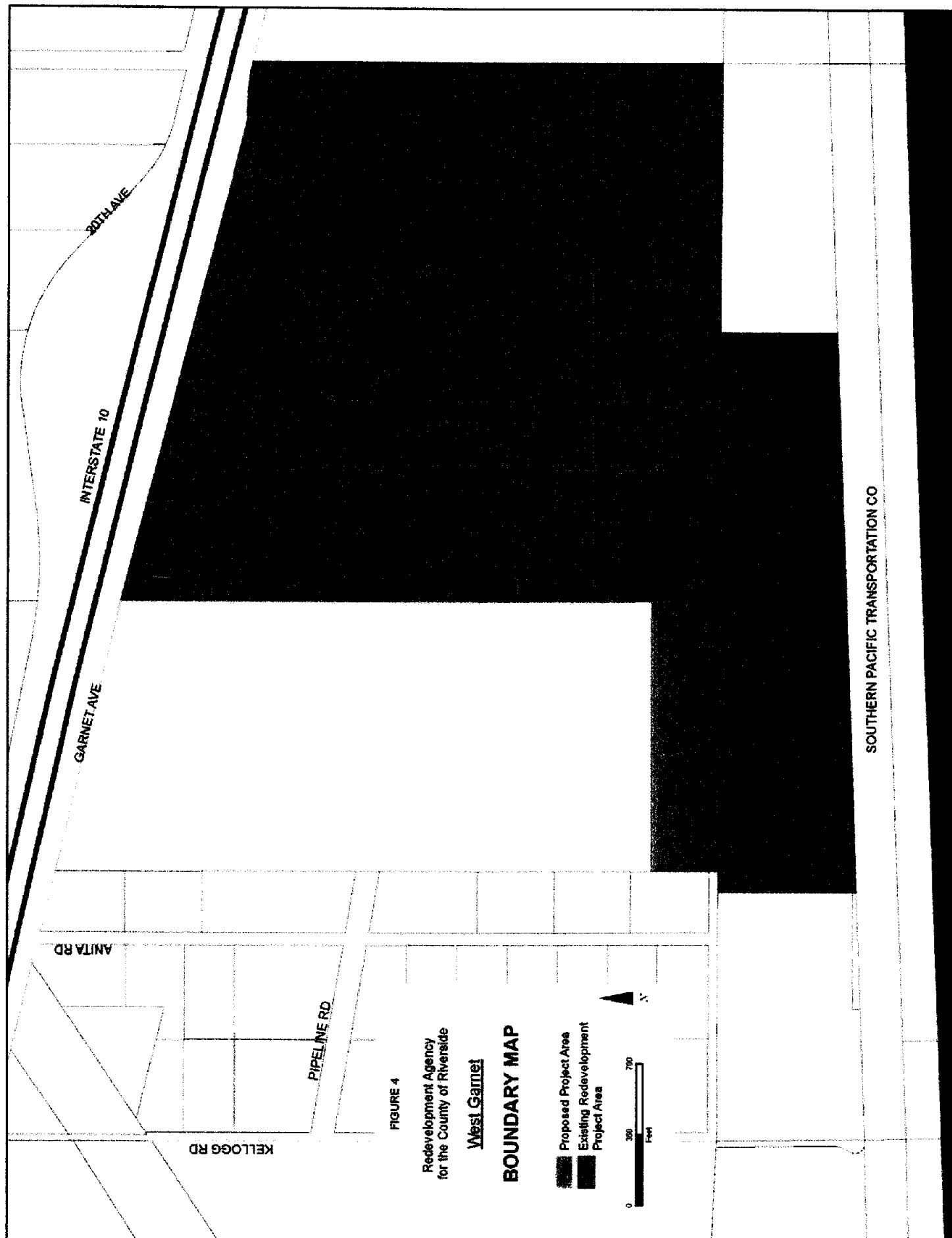


FIGURE 4

Redevelopment Agency
for the County of Riverside

West Garnet

BOUNDARY MAP

- Proposed Project Area
- Existing Redevelopment Project Area

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3.3 PROJECT GOALS

According to Section 33020 of the CRL, redevelopment means the planning, development, re-planning, redesign, clearance, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or any combination of these, on property as may be appropriate or necessary in the interest of the general welfare. Adopting and implementing the Mid-County Plan Amendment as proposed would enable attainment of the purposes of the CRL by providing the Agency with adequate revenues and bonding capacity to accomplish the redevelopment program for the Amendment Area.

The following are general goals the Agency would like to achieve through this Project:

- Help preserve and enhance existing conforming residential neighborhoods through infrastructure improvements and building rehabilitation
- Encourage development according to the Riverside County General Plan, which is part of the RCIP, and the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance.
- Encourage investment in the Amendment Area by the private sector.
- Promote the development of new and diverse employment opportunities.
- Enhance and expand shopping facilities in the Amendment Area by encouraging the development of new commercial uses and rehabilitation of existing commercial uses.
- Promote the improvement and centralization of commercial and industrial areas to make them more attractive and efficient.
- Promote the expansion of the Amendment Area's industrial and commercial bases and local employment opportunities to provide jobs to local workers.
- Consolidate parcels as needed to induce new or expanded, centralized, business development in the Amendment Area.
- Assist economically depressed areas and reverse stagnant or declining assessed valuation trends.
- Protect the health and general welfare of the Amendment Area's many low- and moderate-income residents by utilizing 20% of the tax increment revenues from the Amendment Area to improve, increase, or preserve the supply of low- and moderate-income housing both inside and outside the Amendment Area.
- Upgrade the physical appearance of properties in the Amendment Area.
- Rehabilitate deteriorated residential, commercial and industrial structures to eliminate safety deficiencies and to extend the useful lives of these structures.
- Remove economic impediments to land assembly and in-fill development in areas that are not properly subdivided for development or redevelopment.
- Reduce or eliminate the negative impacts related to incompatible and non-conforming land uses in the Amendment Area.
- Buffer residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of nearby non-residential land uses.
- Clean-up properties that are exposed to hazardous materials.

- Provide replacement housing as required by law when dwellings housing low- or moderate-income persons or families are lost from the low- or moderate-income housing market because of Agency activities.
- Provide relocation assistance to displacees in order to mitigate possible hardships due to relocation activities.
- Provide a broad range of public service infrastructure improvements to induce private investment in the Amendment Area. Such improvements could include the construction or reconstruction of roads, streets, curbs and gutters, sidewalks; the upgrading of streetside landscaping; the construction and reconstruction of water storage and distribution facilities; the construction and reconstruction of sewerage systems; and the development of drainage and flood control facilities.
- Provide new or improved community facilities such as fire stations, schools, park and recreational facilities, and the expansion of public health and social service facilities, where appropriate, to enhance the public health, safety and welfare.
- Encourage the cooperation and participation of Amendment Area property owners, public agencies and community organizations in the elimination of blighting conditions and the promotion of new or improved development in all portions of the Amendment Area.
- Provide a procedural and financial mechanism by which the Agency can assist, complement and coordinate public and private development, redevelopment, revitalization and enhancement of the community.

These goals may be refined, expanded upon, or otherwise modified throughout the adoption process.

3.4 PLAN ACTIVITIES

The redevelopment activities available to the Agency are intended to revitalize the proposed Amendment Area and improve the entire community. The following describes the projects and programs the Agency intends to utilize in order to alleviate blight in the Amendment Area.

Public improvements

Through the Plan Amendment, the Agency would be authorized to plan, design, and construct a variety of improvements to ensure the complete redevelopment of the proposed Amendment Area. Subject to applicable CRL requirements, the following general improvements are eligible for redevelopment funds pursuant to the Redevelopment Plan:

- Community facilities, including but not limited to, playgrounds, parks, skate parks, community centers and senior centers
- Public buildings, including but not limited to, schools, libraries, fire stations and Sheriff's sub-stations
- Trails, including but not limited to, hiking, biking and equestrian trails
- Open space
- Bus stops

- Upgrade and/or install storm drains and flood control facilities, including but not limited to, channels, drainage pipes, and retention/detention basins
- Upgrade and/or install water lines and facilities, including but not limited to, water mains, wells, storage facilities, fire hydrants, and pump stations
- Upgrade and/or install sewer lines and facilities, including treatment facilities
- Undergrounding of overhead utilities
- Bridging over open public infrastructure systems (storm drains, flood control channels, etc.) to provide parcel access from public right-of-way
- Street lighting.

Development Assistance

To encourage development investment in the Amendment Area, the Agency would be authorized to directly reduce the cost of development or rehabilitation activities. One technique commonly used by redevelopment agencies is the provision of tax exempt financing, which serves to reduce the financing cost of a project. Such incentives may take the form of certificates of participation, lease revenue bonds, industrial development bonds and various forms of tax exempt notes at various terms.

Another technique available to the Agency is to acquire property in the proposed Amendment Area and to "write down" the cost of the land when it is sold to a developer or owner participant. Such land write-downs would only occur in accordance with an executed development agreement, which would provide appropriate assurances that the developer or owner-participant would complete the project. In addition, any Agency commitment to reduce the cost of land it has purchased would be based on a detailed analysis of the developer's cost and revenue pro forma for the proposed project. The sales price may be no less than the "reuse" value of the land. The purpose of such analysis would be to show that the contribution of tax increment funds to the Project through the land write-down process does not simply result in extra profit for the owner participant or project developer. Where a contribution of tax increment funds to a specific development project is determined to be necessary, the Agency may take an equity or income position in the project in order to recoup all or a portion of those tax increment funds to support other Agency activities.

In assisting with rehabilitation activities, the Agency may establish rehabilitation loan programs, which provide financial assistance at favorable interest rates or with other favorable terms. In some instances, Agency grants may be used to induce rehabilitation activities. Agency loans or grants may also be used to assist with the clean-up of hazardous materials.

Housing Assistance

CRL requires that the Agency set aside 20% of the tax increment revenues it receives for the purpose of increasing, preserving, or improving low- and moderate-income housing. Additionally, the CRL requires the Agency to moderate-income housing units are removed from the housing market as a result of the redevelopment program.

At present there are an estimated 42 dwelling units on land designated in the General Plan for non-residential uses. While the Agency has no plans to remove any residential

structures from the proposed Amendment Area, and will not have eminent domain authority in order to do so, it is possible that these units would be replaced over the life of the Redevelopment Plan, though not necessarily because of Agency actions.

Because the housing units that could be replaced cannot be specifically identified, it is not possible to determine which ones are occupied by low- or moderate-income persons or families. Nevertheless, given the overall condition of housing units in the proposed Amendment Area, and the economic profile of the area, it is very likely that a high proportion of the units, if not all, would fall into the low- and moderate-income category.

The Agency expects the amount of tax increment funds set aside for low- and moderate-income housing to be used for new construction and housing rehabilitation. In addition, because of the vast needs in the proposed Amendment Area, this assistance will likely be provided within the boundaries of the proposed Amendment Area, although such assistance could occur outside of the proposed Amendment Area.

Relocation Assistance

The CRL and the Relocation Guidelines of the State of California require that relocation assistance be provided to persons, businesses, and other entities displaced as a result of redevelopment activities. Relocation assistance must include relocation advisory assistance, as well as financial assistance to offset moving expenses and to otherwise assist displaced persons or businesses in locating suitable replacement facilities. Business and industrial relocation expenses are limited to the expenses involved in moving the business to another location, as well as certain reestablishment costs.

Property Acquisition and Assemblage

Subject to the limitations set forth in the Plan Amendment, the Agency may acquire, but is not required to acquire, property located in the proposed Amendment Area, by gift, devise, exchange, purchase, or other lawful method, except for eminent domain. Land acquired by the Agency may subsequently be assembled and disposed of in any legal means, such as land write-downs or other techniques, to facilitate development in the proposed Amendment Area in conformance to the RCIP.

3.4.1 Relation to General Plan

The Pursuant to State law⁴, the Project must be consistent with the current adopted General Plan land use policies. The Plan Amendment is a tool for implementing the provisions of the General Plan. The Plan Amendment goals and activities presented above must be implemented in a manner consistent with the General Plan.

Accordingly, development in the Amendment Area would be in conformance with the RCIP and its General Plan policies, and the County Zoning Ordinance.

3.5 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section discusses existing conditions within the Amendment Area, including conditions of blight and urbanization, and existing and planned land uses in the Amendment Area.

⁴ State of California Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code 33000 *et seq.*).

3.5.1 Blighting Conditions

The Draft Preliminary Report for the Plan Amendment contains a detailed description of existing blight-related conditions in the Amendment Area. Pursuant to the CRL, to adopt a redevelopment area, the Agency must demonstrate that the area meets several conditions relative to blight and urbanization. These conditions, as well as the Amendment Area's ability to meet these conditions, are summarized below.

Definitions of Blight

In general, blight is a physical, social or economic condition that reduces or eliminates the proper utilization of an area to such an extent that the blighting conditions cannot be reversed or alleviated by private enterprise acting alone. The following definitions have been updated pursuant to certain amendments to the CRL that became effective in 2007.

CRL Section 33030(b) states that a blighted area must be characterized by both physical and economic conditions of blight. According to CRL Section 33031(a), physical blight includes the following conditions:

1. Buildings in which it is unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work. These conditions may be caused by serious building code violations, serious dilapidation and deterioration caused by long-term neglect, construction that is vulnerable to serious damage from seismic or geologic hazards, presence of hazardous materials, and faulty or inadequate water or sewer utilities.
2. Conditions that prevent or substantially hinder the viable use or capacity of buildings or lots. These conditions may be caused by buildings of substandard, defective, or obsolete design or construction given the present general plan, zoning, or other development standards.
3. Adjacent or nearby incompatible land uses that prevent the development of those parcels or other portions of the Amendment Area.
4. The existence of subdivided lots that are in multiple ownership and whose physical development has been impaired by their irregular shapes and inadequate sizes, given present general plan and zoning standards and present market conditions.

CRL Section 33031(b) defines economic blight to include the following conditions:

1. Depreciated or stagnant property values.
2. Impaired property values, due in significant part, to hazardous wastes on property where the agency may be eligible to use its authority as specified in Article 12.5 (commencing with Section 33459).
3. Abnormally high business vacancies, abnormally low lease rates, or an abnormally high number of abandoned buildings.
4. A serious lack of necessary commercial facilities that are normally found in neighborhoods, including grocery stores, drug stores, and banks and other lending institutions.
5. Serious residential overcrowding that has resulted in significant public health or safety problems. As used in this paragraph, "overcrowding" means exceeding the

standard referenced in Article 5 (commencing with Section 32) of Chapter 1 of Title 25 of the California Code of Regulations.

6. An excess of bars, liquor stores, or adult-oriented businesses that has resulted in significant in public health, safety, or welfare problems.
7. A high crime rate that constitutes a serious threat to the public safety and welfare.

Non-blighted land may be included in the Amendment Area if it is found necessary for effective redevelopment. With some exceptions, land necessary for effective redevelopment must be a contiguous part of an otherwise blighted area. A non-blighted noncontiguous area is conclusively deemed necessary for effective redevelopment if such an area is being used predominantly for:

1. Relocation of owners or tenants from other noncontiguous areas in the same project area or from other project areas in the community.
2. Low- and moderate-income housing.

“Five Part Test”

While blighting conditions may be found in an area, land being considered for inclusion in a project area must pass five basic tests.

1. Land must be urbanized. (CRL requires that 80 percent of the land in a project area be urbanized.)
2. Land must have prevalent physical and economic blight, or must be necessary for effective redevelopment (as defined above).
3. Blight must cause a lack of proper utilization of the area.
4. Improper utilization must be a serious burden on community.
5. Burden cannot be reversed by private enterprise acting alone, by the County acting alone, or by both acting together without the assistance of a redevelopment agency.

3.5.2 Blighting Conditions in the Amendment Area

The Draft Preliminary Report identifies the following blighting conditions in the Amendment Area.

Buildings that are Unsafe or Unhealthy in which to Live or Work

Section 33031(a)(1) of the CRL identifies buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in as being indicative of blight. The causes of such conditions include serious code violations, dilapidation and deterioration, defective design or physical construction, faulty or inadequate utilities, or other similar factors. Within the Amendment Area, these conditions include the following:

Fire Response

The Cherry Valley and North Palm Springs fire stations, which serve both fire and paramedic needs and are in the proposed Cherry Valley and proposed Garnet sub-areas respectively, are old, obsolete, and in need of replacement. Both are built of

unreinforced masonry, putting them in great risk of damage in the case of a substantial earthquake, likely given the close proximity of fault lines in the area. (. (See *Earthquakes/Fault lines* discussion below.)

Turn-outs for fire trucks are also a concern in the proposed Amendment Area, especially in the proposed Garnet sub-area. In many of the residential areas there are streets that dead-end without enough space for a fire truck to turn around, a potential problem in an emergency.

Flooding

Problems with flooding occur in and around the each of the sub-areas. In the Cherry Valley sub-area, 135.54 acres are within the 100-year floodplain. In the Garnet sub-area, 877.53 acres are within the 100-year flood plain.

Earthquakes/Fault Zones

Southern California has numerous seismically active faults, several of which are in or are within close proximity of the proposed Amendment Area. In the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area the Beaumont Plain Fault and an offshoot of the San Andreas Fault run through the area; the Garnet Hill Fault runs through the proposed West Garnet sub-area; and the San Andreas Fault and several offshoots of it run in and around the proposed Garnet sub-area.

In the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area there are several County-designated fault zones. In the proposed Garnet sub-area, the San Andreas Fault Zone runs through the southwest portion of the sub-area. Importantly, the San Andreas Fault Zone runs along either side of the proposed Garnet sub-area, with the sub-area in the middle.

Code Enforcement

According to the County's Code Enforcement Division,⁵ when surveying the proposed Amendment Area, Division Officers noted a number of code violations. In the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area the most common code violations are outside storage, accumulated rubbish, and zoning/land use violation. In the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas the most common code violations are accumulated rubbish and excess outside storage. In the densely populated areas inoperative and/or dismantled vehicles are a prevalent issue. Illegal signage occurs along the main thoroughfares, such as Dillon Road and Indian Avenue. In the proposed West Garnet sub-area there are also two large unpermitted land uses which attract illegal dumping of vehicles and tires.

In all three proposed sub-areas there are buildings and mobile homes that have faulty wiring, poor construction, faulty building materials, illegal add-ons/conversions, residential overcrowding, unreinforced masonry, and hazardous materials.

The proposed Amendment may be the only way to provide assistance to alleviate these dangerous situations as money may be available to property owners and tenants for needed repairs.

⁵ May 21, 2008, memo in response to a questionnaire sent by UFI/GRC Redevelopment Planning.

Deterioration

Most building deterioration in the proposed Amendment Area has not progressed to the degree where it could be considered life-threatening, and is therefore discussed in the next section. However, 19 structures were observed that exhibit conditions of severe dilapidation and could be considered a health and safety risk to any occupants.

The types of health and safety problems observed on such structures included:

- Rotting and sagging roofs
- Extensive damage to exterior walls
- Exterior walls out of plumb
- Doors and windows that do not appear to provide security or complete shelter from the elements.

Severely deteriorated structures have a significant impact on property values, which substantially hinders the economic viability of the property.

Hazardous Materials

Due to the age of structures, the potential for hazardous material contamination in the proposed Amendment Area is high. According to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 80% of homes in the U.S. built prior to 1978 contain lead-based paint. In addition, a study of public buildings by the State of California Department of Health Services revealed that 83% of structures built before 1976 contain bulk-material asbestos.

This means that about 769 properties in the Cherry Valley sub-area and 294 properties in the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas are strong candidates for exposure to hazardous materials because they were constructed prior to the abolition of asbestos and lead-based paint. This likely presence of hazardous materials severely limits the ability of property owners to expand, modernize, or otherwise rehabilitate their structures because of the extreme costs involved with maintenance and removal of hazardous materials.

Conditions that Prevent or Substantially Hinder the Economically Viable Use of Buildings or Lots

Section 33031(a)(2) of the CRL identifies those characteristics that prevent or substantially hinder the economically viable use or capacity of buildings or lots as substandard design, inadequate size given present standards and market conditions, lack of parking, or similar factors.

Building deterioration, deferred property maintenance, commercial obsolescence, and inadequate infrastructure have been identified as a few of the major problems that hinder the viability of uses in portions of the proposed Amendment Area, and results in lower values for affected properties. Elsewhere, the built environment suffers from haphazard and uncoordinated development patterns that are not always uncommon in unincorporated County territory.

The various conditions of blight identified in the proposed Amendment Area are due to a combination of factors: little or no financial investment from the private sector to alleviate

physical deterioration and deferred property maintenance; the legal and financial inabilities of local government and the private sector to address issues of inadequate infrastructure; and, to a certain degree, the reluctance of the private sector to pursue improvements that could jeopardize the rural character and lifestyle of the area that they desire and are accustomed to

Age

Building age is a significant factor in obsolescence, deterioration, and other factors that hinder proper usefulness in the proposed Amendment Area. As mentioned earlier, the Code Enforcement Division noted that the aging building stock in the proposed Amendment Area is a key contributor to blight.

According to information from the Riverside County Assessor, of the 1,015 structures in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area of which age data are known, 769 were built before 1978 (76%), including 316 that were built before 1958 (31%).

In the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas, according to the Riverside County Assessor, of the 1,555 structures of which age data are known, 294 were built before 1978 (19%), including 87 that were built before 1958 (6%).

Absentee Property Owners

Historically, there has been a high correlation between the absentee ownership of residential property and the poor condition of structures located thereon. According to the records of the Riverside County Assessor, 16.1%, 14.9%, and 6.2%, respectively of properties in sub-areas of the proposed Amendment Area are owned by persons or entities that are located outside of each of the proposed Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet sub-areas. Of these, approximately 6% of the registered owners in each of the proposed Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas are located outside of California.

Outdoor Storage

Another significant form of blight is the open storage of equipment and junk. Outdoor storage was observed on 128 parcels in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area (9.87% of all parcels in the sub-area), and 287 parcels in the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas (8.22% of all parcels in the sub-areas) where inoperable vehicles, junk, tools, toys, or other materials were openly stored in front of the property in view from the public right-of-way.

Outdoor storage and illegal dumping has a significant effect on the image of the area as well as the psyche of its residents and workers. Most importantly, it generally promotes further decline of the area and hinders private investment. The CRL acknowledges that blight lends itself to additional blight, and investors tend to avoid areas littered with debris.

Inadequate Public Improvements

Until recently, the Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet Sub-Areas communities have been able to retain a rural character due to their relative isolation from the urbanized portions of the County. Large parcels, a low density of development, and dirt roads that were suitable for motor vehicles and doubled as equestrian trails, contributed to a lifestyle that was desirable to local residents. However, as urbanization continues to

encroach upon the area, and density continues to grow, the failure of public infrastructure systems due to overuse has become more obvious.

By far, the most prominent deficiency in the proposed Amendment Area is the local road system. The main roads are typically built to meet Fire District or County Road Design Standards, while other roads, which were originally owned and maintained by other public agencies or held privately and subsequently dedicated to the County, were built to significantly lesser standards. Though dedicated to the County, many of these roads have yet to be incorporated into the County's road maintenance program due to the extreme costs of improvements in bringing them up to standards.

Although the surface condition of many of the roads in the proposed Amendment Area has deteriorated to a "washboard" character, they are nonetheless marginally suitable for passenger car usage, though at reduced speeds due to minimal traction, and a propensity to create large clouds of dust. Many of the roads are insufficient for certain types of public services to be effective and certain types of fire-fighting equipment will not travel down these streets due to their lack of turnaround space.

Another characteristic of the local road system is open flood control channels along the public right-of-way. Paved roadways that are lined with unimproved channels are common throughout the proposed Cherry Valley project area.

Commercial Obsolescence

Although the proposed Amendment Area is much more residential in character than commercial, there are substantial problems in the business community. Chief among these is the overall obsolescence of commercial properties.

Along Beaumont Avenue in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area there are several commercial entities that have been at their present location for quite some time. However, the structures are nonetheless obsolete and exhibit signs of deferred maintenance. The properties themselves are also absent of even the most basic of site improvements. In one location along the east side of Beaumont Ave. a residence exists between two commercial uses. All show signs of deferred maintenance, lack of site amenities, and an inadequate parking area.

In Garnet, there are several commercial properties along Indian Ave., just south of Dillon Road, where there are similar examples of commercial obsolescence. In most cases building deterioration and deferred maintenance were evident, site amenities were minimal or non-existent, signage was difficult to see from the street, and parking areas were small, awkward and otherwise inadequate.

Incompatible Uses

Section 33031(a)(3) of the CRL identifies one of the physical blight characteristics as adjacent or nearby uses that are incompatible with each other, or in non-conformance with current land use policies, and which prevent economic development.

Historically, piecemeal development in unincorporated communities is not uncommon, particularly where communities, or isolated neighborhoods located therein, have begun the transition from a rural character to a more urban pattern of land uses, as is the case in the proposed Amendment Area. As a result of this transformation, the obsolescence

of land uses and parcelization patterns become more readily apparent. The most obvious example of this condition is a residential use on commercial land.

Generally, incompatible or nonconforming uses create circulation problems, an increased exposure to pollutants for residents, and a visual hodgepodge that does not promote private investment. When these characteristics are present it is obvious that economic development is dramatically slowed, if not completely halted. These conditions significantly hinder improvement efforts due to high costs associated with consolidating parcels, relocation and the lack of authority to do either.

Properties that are in non-conformance with planned uses also keep the County from fully implementing its General Plan. This, by definition, is a burden on the community as the County's goals and objectives cannot be met with incompatible uses.

Irregular Parcels Held in Multiple Ownership

Section 33031(a)(4) of the CRL identifies as a blighting characteristic parcels that are subdivided into irregular shapes or sizes for proper usefulness that are in multiple ownerships.

Parcelization patterns in much of the proposed Amendment Area are generally conducive to the rural character of the Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet Sub-Areas communities. In these areas, large parcels encompassing two or three acres are not uncommon, and are suitable for agriculture, equestrian or other animal-keeping uses.

In other portions of the proposed Amendment Area, the subdivision pattern is consistent with low- and medium-density residential development that is slightly more urban in character. In these areas, new housing tracts have been recently completed within, or adjacent to, other well-established neighborhoods.

In each case, numerous examples of irregular parcels may be found. These are parcels that are small and/or oddly configured relative to adjacent parcels or conventional development standards, and surrounded by properties that are owned by other persons or entities. Many parcels are landlocked, with no legal access via a public right-of-way, and some are long and narrow, or shaped like a triangle or flag. Not only are existing uses constrained by the size and shape of irregular parcels in the proposed Amendment Area, but future uses (or the expansion and/or modernization of exiting uses) are also limited.

The percentage of parcels in each sub-area that are of an irregular size and or/shape is 21.20% in Cherry Valley; 9.55% in Garnet; and 38.36% in West Garnet.

In the proposed Amendment Area, 275 parcels in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area and 352 parcels in the proposed West Garnet and Garnet sub-areas are characterized by an irregular size and/or shape. Of these, 50% in Garnet and West Garnet, and 9% in Cherry Valley are currently vacant, which could be problematic if the owner decides to develop the property.

Depreciated or Stagnant Property Values

The CRL identifies depreciated property values and impaired investments as being an indicator of economic blight. Overall, the Amendment Area displays depreciated property values. Stagnant or depreciating property values contribute to generally impaired investments, in that a lack of expected returns on property often results in deferred maintenance and lack of reinvestment. This in turn contributes to further declines in property values. If the decline is significant, then the value of the owner's investment will decline. In extreme cases, owners may begin to abandon their investments in the area.

Depreciated values and impaired investments can be measured in a number of ways. One way to measure this is to examine the change in property value over a period of time.

For the properties where data is available, in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area only 16.52% of properties have increased above the statutory inflation rate of 2% a year, and only 14.89% have increased over 20%, showing significant reinvestment in those properties. In the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas, for the properties where data is available, only 14.63% of properties increased above the statutory inflation rate, showing some reinvestment, and just 13.51% of properties increased above 20%, showing significant reinvestment in those properties.

Vacancies and Abandoned Buildings

Section 33031(b)(3) of the CRL identifies several conditions as characteristics of economic blight, including abnormally high business vacancies, abnormally low lease rates, or an abnormally high number of abandoned buildings.

Vacant businesses and homes illustrate the complex nature of blight. Poor physical conditions lead to decreased values and sales, which, in turn, lead to poor economic conditions. Vacancies not only give the area a run-down look and reduce local job opportunities, but in commercial areas they do not generate sales tax revenue. In both commercial and residential areas vacant and abandoned buildings frequently lower surrounding property values, increase crime and the risk of fire, and pose hazards to children. These are all factors that substantially hinder or prevent viable uses.

Empty buildings exhibiting characteristics of neglect and abandonment such as broken windows, garbage, or other such indications of neglect, are typically regarded as attractive nuisances and neighborhood burdens and often attract transients who commit crimes related to property, intoxication, and illegal occupancy. Additionally, the standard concept of "The Broken Window Effect", which is widely accepted in professional planning literature, points strongly to a very high degree of correlation between apparent building abandonment and crime.

Lack of Necessary Commercial Facilities

CRL Section 33031(b)(3) specifies as an economic condition of blight a lack of commercial facilities normally found in a neighborhood, such as grocery stores, drug stores, and banks or other financial institutions.

The proposed Amendment Area includes 74 parcels that are designated for commercial development by the County's General Plan. Only 50 of these parcels are currently used for commercial or office purposes. In the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area, the commercial facilities are all located along Beaumont Ave., between Cherry Valley Blvd., and Orchard Street, and along Cherry Valley Blvd., between Beaumont and Nancy. In the proposed Garnet sub-area there are a few commercial units along Indian Ave just south of Dillon Road, as well as a few along Little Morongo Road, just north of Dillon Road. These commercial facilities are haphazardly placed often insufficient to meet the needs of the local population.

There are currently no grocery stores, drug stores, banks or other financial institutions in the proposed Amendment Area. Convenience stores function as locations to buy basic food and drink necessities.

The nearest concentration of commercial, banking and other services is located several miles away, in Beaumont for the residents of Cherry Valley, and in Desert Hot Springs for the residents of Garnet and West Garnet. Due to the lack of these types of services in the proposed Amendment Area, there are currently no means to recapture the leakage of sales taxes to other cities and communities in the County.

There appears to be a demand for certain types of commercial services in the proposed Amendment Area, as long as they are compatible with the character and scale of the existing development in Cherry Valley, Garnet and West Garnet. There are also several vacant parcels that appear to be large enough to accommodate meaningful commercial development. However, this demand is unlikely to be met because various existing infrastructure systems would not support such improvements.

Residential Overcrowding

According to the CRL, a blighted community may be characterized by serious residential overcrowding that has resulted in significant public health or safety problems.

Due to its secretive and often illegal nature, residential overcrowding is a difficult condition to document through records research and field surveys. Property owners, landlords and the residents themselves are reluctant to divulge such information. However, the U.S. Census Bureau provides a measure of overcrowding that shows how the Amendment Area suffers from this condition of blight.

Overcrowding, which is defined as 1.01 or more persons per room by the U.S. Census Bureau, is estimated to be at 5.4% in the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area and 17.8% in the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas. While the proposed Cherry Valley's overcrowding rate is lower than the overcrowding rate of 12.68% for Riverside County, the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas have a much higher rate of overcrowding. This shows a substantial preponderance of overcrowded conditions in the Amendment Area, especially in the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas.

Indicators of overcrowding were observed throughout the proposed Amendment Area, including a number of garage conversions and homes with multiple vehicles parked on the street or on the front yard during normal business hours.

Overcrowding within a community reflects the health and responsiveness of the housing market, and indicates the social well being of the area's residents. Overcrowding is

considered a problem if the public health, safety and welfare are threatened. Higher crime rates have also often been associated with overcrowded living conditions.

Crime

The CRL provides that one of the conditions of economic blight is a high crime rate that constitutes a serious threat to the public safety and welfare an economic condition that causes blight.

According to evidence presented by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the Amendment Area has a moderate rate of crime when compared to the balance of the County. Crimes in the proposed Amendment Area tend toward property crimes such as burglary and theft. Persons crimes are generally drug related. Periodically in the West Garnet sub-area there are railroad crimes where goods traveling via rail are stolen. In the windmills near the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas there are often thefts of copper wire.

There is some gang activity by the "Brownstown" gang in the northeastern section of the proposed Garnet sub-area. Gang activity includes assaults, shootings, homicides, and a greater amount of crime.

3.5.3 Extent of Urbanization in the Amendment Area

CRL Section 33320.1 requires that the proposed Amendment Area be "predominantly urbanized." This means that not less than 80% of the land therein must be, or has been, developed for an urban use, or is an integral part of one or more areas developed for urban uses that are surrounded or substantially surrounded by parcels that have been or are developed for urban uses.

Based upon the criteria described above and the results of the field studies conducted in support of the Draft Preliminary Report, the proposed sub-area in Cherry Valley is 93.83% urbanized; the proposed sub-area in Garnet is 96.52% urbanized; and the proposed sub-area in West Garnet is 92.34% urbanized. All three areas meet the CRL requirement for urbanization

3.5.4 Existing and Proposed Land Uses in the Amendment Area

Existing land uses as well as designated General Plan land uses are listed in the following tables for each of the three sub-areas. Table 2 and Figures 5 and 6 describe existing and proposed uses for Cherry Valley. Table 3 and Figures 7 and 8 describe existing and proposed uses for Garnet. Table 4 and Figures 9 and 10 describe existing and proposed uses for West Garnet.

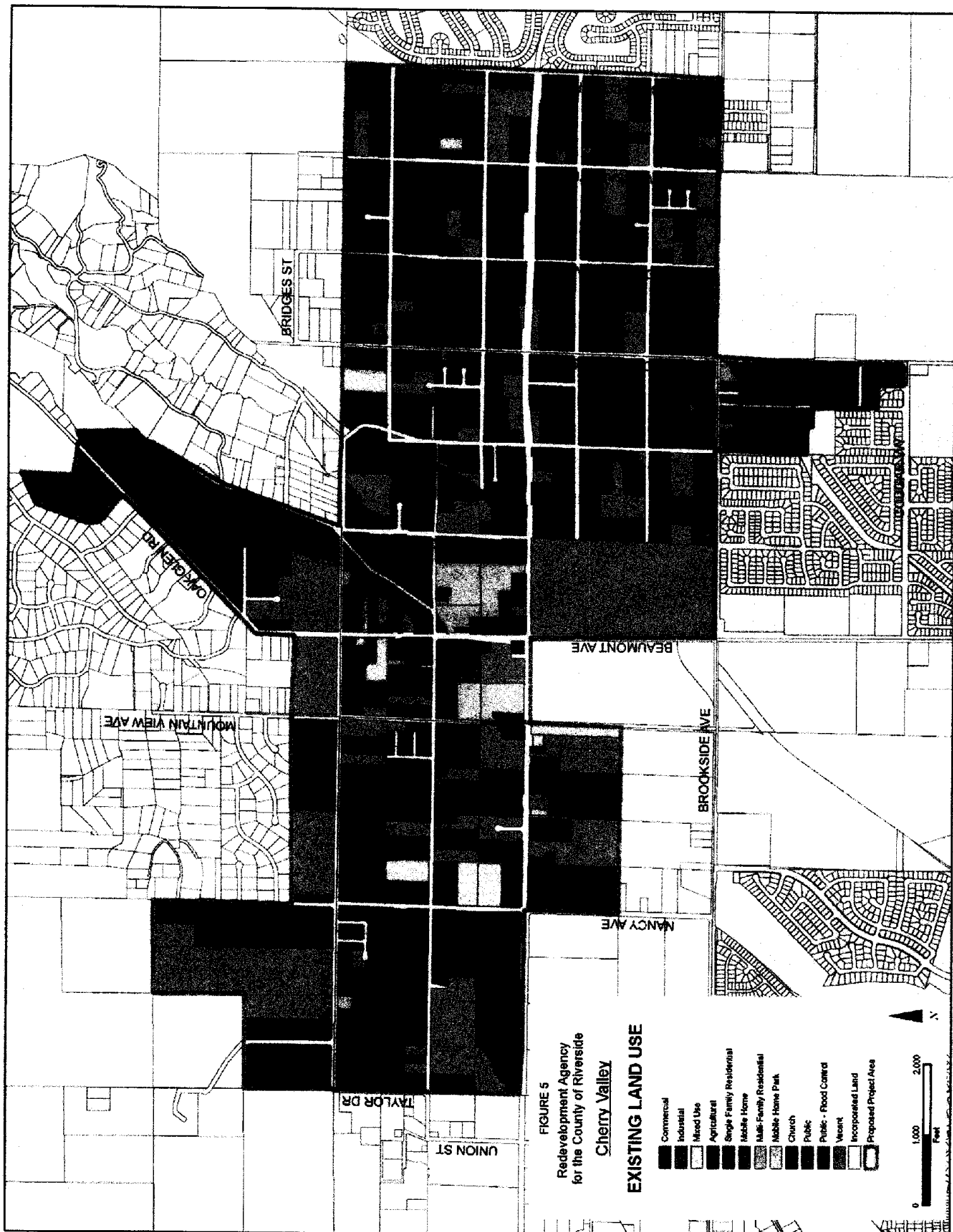
**TABLE 2
CHERRY VALLEY – EXISTING LAND USE & GENERAL PLAN LAND USE**

EXISTING LAND USE			
Commercial	19	26.88	1.49%
Industrial	2	6.87	0.38%
Mixed Use	11	30.11	1.67%
Agricultural	1	27.12	1.50%
Single Family Residential	1101	1033.72	57.19%
Mobile Home Residential	1	0.51	0.03%
Multi-Family Residential	6	3.59	0.20%
Mobile Home Park	6	29.13	1.61%
Church	3	3.19	0.18%
Public	8	24.37	1.35%
Public - Flood Control	35	73.26	4.05%
Vacant	107	367.6	20.34%
Sub-Total	1300	1626.35	89.97%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	181.21	10.03%
Total	1300	1807.56	100%
GENERAL PLAN			
Commercial - Office	1	3.53	0.20%
Commercial - Retail	66	61.65	3.41%
Light Industrial	1	2.38	0.13%
High Density Residential	5	8.25	0.46%
Medium High Density Residential	1	7.75	0.43%
Medium Density Residential	256	82.25	4.55%
Very Low Density Residential	63	52.11	2.88%
Very Low Density Residential - Rural Community	900	1340.88	74.18%
Rural Residential	7	67.55	3.74%
Sub-Total	1300	1626.35	89.97%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	181.21	10.03%
Total	1300	1807.56	100%



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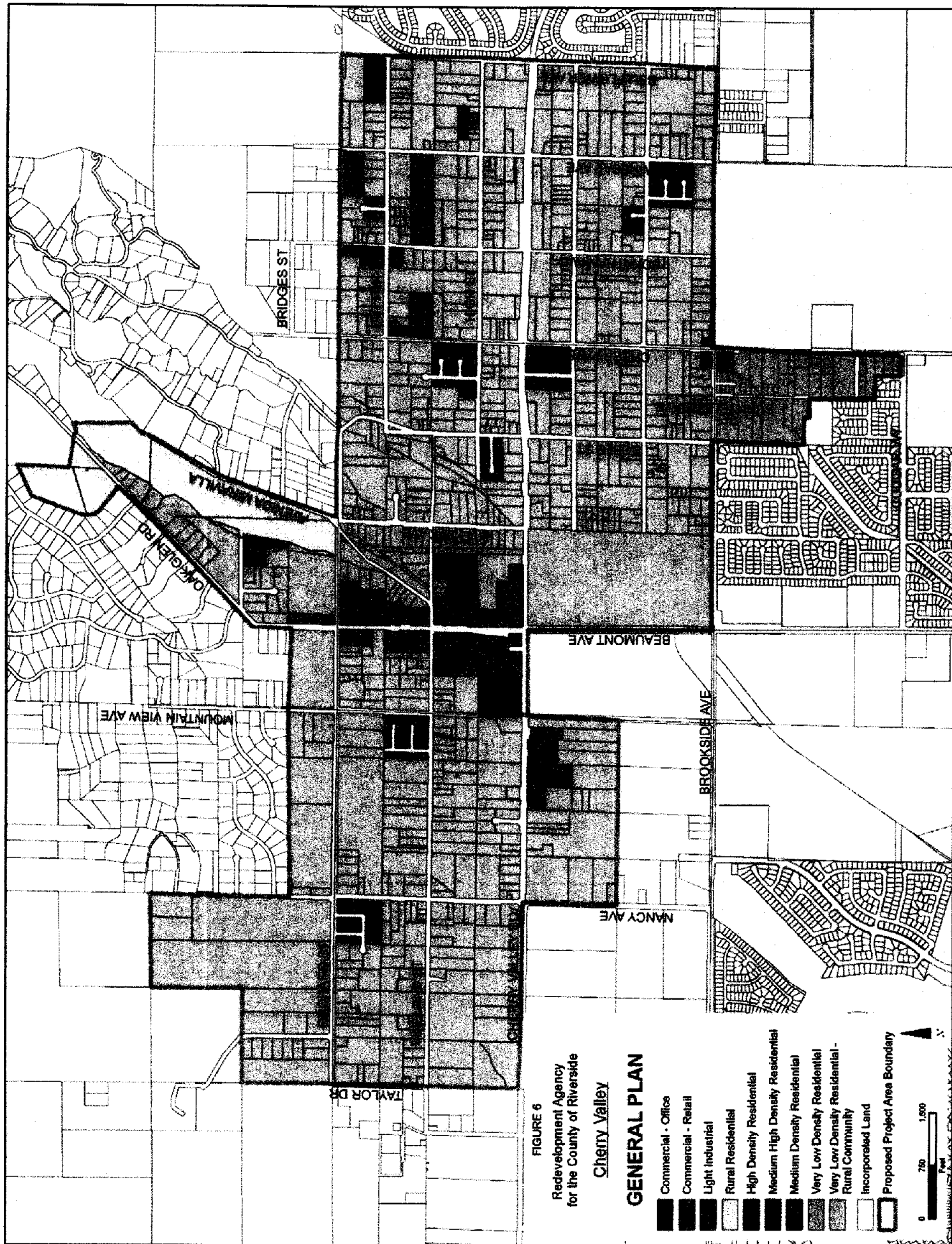


FIGURE 6
 Redevelopment Agency
 for the County of Riverside
 Cherry Valley

GENERAL PLAN



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**TABLE 3
GARNET – EXISTING LAND USE & GENERAL PLAN LAND USE**

EXISTING LAND USE			
Commercial	31	101.1	3.86%
Industrial	1	4.26	0.16%
Light Industrial	1	0.11	0.00%
Mixed Use	10	9.21	0.35%
Single Family Residential	1625	407.63	15.57%
Mobile Home	76	18.09	0.69%
Mobile Home Park	16	107.44	4.10%
Multi-Family Residential	6	1.4	0.05%
School	1	21.13	0.81%
Church	3	2.22	0.08%
Public	61	312.52	11.94%
Public - Flood Control	21	42.99	1.64%
Vacant	1578	1274.82	48.69%
Sub-Total	3430	2302.92	87.96%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	315.24	12.04%
Total	3430	2618.16	100%
GENERAL PLAN			
Commercial - Retail	7	13.86	0.53%
Light Industrial	63	376.11	14.37%
High Density Residential	11	50.21	1.92%
Medium High Density Residential	2	19.75	0.75%
Medium Density Residential	3089	905.51	34.59%
Low Density Residential*	30	6.85	0.26%
Rural Residential	35	183.32	7.00%
Public Facilities	41	324.38	12.39%
Open Space - Water	12	57.88	2.21%
Open Space - Recreation	5	45.23	1.73%
Rural Desert	135	319.82	12.22%
Sub-Total	3430	2302.92	87.96%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	315.24	12.04%
Total	3430	2618.16	100%



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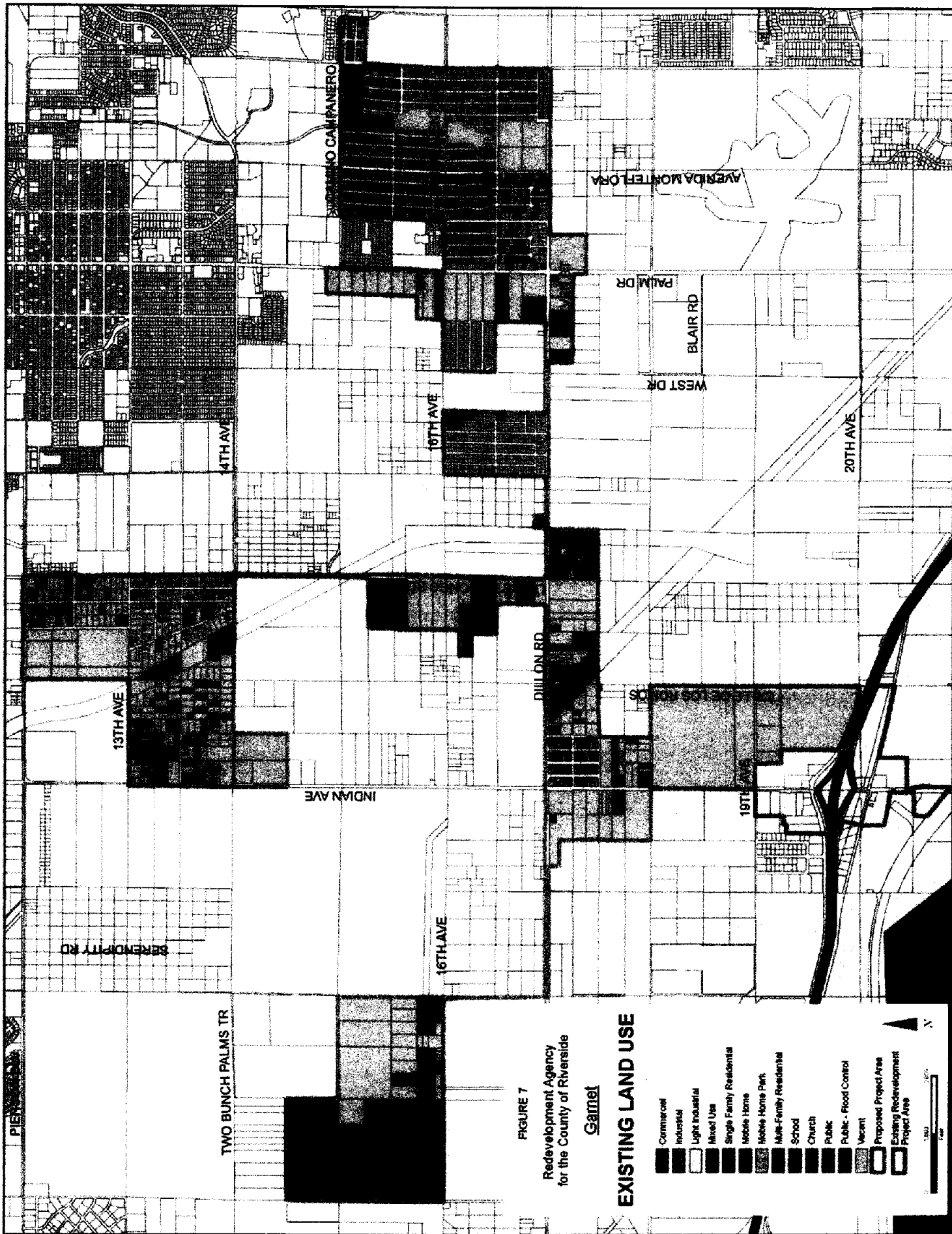


FIGURE 7
 Redevelopment Agency
 for the County of Riverside

Gamet

EXISTING LAND USE

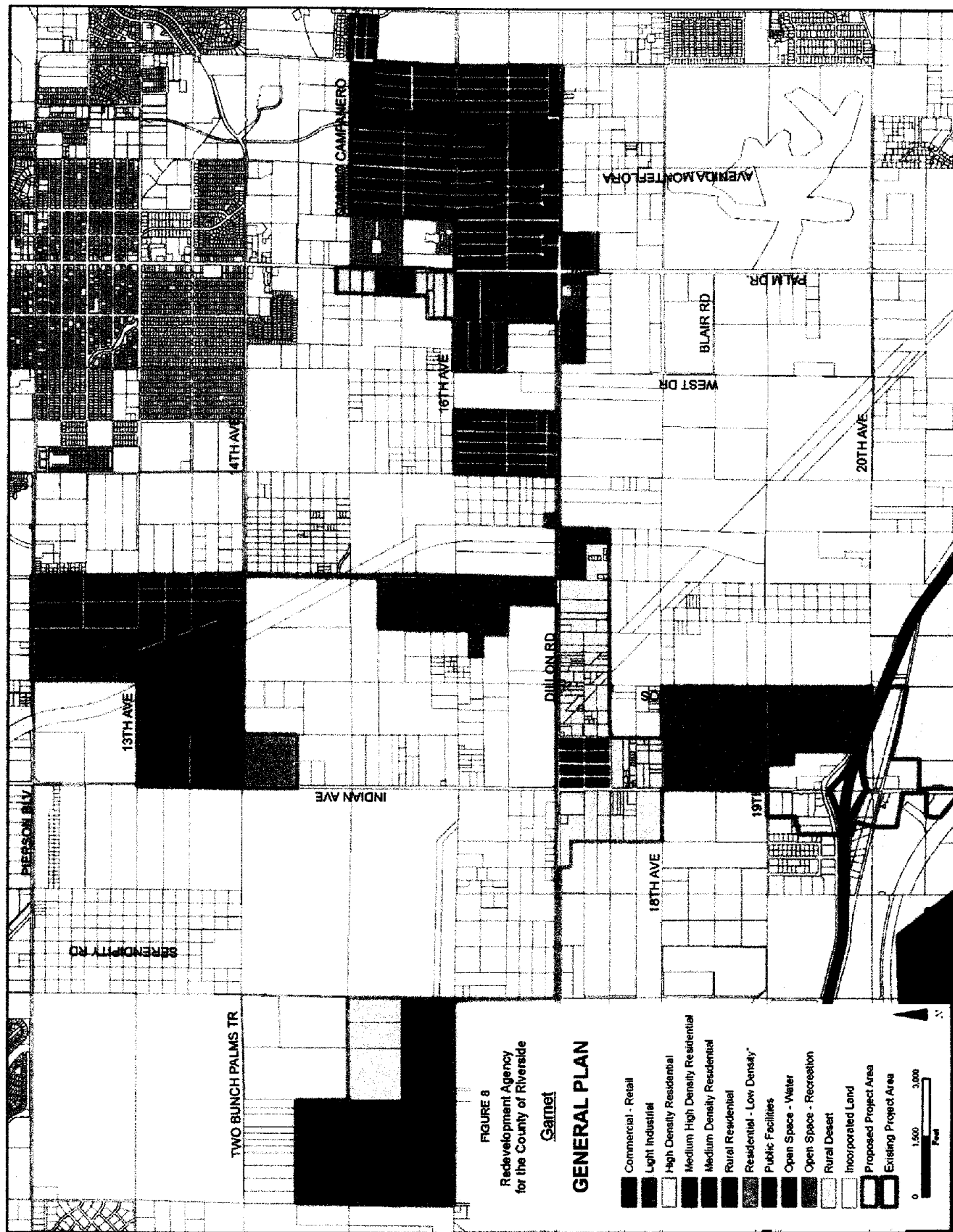
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Single Family Residential
- Mobile Home
- Mobile Home Park
- Multi-Family Residential
- School
- Church
- Public
- Public - Flood Control
- Vacant
- Proposed Project Area
- Existing Redevelopment Project Area





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**TABLE 4
WEST GARNET – EXISTING LAND USE & GENERAL PLAN LAND USE**

EXISTING LAND USE			
Single Family Residential	9	4.09	4.75%
Multi-Family Residential	1	0.23	0.27%
Church	2	0.2	0.23%
Vacant	53	66.21	76.85%
Sub-Total	65	70.73	82.09%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	15.43	17.91%
Total	65	86.16	100%
GENERAL PLAN			
Low Density Residential	63	59.65	69.23%
Rural Desert	2	11.08	12.86%
Sub-Total	63	70.73	82.09%
Streets/R.O.W.	n/a	15.43	17.91%
Total	65	86.16	100%



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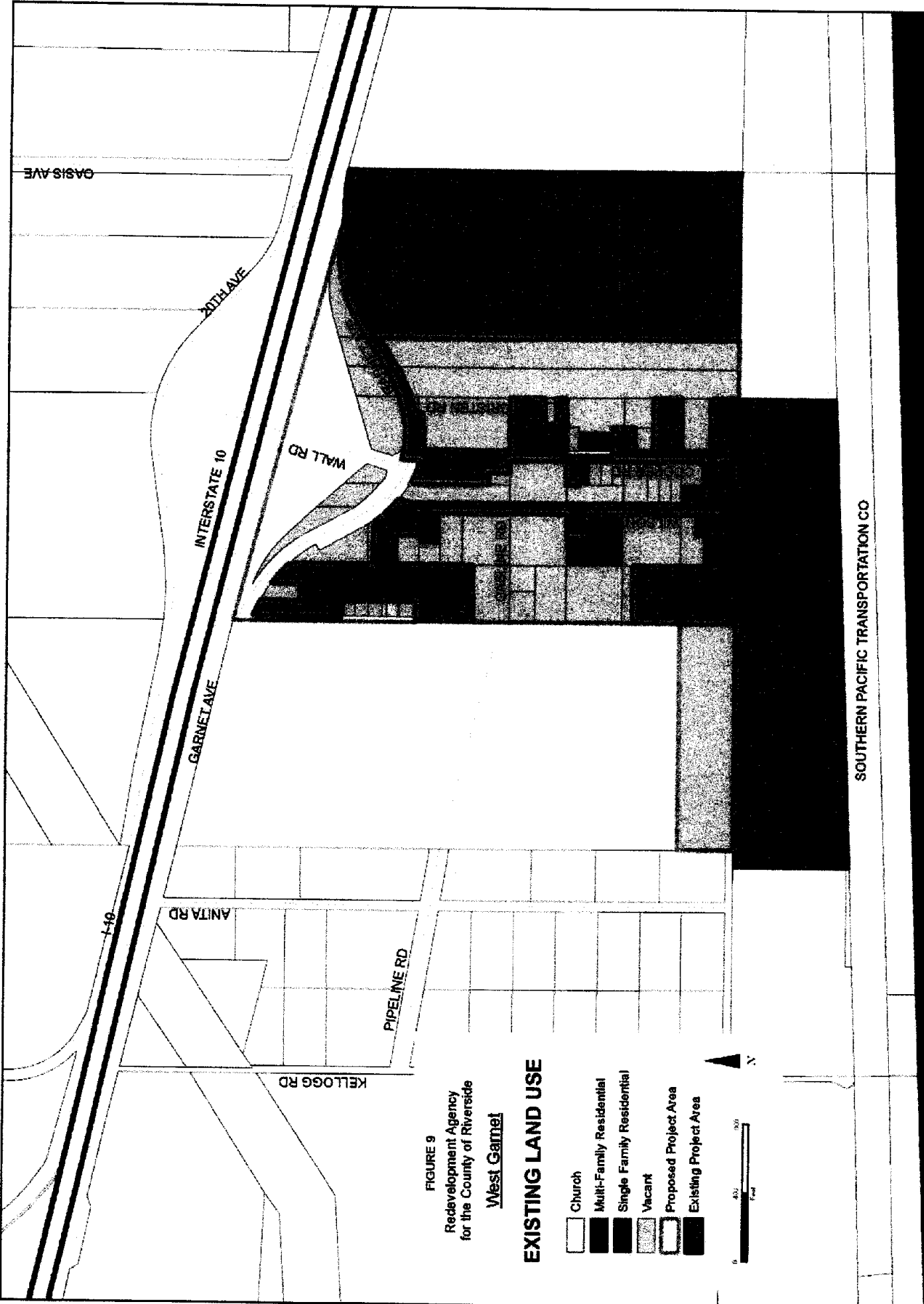


FIGURE 9
 Redevelopment Agency
 for the County of Riverside

West Garnet

EXISTING LAND USE

-  Church
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Vacant
-  Proposed Project Area
-  Existing Project Area



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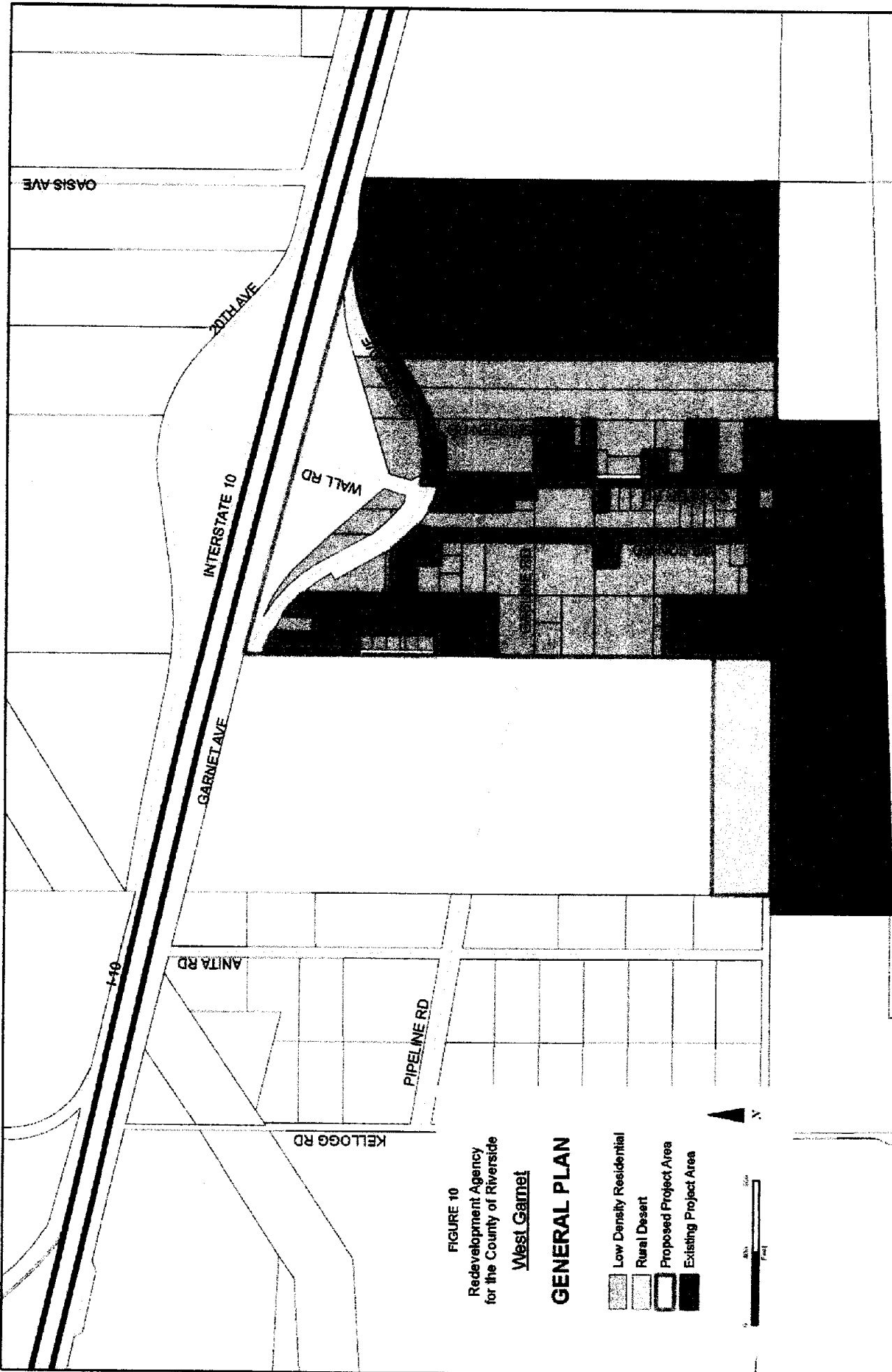
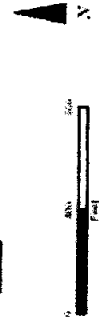


FIGURE 10
Redevelopment Agency
for the County of Riverside

West Garnet

GENERAL PLAN

-  Low Density Residential
-  Rural Desert
-  Proposed Project Area
-  Existing Project Area



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4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This section describes the existing conditions, potential significant adverse impacts, and mitigation measures related to the Project. Specifically, this section focuses on relevant issues associated with the following environmental topics:

1. Land Use and Planning
2. Traffic
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Hydrology
7. Population And Housing
8. Public Services
9. Utilities
10. Agricultural Resources.

Each environmental factor is discussed separately under its own section. Each discussion begins with a description of the existing conditions of the Project site relative to the specific environmental factor. This background information is critical to accurately assess the Project's impacts.

Next, the thresholds of significance used to measure potential Project impacts are identified. Thresholds of significance are based on the CEQA Guidelines, information provided by the Project Initial Study (Appendix A), the General Plan and other regulatory requirements as appropriate.

The potentially significant environmental impacts of adopting and implementing the Project are then discussed and evaluated against the threshold of significance. For each significant impact, appropriate mitigation measures are presented. Any significant impact that cannot be fully mitigated is identified and discussed.

Finally, any cumulative impacts associated with the specific environmental factor are identified. Where appropriate, measures to mitigate any cumulative impacts are presented, and any cumulative significant impact that cannot be fully mitigated is identified and discussed.

4.1 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This section addresses issues related to land uses and potential land use changes within the Amendment Area. Potential adverse Project impacts, if any, and appropriate mitigation measures necessary to resolve impacts are discussed. Primary data for this section are drawn from the field surveys performed by Urban Futures, Inc./GRC in support of the Project and the County's General Plan Land Use Element.

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Land Uses

Existing land uses within the 4,511.88 acre Amendment Area are depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4, and Figures 5, 7, and 9, Section 3.5.4. Within the Cherry Valley sub-area, existing land uses are predominantly single family residential (57.19%), mixed with mobile home park, commercial, public, multi-family residential, industrial, public rights-of-way and agricultural land uses. According to the PAP, the Cherry Valley community is a rural community characterized by large-lot residential, agricultural and animal-keeping uses, with a commercial core along Beaumont Avenue, northerly of Cherry Valley Boulevard. There are also two large mobile home parks adjacent to the commercial core.

Within the Garnet sub-area, existing land uses also are a mix of single family residential, mobile home park, commercial, public, multi-family residential, industrial, and public rights-of-way. Single family is the predominant land use in the Garnet sub-area, comprising 15.57 % of the sub-area, less than in the Cherry Valley sub-area.

Within the West Garnet sub-area, existing land uses are more sparsely developed, consisting of a mix of single family residential, multi-family residential, and public rights-of-way. Single family is the predominant land use in the West Garnet sub-area, comprising only 4.75 % of the sub-area. Approximately 76.85% of the sub-area is vacant. According to the WCVAP, the community of West Garnet is a small low density residential neighborhood.

The land included in each of the sub-areas includes both developed urban uses, and land currently undeveloped but integral to the already developed urban uses.

Existing Blighting Conditions

According to the Draft Preliminary Report for the Plan Amendment much of the existing land uses within each of the sub-areas is blighted. These blighting conditions, which are detailed in Section 3.5.2, include lack of curb and gutter, lack of flood control improvements, lack of sewer systems; deteriorated housing stock, and lack of commercial facilities to serve the area population.

The Agency has become aware that these blighting conditions are slowing the development of the Amendment Area and could inhibit the continued removal of blight in the Existing Project Area.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Amendment Area is located western Riverside County in the Western Coachella Valley area. The area is ringed by the rugged San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and Little San Bernardino Mountains, the Coachella Valley contains a series of low-lying desert flatlands, sloping dunes and rolling foothills. Cove-like areas line the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains. The Whitewater River runs the length of the Valley.

Surrounding uses in the Cherry Valley sub-area include residential, commercial and undeveloped properties. Surrounding uses in the Garnet sub-area include the existing Garnet Project Area; the Whitewater River; and residential, commercial and

undeveloped properties. Surrounding uses in the West Garnet sub-area include the existing West Garnet Project Area; and residential, commercial and undeveloped properties.

General Plan Land Uses

General Plan designated land uses within the Amendment Area are depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4, and Figures 6, 8, and 10, Section 3.5.4.

In the Cherry Valley sub-area, General Plan land uses are a mix of Rural Residential, Very Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Light Industrial, and Commercial Office and Commercial Retail. Very Low Residential (Rural Community) is the predominant General Plan land uses, encompassing 74.18% of the planned land uses within the sub-area.

In the Garnet sub-area, General Plan land uses are a mix of Rural Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Medium High Density Residential, High Density Residential, Light Industrial, Commercial Retail, Public Facilities, Rural Desert, and Open Space (Water) and Open Space (Recreation). The Open Space (Water) comprises the Whitewater River area. Medium Density Residential is the predominant General Plan land uses, encompassing 34.59% of the planned land uses within the sub-area.

In the West Garnet sub-area, General Plan land uses are Low Density Residential and Rural Desert. Low Density Residential is the predominant General Plan land uses, encompassing 69.23% of the planned land uses within the sub-area.

Table 5, below provides a description of the General Plan land use designations for the Amendment Area as defined by the General Plan Land Use Element.

TABLE 5 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS SUMMARY			
Rural	Rural Residential (RR)	5 ac min.	• Single-family residences with a minimum lot size of 5 acres. • Allows limited animal keeping and agricultural uses, recreational uses, compatible resource development (not including the commercial extraction of mineral resources) and associated uses and governmental uses.
	Rural Desert (RD)	10 ac min.	• Single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of 10 acres. • Allows limited animal keeping, agriculture, recreational, renewable energy uses including solar, geothermal and wind energy uses, as well as associated uses required to develop and operate these renewable energy sources, compatible resource development (which may include the commercial extraction of mineral resources with approval of SMP), and governmental and utility uses.
Rural Community	Very Low Density Residential (RC-VLDR)	1 ac min.	• Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 1 to 2 acres. • Limited agriculture, intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.
Open Space	Water (W)	N/A	• Includes bodies of water and natural or artificial drainage corridors. • Extraction of mineral resources subject to SMP may be permissible provided that flooding hazards are addressed and long term habitat and riparian values are maintained.

TABLE 5
GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS SUMMARY

Community Development	Recreation (R)	N/A	• Recreational uses including parks, trails, athletic fields, and golf courses. • Neighborhood parks are permitted within residential land uses.
	Estate Density Residential (EDR)	2 ac min.	• Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 2 to 5 acres. • Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.
	Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)	1 ac min.	• Single-family detached residences on large parcels of 1 to 2 acres. • Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.
	Low Density Residential (LDR)	½ ac min.	• Single-family detached residences on large parcels of ½ to 1 acre. • Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged.
	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	2 - 5 du/ac	• Single-family detached and attached residences with a density range of 2 to 5 dwelling units per acre. • Limited agriculture and animal keeping is permitted, however, intensive animal keeping is discouraged. • Lot sizes range from 5,500 to 20,000 sq. ft., typical 7,200 sq. ft. lots allowed.
	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	5 - 8 du/ac	• Single-family attached and detached residences with a density range of 5 to 8 dwelling units per acre. • Lot sizes range from 4,000 to 6,500 sq. ft.
	High Density Residential (HDR)	8 - 14 du/ac	• Single-family attached and detached residences, including townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard homes, patio homes, townhouses, and zero lot line homes.
	Commercial Retail (CR)	0.20 - 0.35 FAR	• Local and regional serving retail and service uses. The amount of land designated for Commercial Retail exceeds that amount anticipated to be necessary to serve the County's population at build out. Once build out of Commercial Retail reaches the 40% level within any Area Plan, additional studies will be required before CR development beyond the 40 % will be permitted.
	Commercial Office (CO)	0.35 - 1.0 FAR	• Variety of office related uses including financial, legal, insurance and other office services.
	Light Industrial (LI)	0.25 - 0.60 FAR	• Industrial and related uses including warehousing/distribution, assembly and light manufacturing, repair facilities, and supporting retail uses.
	Public Facilities (PF)	< 0.60 FAR	• Civic uses such as County administrative buildings and schools.

General Plan Land Use Policies

PAP: The PAP identifies General Plan level land use policies to govern future development of the Area Plan. Those policies applicable to the Cherry Valley sub-area of the Amendment Area are as follows:

PAP 3.1 Require a minimum lot size of one acre for properties within the Rural Community Foundation Component within the Cherry Valley Policy Area, except for properties within one-half mile of the San Bernardino County Line.

PAP 3.2 Encourage local serving commercial development along Beaumont Avenue within the Cherry Valley Policy Area.

PAP 3.3 Encourage the creation and maintenance of multi-purpose trails through the Cherry Valley area by using existing flood control easements and underutilized road rights-of-way.

PAP 4.1 Clustering of dwelling units and lots is encouraged in order to preserve open space areas.

PAP 4.2 Provision shall be made for establishment of a visible "entrance" feature for Cherry Valley within this area that evokes the rural identity of the community.

WCVAP: The WCVAP identifies General Plan level land use policies to govern future development of the Area Plan. Those policies applicable to the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas of the Amendment Area are as follows:

Residential Uses Policies:

The scenic qualities of the Coachella Valley make the area a special place to live. With the Valley continuing to face growth and development pressures, it is essential that current and future residents are able to maintain views of the desert and mountainous terrain from their homes. The following policies apply new residential developments having densities of 8 dwelling units per acre or more:

WCVAP 7.1 Utilize single-story units adjacent to existing single family developments.

WCVAP 7.2 Ensure that two-story residential units do not block views from adjacent single family residences.

WCVAP 7.3 Require additional front and side-yard setbacks, where necessary, in order to ensure land use compatibility.

WCVAP 7.4 Ensure that architectural design is compatible with or enhances adjacent development.

WCVAP 7.5 Enhance block walls with special treatment or design.

WCVAP 7.6 Require residential development to incorporate the following design criteria:

- a) Roofline variation, through level changes and/or different building heights.
- b) Setback variation of units to reduce a straight-line effect, but in no case less than required by the County Land Use Ordinance.
- c) Facade treatment variation through use of compatible materials or colors.
- d) Consideration for security through lighting and visibility of common areas from units.
- e) Use of walls, landscaped berms, and plant materials in combination to provide screening buffers to roadways and adjacent land uses.
- f) Use of street trees and landscaping along interior roadways and parking areas.
- g) Placement of trees and other plant materials on both sides of walls along street frontages and other rights-of-way.
- h) Development projects with carports shall be designed with carports located out of view of the frontage street and other right-of-ways or provide with substantial screening.

- i) All buildings shall be provided with design treatments for roofs and facade with tile or other appropriate materials.
- j) The use of native and/or water-efficient plants, where feasible.

Commercial Retail Uses:

Commercial uses are found in scattered locations throughout the Valley. In order to ensure that commercial development does not degrade the visual qualities of the Valley, it is important to establish screening elements that shield potentially unsightly areas from public view. The following policy applies to Commercial Retail uses in the Western Coachella Valley:

WCVAP 10.1 Require screening through landscaping, or other effective mechanisms, of outdoor storage areas, other than authorized sales and display areas.

Commercial Office Uses

The following policies apply to Commercial Office uses in the Western Coachella Valley:

WCVAP 11.1 Professional offices may be found consistent within the Medium High, High, Very High, and Highest Density Residential land use designations under the following:

- a) All projects shall use single-story construction, and/or additional building setbacks, block walls, landscaped berms, trees and other landscaping where adjacent to residential development.
- b) Parking areas shall be well screened from residential developments, and traffic conflicts shall be limited.
- c) Professional office uses must comply with the Commercial Office land use designation policies found in the Land Use Element.

Industrial Uses

The Land Use Plan for Western Coachella Valley designates land for industrial development; several of these areas are located along the Interstate 10 corridor, with some nearby areas designated for residential uses. Preserving the visual qualities of the Valley and ensuring compatibility with adjacent uses are the focus of the policies listed below. The following policies shall apply to industrial land uses in the Western Coachella Valley:

WCVAP 12.1 Require a minimum lot size of 7,000 square feet for industrial uses.

WCVAP 12.2 Ensure that industrial buildings do not exceed fifty feet in height.

WCVAP 12.3 Discourage industrial uses which may conflict with residential land uses either directly or indirectly.

WCVAP 12.4 Require the screening and/or landscaping of outdoor storage areas, such as contractor storage yards and similar uses.

WCVAP 12.5 Permit limited commercial uses within existing and proposed industrial development.

Regional Planning

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the regional planning body for six counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura and Imperial. As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, SCAG Governments is mandated by the federal government to research and draw up plans for transportation, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality.

Primary SCAG policy documents applicable to land use in Riverside County are the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, which serves as a policy document that sets broad goals for the southern California region and identifies strategies for agencies at all levels of government to use in guiding their decision-making with respect to significant issues and changes, including growth management. The RCPG contains policies on Strategy, the Economy, Growth Management, Mobility (transportation), Air Quality, Housing, Human Resources and Services, Finance, Open Space and Conservation, Water Resources, Water Quality, Energy, Hazardous Waste Management, Integrated Solid Waste Management and Plan Implementation.

A draft of the 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) has been distributed by SCAG for public review. Upon its adoption, the RCP will replace the RCPG, providing a strategic plan for defining and solving the region's inter-related housing, traffic, water, air quality, and other regional challenges. Through extensive outreach and input from the RCP Task Force, SCAG's policy committees, subregions, local governments and other key stakeholders, the RCP is a collaborative effort to address our region's challenges and set a path forward.

4.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to land use and planning are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project's Initial Study and assessed by the following questions:

- Would the Project 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?

4.1.3 Potential Impacts

Conflicts with Applicable Land Use Plan Policies

- General Plan / PAP / WCVAP

Redevelopment plans such as the proposed Plan Amendment are not land use proposals. Rather the plans are enabling tool to be used by the redevelopment agency for the purpose of encouraging the rehabilitation and upgrading of blighted areas.

Future development in the Amendment Area would proceed in accordance with proposed General Plan land uses, as depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4, and

applicable land use policies. The proposed Plan Amendment would not alter expected densities from that already anticipated in the General Plan.

Through its redevelopment authority, the Agency would encourage new development by facilitating public-private partnerships that can assist with such issues as land assembly, site preparation, offsite improvements, disposition of property, hazardous waste investigations, and relocation assistance to existing property owners and tenants. A number of these programs are housing related, working to increase, improve, and preserve affordable housing. Through these efforts, the Agency would work toward alleviating blighting conditions in the Amendment Area.

These redevelopment efforts are expected to support General Plan policies that promote a mix of residential, commercial industrial and public land uses in the Amendment Area. Incompatible and nonconforming uses are expected to ultimately convert to their General Plan designated use. By providing a new source of funding to remove barriers to revitalization and new development, the Plan Amendment is expected to spur market forces to redevelop blighted and nonconforming uses. However, these changes are expected to occur gradually during the 30 year term of the proposed Plan Amendment. No conflicts with General Plan plans or policies would occur.

- **Regional Plan**

As the RCP is still in draft form, the RCPG serves as the regional plan for Riverside County and the Amendment Area. The General Plan has been found to be consistent with the RCPG⁶. As discussed above, future development in the Amendment Area would proceed in accordance with proposed RCIP and by extension, the RCPG. Policies of the RCPG applicable to the Plan Amendment are listed below:

3.13 Encourage local jurisdictions' plans that maximize the use of existing urbanized areas accessible to transit through infill and redevelopment.

Discussion: The Plan Amendment will implement General Plan policies that encourage the development of infill areas and promote redevelopment.

3.16 Encourage development in and around activity centers, transportation corridors, underutilized infrastructure systems, and areas needing recycling and redevelopment.

Discussion: The Plan Amendment will implement General Plan policies that encourage development along the I-10 transportation corridor and areas needing recycling and redevelopment.

⁶ The certified Riverside County General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report Volume I (FEIR) (2002) found the General Plan consistent with the RCPG.

- **Incompatible Land Use Impacts**

The Project would not change the proposed General Plan land uses permitted in the Amendment Area. One of the goals of the Plan Amendment is to alleviate problems associated with uses that do not conform to the General Plan or are incompatible with adjacent uses. The Project is expected to facilitate correction of existing land use incompatibilities; it is not expected to create incompatible uses.

- **Surrounding Uses**

By alleviating blight and promoting implementation of the General Plan, the Project is expected to positively affect surrounding land uses.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The Project would be consistent with applicable General Plan and regional land use policies. It is expected to facilitate development and redevelopment of compatible land uses. Each future development in the vicinity of the Amendment Area would undergo a similar project review process as the proposed Project to preclude potential land use and planning policy conflicts. The Project is not expected to result in significant adverse cumulative impacts relative to land use and planning.

4.1.5 Mitigation Measures

None required.

4.1.6 Conclusions

The proposed Plan Amendment would specifically adopt the General Plan by reference, as it may be amended from time to time. For example, if a block is designated in the General Plan for Very Low Density Residential development, the Agency is required to uphold that designation.

The Project is not expected to conflict with applicable land use plans or be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity of the Project.

4.1.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.2 TRAFFIC

This section of the EIR discusses existing vehicular traffic in the vicinity of the Project site, and summarizes the potential impacts to traffic flows from Project implementation. Potential adverse Project impacts, if any, and appropriate mitigation measures necessary to resolve impacts are discussed. Primary data for this section are drawn from the Circulation Element of the General Plan and the WCVAP and PAP.

4.2.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Roadways

Regional access to the Amendment Area is provided by Interstate 10 (I-10). In the Cherry Valley sub-area, major east-west roadways include Cherry Valley Boulevard,

Vineland Street and Orchard Street. Major north-south roadways include Nancy Avenue, Beaumont Avenue and Cherry Avenue.

In the Garnet sub-area, major east-west roadways include Dillon Road, 19th Avenue and 13th Avenue. Major north-south roadways include Indian Avenue, Little Morongo Road and Palm Drive.

In the West Garnet sub-area, major east-west roadways include El Dorado Road and Garnet Street. Major north-south roadways include Wilson Road and Copper Road.

General Plan Performance Criteria

As stated in the Circulation Element of the General Plan, in order to evaluate whether roadways and intersections are meeting their intended purpose, suitable performance criteria were established. Performance criteria provide a means to assess whether the future circulation system can adequately accommodate future traffic volumes. Level of service (LOS) is the performance criteria applied in the Circulation Element. It rates how effectively a particular roadway or intersection is operating. LOS represents the degree of use provided by a facility based on the operational characteristics of the facility, such as signal control, signal timing, and lane geometries. LOS is expressed through a range of levels from LOS A through LOS F, where LOS A represents free-flow conditions and LOS F represents severely congested conditions, based on corresponding average stopped delay per vehicle.

Circulation Element policies specify that an LOS C should be maintained along all County roads and conventional state highways. As an exception, LOS D may be allowed in Community Development areas (areas of concentrated urban development), only at intersections of any combination of Secondary Highways, Major Highways, Urban, Expressways, conventional state highways or freeway ramp intersections.

LOS "E" may be allowed in designated community centers to the extent that it would support transit-oriented development and walkable communities.

General Plan Circulation Policies

In regard to vehicular traffic, General Plan Circulation Element policies also specify that:

- Traffic studies should be prepared for development entitlements (tracts, plot plans, public use permits, conditional use permits, etc.) to identify project related traffic impacts and determine the "significance" of such impacts in compliance with CEQA.
- Direct project related traffic impacts of new development proposals shall be mitigated via conditions of approval requiring the construction of any improvements identified as necessary to meet level of service standards.
- Cumulative and indirect traffic impacts of development may be mitigated through the payment of various impact mitigation fees such as County Development Impact Fees, Road and Bridge Benefit District Fees, and Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees to the extent that these programs provide funding for the improvement of facilities impacted by development.

PAP and WCVAP policies reinforce those of the Circulation Element, and include:

- Maintain the County's roadway Level of Service standards as described in the Level of Service section of the General Plan Circulation Element.
- Support the development of regional transportation facilities and services (such as high-occupancy vehicle lanes, express bus service, and fixed transit facilities), which will encourage the use of public transportation and ride-sharing for longer distance trips.

Regional Transportation Plans

- **Regional Transportation Plan:** The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a multi-modal, long-range planning document prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), in coordination with federal, state, and other regional, subregional, and local agencies in southern California.
- **CETAP:** The Community Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) is one of three planning efforts of the RCIP. The CETAP incorporates three levels of effort: identification of transportation corridors, development of the General Plan Circulation Element, and exploration of options for transit system development in the County. It is the basis for all Circulation Element plans and policies.
- **Congestion Management Program:** The Riverside County Congestion Management Program (CMP) is updated every few years in accordance with Proposition 111, passed in June 1990. The CMP was established to more directly link land use, transportation, and air quality and to prompt reasonable growth management programs that would more effectively utilize new and existing transportation funds, alleviate traffic congestion and related impacts, and improve air quality.

4.2.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to traffic are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project cause an increase in traffic, which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system?
- Would the Project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

4.2.3 Potential Impacts

Traffic Increases

Currently, streets in the Amendment Area lack curb and gutter, street lighting, paving and are incomplete. The Plan Amendment would provide a new source of funding to be used for infrastructure and public facility improvements in the Amendment Area, including street related improvements. It is expected to facilitate build-out of the

Amendment Area in conformance with the General Plan. Funds generated through the Plan Amendment would be available to assist construction of needed circulation improvements.

Although the timing and scope of future improvement projects to be undertaken with Agency funds in the Amendment Area are not known at this time, traffic related improvements along these major commercial corridors are expected to include:

- Reconstruction of street segments and intersections
- Emergency vehicle access improvements.

Such traffic related improvements to be funded through the Plan Amendment would be required to comply with applicable General Plan and regional plan policies. These applicable policies include the requirement for traffic studies for development entitlements to identify project related traffic impacts, and determine appropriate mitigation including the payment of applicable impact mitigation fees such as County Development Impact Fees, Road and Bridge Benefit District Fees, and Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees.

As the Amendment Area transitions from existing uses to General Plan land uses, the amount of residential and industrial uses are expected to increase. Based on the acreage information provided in Tables 2, 3 and 4, the amount of residential acres in the three sub-areas, combined, would increase by 1,720 acres with General Plan build-out. The amount of industrial use would increase by 372 acres and the amount of commercial acreage would decrease by 132 acres with General Plan build-out. With these increases, traffic volumes also would increase.

Recognizing that future growth will generate the need for traffic improvements, in addition to the policies noted above, the General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2002051143) recommended a mitigation measure that requires project proponents to make a "fair share" contribution to required intersection and/or roadway improvements. This measure and the above listed General Plan policies are added to this EIR as Mitigation Measures TR-1 and TR-2 to ensure that future traffic in the Amendment Area is reduced to less than significant levels.

Levels of Service

Mitigation measures TR-1 and TR-2 are intended to ensure that General Plan established levels of service are maintained. With inclusion of these measures, impacts relative to level of service would be less than significant.

4.2.4 Cumulative Impacts

As noted above, future development in the Amendment Area would be compatible with the General Plan and regional planning policies. Cumulative traffic impacts of future development would be alleviated through the County's various development impact and mitigation fee programs. Therefore, cumulative impacts relative to traffic associated with the Project are expected to be less than significant.

4.2.5 Mitigation Measures

TR-1: Future development entitlement proposals in the Amendment Area (including tracts, plot plans, public use permits, conditional use permits, etc.) shall be required to prepare a traffic study for County review and approval to identify project related traffic impacts and determine the "significance" of such impacts in compliance with CEQA.

TR-2: As part of its review of land development proposals, the County shall require project proponents to make a "fair share" contribution to required intersection and/or roadway improvements. The required intersection and/or roadway improvements shall be based on maintaining the appropriate level of service (LOS D within Community Development Areas designated by the 2002 Riverside County General Plan and within adjacent jurisdictions; LOS C within those portions of unincorporated Riverside County outside of Community Development Areas). The fair share contribution shall be based on the percentage of project-related traffic to the total future traffic.

4.2.6 Conclusions

Future traffic related improvements are expected to offset increases in traffic volumes that would result primarily from General Plan build-out and cumulative traffic traveling through the Amendment Area, which are a function of the General Plan's land use and circulation policies.

By providing a new source of funds, the Project is expected to facilitate planned traffic improvements in the Amendment Area. With compliance with the Mitigation Measures TR-1 and TR-2 and applicable County impact mitigation fees, implementation of the proposed Redevelopment Project would result in less than significant impacts on Amendment Area and region-wide roadways.

4.2.7 Significant After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.3 AIR QUALITY

This section of the EIR discusses issues related to air quality. Potential adverse Project impacts, if any, and appropriate mitigation measures necessary to resolve impacts are discussed.

4.3.1 Existing Conditions

Air Basins

Riverside County is located in three distinct air basins: South Coast Air Basin, Mojave Desert Air Basin, and Salton Sea Air Basin. The Amendment Area is located within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which includes all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

Climate/Meteorology

The SCAB is located in a coastal plain with connecting broad valleys and low hills, bounded by the Pacific Ocean in the southwest quadrant with high mountains forming the remainder of the perimeter. It lies in the semi-permanent high-pressure zone of the eastern Pacific. As a result, the climate is mild, tempered by cool sea breezes. This

usually mild climatological pattern is interrupted infrequently by periods of extremely hot weather, winter storms, or Santa Ana winds.

The annual average temperature varies little throughout the SCAB, ranging from the low to middle 60s, measured in degrees Fahrenheit (F). The majority of annual rainfall in the SCAB occurs between October and March. Annual temperatures in the vicinity of the Amendment Area vary between an average 47.2 degrees F in the winter to an average of 75.6 degrees F in the summer.

Rainfall is seasonally and annually highly variable. Almost all rain falls from November through April. Summer rainfall is normally restricted to widely scattered thundershowers near the coast with slightly heavier shower activity in the east and over the mountains. Rainfall averages around 10-15 inches per year in the Amendment Area.

Although SCAB has a semi-arid climate, the air near the surface is typically moist because of the presence of a shallow marine layer. Except for infrequent periods when dry, continental air is brought into SCAB by offshore winds, the ocean effect is dominant. Periods of heavy fog, especially along the coastline, are frequent; and low stratus clouds, often referred to as "high fog" is a characteristic climatic feature.

Wind patterns across the south coastal region are characterized by westerly and southwesterly on-shore winds during the day and easterly or northeasterly breezes at night. The dominant daily wind speed is 8 to 12 mph daytime breeze and 3 to 5 mph nighttime breeze. The typical wind flow pattern fluctuates only with occasional winter storms or strong northeasterly Santa Ana winds from the mountains and deserts northeast of the SCAB.

The wind patterns affect the rate and orientation of horizontal pollutant transport, and interact with temperature inversions that control the vertical depth through which pollutants are mixed. These inversions are the marine/subsidence inversion and the radiation inversion.

The combination of stagnant wind conditions and low inversions produces the greatest pollutant concentrations. On days of no inversion or high wind speeds, ambient air pollutant concentrations are lowest. During periods of low inversions and low wind speeds, air pollutants generated in urbanized areas are transported predominantly onshore into Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. In the winter, the greatest pollution problems are carbon monoxide and oxides of nitrogen because of extremely low inversions and air stagnation during the night and early morning hours. In the summer, the longer daylight hours and the brighter sunshine combine to cause a reaction between hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen to form photochemical smog. These conditions give the SCAB the worst air pollution problem in the nation.

Criteria Air Pollutants

The air pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources are regulated by federal and state law. These regulated air pollutants are known as "criteria air pollutants" and are categorized as primary and secondary pollutants. Primary air pollutants are those that are emitted directly from sources. CO, ROG, nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and most fine particulate matter (PM-10, PM-2.5) including lead (Pb) and fugitive dust, are primary air pollutants. Of these, CO, SO2, PM-10, and PM-2.5 are criteria pollutants. ROG and NOx are criteria pollutant precursors which form

secondary criteria pollutants through chemical and photochemical reaction in the atmosphere. Ozone (O₃) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are the principal secondary pollutants.

Presented below is a description of each of these primary and secondary criteria air pollutants and their known health effects:

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas produced by incomplete combustion of carbon substances (e.g., gasoline or diesel fuel). The primary adverse health effect associated with CO is the interference of normal oxygen transfer to the blood, which may result in tissue oxygen deprivation.

Reactive Organic Gases (ROGs) are compounds comprised primarily of atoms of hydrogen and carbon. Internal combustion associated with motor vehicle usage is the major source of hydrocarbons. Other sources of ROG include the evaporative emissions associated with the use of paints and solvents, the application of asphalt paving, and the use of household consumer products such as aerosols. Adverse effects on human health are not caused directly by ROG, but rather by reactions of ROG to form secondary pollutants.

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) serve as integral participants in the process of photochemical smog production. The two major forms of NO_x are nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). NO is a colorless, odorless gas formed from atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen when combustion takes place under high temperature and/or high pressure. NO₂ is a reddish-brown irritating gas formed by the combination of NO and oxygen. NO_x acts as an acute respiratory irritant and increases susceptibility to respiratory pathogens.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) is a byproduct of fuel combustion. The principal form of NO₂ produced by combustion is NO, but NO reacts to form NO₂, creating the mixture of NO and NO₂ commonly called NO_x. NO₂ acts as an acute irritant and, in equal concentrations, is more injurious than NO. At atmospheric concentrations, however, NO₂ is only potentially irritating. There is some indication of a relationship between NO₂ and chronic pulmonary fibrosis. An increase in bronchitis in children (two and three years old) has also been observed at concentrations below 0.3 part per million (ppm). NO₂ absorbs blue light; the result is a brownish-red cast to the atmosphere and reduced visibility. NO₂ also contributes to the formation of PM-10 (particulates having an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns or 0.0004 inch or less in diameter).

Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) is a colorless, pungent, irritating gas formed by the combustion of sulfurous fossil fuels. Fuel combustion is the primary source of SO₂. At sufficiently high concentrations, SO₂ may irritate the upper respiratory tract. At lower concentrations and when combined with particulates, SO₂ may do greater harm by injuring lung tissue.

Particulate Matter (PM) consists of finely divided solids or liquids such as soot, dust, aerosols, fumes, and mists. Two forms of fine particulate are now recognized. Course particles, or PM-10, include that portion of the particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns (i.e., ten one-millionths of a meter or 0.0004 inch) or less. Fine particles, or PM-2.5, have an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns (i.e., 2.5 one-millionths of a meter or 0.0001 inch) or less. Particulate discharge into the atmosphere results primarily from industrial, agricultural, construction, and transportation activities. However, wind action on the arid landscape also contributes substantially to the local

particulate loading. Both PM-10 and PM-2.5 may adversely affect the human respiratory system, especially in those people who are naturally sensitive or susceptible to breathing problems.

Fugitive Dust poses primarily two public health and safety concerns. The first concern is that of respiratory problems attributable to the suspended particulates in the air. The second concern is that of motor vehicle accidents caused by reduced visibility during severe wind conditions. Fugitive dust may also cause significant property damage during strong windstorms by acting as an abrasive material agent (much like sandblasting activities). Finally, fugitive dust can result in a nuisance factor due to the soiling of proximate structures and vehicles.

Ozone (O3) is one of a number of substances called photochemical oxidants that are formed when reactive organic compounds (ROC) and NOx (both byproducts of the internal combustion engine) react with sunlight. O3 is present in relatively high concentrations in the SCAB, and the damaging effects of photochemical smog are generally related to the concentrations of O3. O3 may pose a health threat to those who already suffer from respiratory diseases as well as healthy people. Additionally, O3 has been tied to crop damage, typically in the form of stunted growth and pre-mature death. O3 can also act as a corrosive resulting in property damage such as the embitterment of rubber products

Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) are a significant environmental health issue in California. The California Health and Safety Code defines a TAC as "an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health." California regulates TACs primarily through AB 1807 (Tanner Air Toxics Act) and AB 2588 (Air Toxics "Hot Spot" Information and Assessment Act of 1987. Air toxics from stationary sources are also regulated in California under the Air Toxics "Hot Spot" Information and Assessment Act of 1987. Under this regulation, toxic air contaminant emissions from individual facilities are quantified and prioritized by the air quality management district or air pollution control district. High priority facilities are required to perform a health risk assessment and, if specific thresholds are exceeded, required to communicate the results to the public in the form of notices and public meetings.

The majority of the estimated health risks from TACs can be attributed to a relatively few compounds, the most important being particulate matter from diesel-fueled engines. Almost all of the diesel exhaust particle mass is in the fine particle range of 10 microns or less in diameter. Because of their size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped into the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lung.

Regulatory Setting

Air quality conditions in the SCAB are under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD regulates stationary sources of pollution throughout its jurisdiction area. Direct emissions from motor vehicles are regulated throughout the state by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). All emissions are governed by the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Pollutants emitted into the air from stationary and mobile sources affect the quality of the ambient air. Stationary sources can be divided into two major subcategories: point

sources and area sources. Point sources consist of one or more emission sources at a facility with an identified location and are usually associated with manufacturing and industrial processing plants. Area sources are widely distributed and produce many small emissions, such as residential water heaters.

Mobile sources refer to emissions from motor vehicles, including tailpipe and evaporative emissions, and are classified as either on-road or off-road. On-road sources are a combination of emissions from automobiles, trucks, and indirect sources. Indirect sources are sources that by themselves may not emit air contaminants but indirectly cause the generation of air pollutants by attracting vehicle trips or consuming energy. Examples of indirect sources include an office complex or commercial center that generates commuter trips and consumes energy resources through the use of natural gas for space and water heating. Indirect sources also include actions proposed by local governments, such as private projects involving the development of large buildings or tracts. In addition, indirect sources include those emissions created by the distance vehicles travel. Off-road sources include aircraft, ships, trains, and self-propelled construction equipment.

The Clean Air Act Amendment of 1971 established national Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) with states retaining the option to adopt more stringent standards or to include other pollution species. These standards are the levels of air quality considered safe, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health and welfare. They are designed to protect those "sensitive receptors" most susceptible to further respiratory distress, such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people already weakened by other disease or illness, and persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise. Healthy adults can tolerate occasional exposure to air pollutant concentrations considerably above these minimum standards before adverse effects are observed.

Both the state of California and the federal government have established health-based Ambient Air Quality Standards for six air pollutants. As shown in Table 6, below, these pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, suspended particulate matter (PM-10), and lead (PM-2.5 particulate matter has also recently been added to this listing).

In addition to primary and secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards, the State of California has established a set of episode criteria for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter. These criteria refer to episode levels representing periods of short-term exposure to air pollutants that threaten public health.

TABLE 6
CURRENT FEDERAL AND STATE AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Ozone (O ₃)	1-hr	0.12 ppm	0.09 ppm	Motor Vehicles, paints, coatings, and solvents.
	8-hr	0.08 ppm	0.07 ppm	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1-hr	35.0 ppm	20.0 ppm	Internal combustion engines, primarily gasoline powered motor vehicles
	8-hr	9.0 ppm	9.0 ppm	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	Annual Avg	0.05 ppm	0.03 ppm	Motor vehicles, petroleum-refining operations, industrial sources, aircraft, ships, and railroads
	1-hr	--	18 ppm	

TABLE 6
CURRENT FEDERAL AND STATE AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	Annual Avg	0.03 ppm	--	Fuel combustion, chemical plants, sulfur recovery plants, and metal processing.
	1-hr	--	0.25 ppm	
	24-hr	0.14 ppm	0.04 ppm	
Lead (Pb)	Monthly	--	1.5 µg/m ³	Present source: Lead smelters, battery manufacturing and recycling facilities.
	Quarterly	1.5 µg/m ³	--	Past source: Combustion of leaded gasoline
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀) Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	Annual Avg	50 µg/m ³ (annual avg)	20 µg/m ³	Dust and fume-producing construction, industrial and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (i.e., wind raised dust and ocean sprays).
	24-hr	150 µg/m ³	50 µg/m ³	
	Annual Avg	15 µg/m ³	12 µg/m ³	Dust and fume-producing construction, industrial and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (i.e., wind raised dust and ocean sprays).
	24-hr	35 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)	--	

Air Quality Management Planning

The SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are the agencies responsible for preparing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the SCAB. Since 1979, a number of AQMPs have been prepared. Each iteration of the AQMP is designed to comply with state and federal requirements, reduce the high level of pollutant emissions in the SCAB, and ensure clean air for the region through various control measures.

The most recent comprehensive plan is the 2007 Air Quality Management Plan adopted on June 1, 2007. The 2007 AQMP incorporates the new federal PM-2.5 and 8-hour ozone standards. The plan focuses on control of sulfur oxides, directed emitted PM-2.5 and nitrogen oxides to achieve the PM-2.5 standard. The 1997 AQMP is the current federally approved applicable air plan for ozone. The EPA has not approved the ozone attainment plan for the 2003 AQMP to date. For federal purposes, the 1997 AQMP with the 1999 amendments is the current applicable ozone attainment plan.

The current AQMP is under review by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Although not yet approved, the SCAQMD recommends the use of the 2007 AQMP for CEQA purposes. Projects that do not involve growth-inducing impacts or cause local or regional population/growth projections to be exceeded are generally considered consistent with the AQMP.

Areas that meet the ambient air quality standards are classified as "attainment" areas while areas that do not meet these standards are classified as "non-attainment" areas. The severity of the classifications for non-attainment includes a range in magnitude from: marginal, moderate, serious, severe, and extreme. The SCAB region is in a designated "extreme non-attainment" area in regard to ozone, and "serious non-attainment" in regard to PM-10. Areas that are extreme non-attainment of the ozone standard must

meet attainment by November 15, 2010. Areas considered as serious non-attainment of the PM-10 standard must reach attainment as expeditiously as possible.

The attainment status for the SCAB is included in Table 7. The SCAB is also designated as attainment of the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for SO₂, lead, and sulfates. Areas that are designated as Severe 17 for the ozone standard must meet attainment of the 8-hour standard by 2021 (2024 if reclassified to Extreme). Areas considered as serious non-attainment of the PM-10 standards must have reached attainment by the end of 2006, or as expeditiously as possible. To date, the SCAB still does not meet this standard. The PM_{2.5} attainment date is to be met in the year 2015.

TABLE 7 ATTAINMENT STATUS FOR THE SCAB BASIN		
Ozone (1-hour)	Extreme Nonattainment	Extreme Non-attainment (under the prior standard)
Ozone (8-hour)		Severe-17 (may petition for Extreme)
PM10	Serious Non-attainment	Serious Non-attainment
PM2.5	Non-attainment	Non-attainment
CO	Attainment	Attainment/Maintenance
NO2	Attainment	Attainment/Maintenance

Sensitive Receptors

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved. Sensitive population groups include children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill, especially those with cardio-respiratory diseases. Residential areas are also considered to be sensitive to air pollution because residents (including children and the elderly) tend to be at home for extended periods of time, resulting in sustained exposure to any pollutants present. Schools are also considered as sensitive as children are present for extended durations and engage in regular outdoor activities. Recreational land uses are considered moderately sensitive to air pollution.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

"Greenhouse gases" (so called because of their role in trapping heat near the surface of the earth) emitted by human activity are implicated in global climate change, commonly referred to as "global warming." These greenhouse gases contribute to an increase in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere by transparency to short wavelength visible sunlight, but near opacity to outgoing terrestrial long wavelength heat radiation. The principal greenhouse gases (GHGs) are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, and water vapor. Fossil fuel consumption in the transportation sector (on-road motor vehicles, off-highway mobile sources, and aircraft) is the single largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for approximately half of GHG emissions globally. Industrial and commercial sources are the second largest contributors of GHG emissions with about one-fourth of total emissions.

California has passed several bills and the Governor has signed at least three executive orders regarding greenhouse gases. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research is in the process of developing CEQA significance thresholds for GHG emissions but thresholds have yet to be established. GHG statutes and executive orders (EO) include AB 32, SB 1368, EO S-03-05, EO S-20-06 and EO S-01-07.

AB 32 is one of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation that California has adopted. Among other things, it is designed to maintain California's reputation as a "national and international leader on energy conservation and environmental stewardship." It will have wide-ranging effects on California businesses and lifestyles as well as far reaching effects on other states and countries. A unique aspect of AB 32, beyond its broad and wide-ranging mandatory provisions and dramatic GHG reductions are the short time frames within which it must be implemented.

Future development in the Amendment Area would contribute to long-term increases in greenhouse gases (GHGs) as a result of traffic increases (mobile sources) and minor secondary fuel combustion emissions from space heating, hot water, etc. Future development would also result in secondary operational increases in GHG emissions as a result of electricity generation to meet project-related increases in energy demand. Electricity generation in California is mainly from natural gas-fired power plants. However, since California imports about 20 to 25 percent of its total electricity (mainly from the northwestern and southwestern states), GHG emissions associated with electricity generation could also occur outside of California. Short-term GHG emissions will also derive from construction activities.

4.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to air quality are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?
- Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors
- Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?
- Would the Project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

4.3.3 Potential Impacts

Quantifying air quality impacts resulting from the adoption and implementation of a redevelopment plan or plan amendment must be conducted at a general level of detail because specific development proposals and the timing of future proposals have yet to be identified and defined. Further, the build-out of the area will occur over an extended period of time that may extend up to thirty years. Consequently, the actual relationship between air quality and emissions is difficult to determine.

A discussion of impacts beyond the level contained in this Report would be highly speculative. It is therefore necessary for subsequent EIRs, supplemental EIRs, or other environmental documents prepared in accordance with CEQA, to analyze further air quality impacts once site specific data is known.

Short-Term Impacts

The construction phases of future development projects in the Amendment Area will produce on-site air pollutant emissions from heavy equipment exhaust and from the generation of dust as a result of grading activities. Construction equipment emissions are difficult to quantify because of the long-term nature of Project implementation, the current lack of specificity regarding future development projects, and day-to-day variability in construction activities and equipment used. However, as a point of reference, typical construction fuel consumption rates are about five gallons per hour, and typical construction emission rates range from about two to six pounds per hour, per piece of equipment. The use of heavy equipment may also produce impacts from diesel fuel odors.

As with consumption construction equipment exhaust emissions, it is difficult to estimate the short-term impact from dust generated by earthwork activities due to the potential long-term phasing of development in the proposed Amendment Area. However, as a point of reference, a dust generation factor of 1.2 tons per acre, per day of activity is typical for large construction projects. The dust from construction may cause a temporary nuisance to persons residing near areas of earth movement if proper mitigation (e.g., soil dampening) is not applied. These onsite impacts may occur sporadically as a result of construction in the proposed Amendment Area.

Long-Term Impacts

The long-term impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed Amendment consist of emissions generated by mobile (motor vehicle) and stationary sources after individual development projects have been completed. Stationary sources include the use of natural gas on-site for cooking, space and water heating, and the generation of electricity off-site.

Motor vehicle emissions generated by traffic associated with development in accordance with the General Plan land use element will vary depending on the timing of future development. Emission rates for traffic generated by development that occurs in later years may be lowered by emerging technologies for pollution reduction.

Conflicts with Air Quality Plan

The Project consists of a Redevelopment Plan amendment, the goal of which is to eliminate blight within the Amendment Area boundaries. Within the Amendment Area, implementation would provide for needed infrastructure improvements that would generally improve the quality of life and improve transportation facilities within the area. Improvements to transportation facilities typically result in enhanced traffic flow thereby reducing emissions associated vehicle overcrowding that results reduced speeds and increased emissions.

The Project would facilitate and perhaps accelerate industrial, commercial and residential development consistent with the General Plan. The planned mix of residential and non-residential uses could result in air quality benefits by reducing both the number

of trips as well as the average trip length as people find it unnecessary to drive to outlying areas for goods and services.

The Project would not involve growth-inducing impacts or cause an exceedance of established population or growth projections. The Project is not expected to violate a federal, state or regional air quality plan.

Violation of Air Quality Standards

Construction: Construction operations would contribute to emissions of CO, NOx, ROG, SOx, PM10, and PM2.5. The amount of emissions generated is related to the level and type of construction activity. Construction-related emissions are short-term in nature and can generally be mitigated to a level of insignificance. Comments from SCAQMD in response to the NOP requested that potential air quality impacts associated with all phases of development be identified⁷. SCAQMD's comments also suggested that the Agency follow Chapter 11 of the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook and Rule 43 Fugitive Dust and the Implementation Handbook, both which outline sample mitigation measures to reduce potential air quality impacts.

Construction emissions typically consist of NOx, ROG, PM10, and PM2.5, which are contained in the exhaust fumes emitted from mobile construction equipment, including utility engines and vehicles involved directly in construction, and those that are used to transport equipment and materials to and from the site. The amount of exhaust emissions generated would depend on the time frame of the proposed development and the construction equipment that is required.

As future development occurs in the Amendment Area, each proposal will be subject to the established SCAQMD handbooks and regulations that establish specific guidance for air quality monitoring, mitigation and compliance. To ensure consistency between SCAQMD policies and redevelopment activities within the Amendment Area, the requirement for subsequent air quality assessment per SCAQMD criteria is added as Mitigation Measure AQ-1 to this EIR.

Redevelopment activities are expected to stimulate the elimination of blight and the pace of new energy-efficient development. Consequently, with inclusion of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, anticipated impacts relative to construction air quality impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Long-Term Operational Air Quality Impacts: Long-term air quality impacts are those associated with the emissions produced from project-generated vehicle trips as well as from stationary sources related to the use of natural gas for heating, the use of hearths, landscape maintenance equipment, the use of consumer aerosol products, and ongoing structural maintenance (i.e., re-painting).

As future development occurs in the Amendment Area, each proposal will be subject to the established SCAQMD Rules and Regulations Manual, which establishes specific guidance for air quality monitoring, mitigation and compliance. This requirement for subsequent air quality assessment per SCAQMD criteria is added as Mitigation Measure

⁷ Correspondence from South Coast Air Quality Management District, Steve Smith, Program Supervisor, dated March 7, 2008; contained in Appendix B.

AQ-1 to this EIR. With inclusion of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, anticipated impacts to long term operational air quality impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Substantial

Pollutant Concentration Standards Changes in land use promulgated through the General Plan project an increase, although slight, in industrial use relative to residential uses. To ensure that future development projects in the Amendment Area consider potential impacts to sensitive receptors, the requirement for subsequent air quality assessment per SCAQMD criteria is added as Mitigation Measure AQ-1 to this EIR. With inclusion of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, anticipated impacts to sensitive receptors are expected to be less than significant.

Objectionable Odors

Future industrial uses that are expected to develop in the Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas could emit fumes that create objectionable odors. Other future sources of odors include construction activities and vehicular emissions. Future development will be required to comply with Mitigation Measure AQ-1 as well as the California Building Code and SCAQMD regulations specific to odor control. Therefore, impacts related to creation of objectionable odors affecting substantial numbers of people are expected to be less than significant.

Global Warming/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy

At this time, GHG emissions (primarily CO₂) are not regulated as a criteria pollutant and there are no significance criteria for these emissions. Further, direct impacts on climate change from urban development are difficult to determine because urban development does not constitute a separate source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are distinct from vehicle or energy associated emissions. In addition, it is difficult to measure or predict the magnitude of GHG emissions that might be associated with a particular project due to the indirect relationship between urban development and GHG production. The mechanisms of land atmosphere interactions are not well-understood or represented in climate models. As a result, project specific contributions to global warming cannot be discerned with a high degree of certainty.

The primary source of GHG emissions generated from anticipated development in the proposed Amendment Area will be from motor vehicles. Other emissions will be generated from the combustion of natural gas for space and water heating. Emissions will also be generated off-site by the use of natural gas and oil for the generation of electricity consumed by anticipated development.

Therefore, it is appropriate to evaluate potential project impacts based on project consistency with regulatory standards, requirements, strategies, and policies designed to reduce GHG emissions. Compliance with SCAQMD Rules and Regulations as specified in Mitigation Measure AQ-2, is expected to reduce impacts relative to GHG to less than significant levels. In addition, to ensure that future development and redevelopment activities in the Amendment Area are conducted according to current available "green" technologies, Mitigation Measure AQ-3 is added to the Project. This measure requires compliance with future County adopted "green design" or "sustainable development" ordinances.

Energy Consumption

The CEQA Statutes provide that EIRs shall include a detailed statement on significant effects of a project and mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects on the environment, including, but not limited to, measures to reduce the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy (Public Resources Code §21000(b)(3)).

Redevelopment is in many respects the land use equivalent of recycling. It provides a blighted urban area with funds to improve infrastructure and bring deteriorating structures up to current codes. By promoting redevelopment of the Amendment Area, the Project is expected to encourage new replacement development that will comply with current energy regulation and energy savings technology. The Project will be consistent with the General Plan, including goals and policies that support energy saving activities.

Because the Amendment Area is already urbanized, future redevelopment of the Amendment Area is not expected to generate more energy consumption than currently exists in the area. Electricity and natural gas consumption may in fact be less as than currently occur as new development complies with current code, and energy efficient design and technologies. Because the ultimate amount of development in the Amendment Area would be no greater than that proposed by the RICP General Plan, amounts of transportation fuel consumption would no greater than already planned by County and regional plans. Consequently, the Project use of would not result in a significant impact to energy resources.

4.3.4 Cumulative Impacts

In accordance with SCAQMD methodology, any project that does not exceed or can be mitigated to less than the daily threshold values does not add significantly to a cumulative impact. Measures AQ-1, AQ-2 and AQ-3, which will be applicable to each future development proposal in the Amendment Area, are expected to reduce potential air quality impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the Amendment to less than significant levels. Because each future development proposals in the proposed Amendment Area will be subject to Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, the Project contribution to cumulative air quality impacts is considered less than significant. Also, the Project will be subject to SCAQMD policies and requirements to ensure that any cumulative effects will not reach a level of significance.

4.3.5 Mitigation Measures

AQ-1: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with the established SCAQMD regulations, which may include air quality impact studies and subsequent CEQA analysis.

AQ-2: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall include appropriate and feasible mitigation measures to address global warming as specified by County ordinance or, if no ordinance exists, as specified by relevant regulating authority, which could include mitigation measures provided by the Office of the California Attorney General.

AQ-3: Future development proposals in the Amendment Area shall be subject to compliance with a County adopted "green design" or "sustainable development"

ordinance should such ordinance be adopted prior to project development. If such ordinance is not adopted prior to project development, each development shall be encouraged to incorporate any or all of current available energy-conservation features and "green" technologies into the project design.

4.3.6 Conclusions

Project air quality impacts related to compliance with applicable air quality plans, construction activities, operational activities, global warming, exposure of sensitive receptors and odors are expected to be less than significant with inclusion of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AQ-2.

4.3.7 Significance After Mitigation impacts

Less than significant.

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4.4.1 Existing Conditions

Regulations Pertaining to Biological Resources

A brief description of the biological resources regulations potentially pertaining to development in the Amendment Area is provided below:

Section 404 of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The objective of the Clean Water Act of 1977 is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Section 404 of the Act regulates activities that result in discharge of dredged, fill, or excavated material into "waters of the United States". These waters may include all waters used, or potentially used, for interstate commerce, including all waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, all interstate waters, all other waters (intrastate lakes, rivers, streams, mudflats, sandflats, playa lakes, natural ponds, etc.), all impoundments of waters otherwise defined as "Waters of the U.S.," tributaries of waters otherwise defined as "Waters of the U. S.," the territorial seas, and wetlands adjacent to "Waters of the U.S." (33 CFR, Part 328, Section 328.3).

Sections 401 and 402 of the U.S. Clean Water Act. These sections of the Clean Water Act address problems of water pollution through the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Section 401 prohibits the discharge of any pollutant without a permit, and Section 402 establishes the permit program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 – 1603. California Fish and Game Code requires that activities that result in the diversion or obstruction of the natural flow of a stream, or "substantially change" the "bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake designated by the department in which there is at any time an existing fish or wildlife resource, or from which these resources derive benefit," require a Streambed Alteration Agreement with between the project applicant and the CDFG, under sections 1600-1603 (CDFG 1994). The CDFG potentially extends the definition of stream to include "intermittent and ephemeral streams, rivers, creeks, dry washes, sloughs, blue-line streams mapped on USGS quads, and watercourses with subsurface flows. In addition to complying with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, any modification of streambed habitat may require a Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG.

Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and State Fully Protected Species. Species listed as endangered and threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) are protected under Section 9 of FESA, which forbids any person to "take" an endangered or threatened species. "Take" is defined in Section 3 of the Act as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the term "harm" includes destruction or modification of habitat. Sections 7 and 10 of the Act may authorize "incidental take" for otherwise lawful activity (a development project, for example) if it is determined that the activity would not jeopardize the species' survival or recovery.

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), enacted in 1970, provides protection to endangered and threatened species in California. The definition of "take" under CESA does not include "harm" or "harass" as does FESA; thus, no provisions to protect habitat are included.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), first enacted in 1916, prohibits any person to: "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, barter, offer to purchase, purchase" any migratory bird. The list of migratory birds includes nearly all bird species native to the United States; non-native species are not included. The statute was extended in 1974 to include parts of birds and eggs and nests. It is illegal under MBTA to directly kill, or destroy a nest of, nearly any bird species. Activities that result in removal or destruction of an active nest (a nest with eggs or young being attended by one or more adults) would violate the MBTA. Removal of unoccupied nests, such as abandoned swallow nests, or bird mortality resulting indirectly from a project, would not represent violations of the MBTA.

Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The MSHCP is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in Western Riverside County. The MSHCP is one of several large, multi-jurisdictional habitat-planning efforts in Southern California with the overall goal of maintaining biological and ecological diversity within a rapidly urbanizing region. The MSHCP is intended to allow Riverside County and its cities to better control local land-use decisions and maintain a strong economic climate in the region while addressing the requirements of the state and federal Endangered Species Acts.

Natural Resources

The Pass Planning Area: Within the Pass Planning Area that surrounds the Cherry Valley sub-area, there are a number of natural water resources including: the San Gorgonio River, which flows to the east of Banning Bench; San Timoteo Creek, which flows west through the Badlands; and Smith Creek, which feeds the San Gorgonio River. A series of smaller local streams have also carved up the land, such as Little San Gorgonio and Noble Creeks. The Pass represents a significant drainage divide between the Santa Ana River, the San Jacinto River, and the Salton Sea watersheds (the latter being part of the Colorado River Basin). Water flowing southwest flows into the San Jacinto River. Water moving northwest through San Timoteo Creek is part of the Santa Ana River watershed. To the east of the San Gorgonio Pass summit in Beaumont, water

drains into the Whitewater River, through the Coachella Valley, and eventually to the Salton Sea.

The Pass contains significant oak woodland areas that provide habitat and maintain its environmental quality.

West Coachella Valley Planning Area: Within the West Coachella Valley Planning Area that surrounds the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas, the Whitewater River is the primary natural water resource, spanning the length of the Coachella Valley. The upper part of the river, in the San Gorgonio Wilderness, is dry throughout most of its length with the exception of its most westerly end, which quickly percolates into the groundwater basin or is diverted for use. The river is fed by several tributaries, including the San Gorgonio River, Mission Creek, Little and Big Morongo Creeks, and Box Canyon Wash.

The Western Coachella Valley accommodates several ecological habitats that are home to numerous flora and fauna, habitat areas for the Peninsular bighorn sheep and the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard.

Sensitive Species

The following sensitive, threatened, and endangered species may be found within the Path Area Plan:

- Payson's jewelflower
- Munz's onion
- Munz's mariposa lily
- Jaeger's milk vetch
- California bedstraw
- Parry's spine flower
- Slender-horned spineflower
- Mojave tarplant
- Engelmann oak
- Bell's sage sparrow
- Mountain quail
- Least Bell's vireo
- Los Angeles pocket mouse
- Stephen's kangaroo rat
- Granite spiny lizard.

Although portions of the Western Coachella Valley contain the Fringe-toed Lizard, this species is not expected to occur in either the Garnet or West Garnet sub-areas.

General Plan Biological Resource Policies

Consistent with the MSCHP, policies applicable to the Pass Area, inclusive of the Cherry Valley sub-area, are as follows:

PAP 16.4 Conserve rock and granite outcroppings for reptile populations known within this area.

PAP 16.5 Conserve coastal sage scrub patches which support known populations of granite night lizard and granite spiny lizard.

PAP 16.6 Ensure interconnected habitat conservation in order to provide a linkage from the San Jacinto Mountains to the Coachella Valley.

PAP 16.8 Maintain wetlands and wetland connections via Noble Creek to conserve wetland species and wildlife dispersal.

PAP 16.9 Maintain a contiguous connection between proposed reserves in San Bernardino County and the Badlands area.

Consistent with the MSCHP, policies applicable to the West Coachella Valley Area, inclusive of the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas, are as follows:

WCVAP 19.1 Protect visual and biological resources in the Western Coachella Valley through adherence to General Plan policies found in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat section of the Multipurpose Open Space Element.

WCVAP 21.1 Protect biological resources in the Western Coachella Valley through adherence to General Plan policies found in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat section of the Multipurpose Open Space Element, as well as policies contained in the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, upon the latter's adoption.

4.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to biological resources are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
- Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
- Would the Project 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?
- Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

- Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
- Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

4.4.3 Potential Impacts

Much of the Amendment Area is already developed with urban land uses. However, in each of the sub-areas there are undeveloped parcels that could contain sensitive habitats or species. The timing and design of future development on these parcels is not known at this time. However, all future development in the Amendment Area must be consistent with General Plan policies, including those of the MSCHP, PAP, and WVCAP.

Implementation of the Plan Amendment could facilitate development in accordance with the General Plan, including development of currently vacant parcels. To ensure that potential biological resources in the Amendment Area are properly identified and protected, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 is recommended for inclusion to the Project. BIO-1 requires a biological resource survey by a qualified consultant prior to any grubbing, grading or construction on a vacant parcel over one-acre in size and adjacent to another vacant parcel, natural drainage, or natural open space area

4.4.4 Cumulative Impacts

With the inclusion of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, the Project is not expected to substantially interfere 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. Consequently, the Project is not expected to contribute to significant adverse cumulative impacts relative biological resources.

4.4.5 Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Prior to issuance of any grubbing, grading or building permit on a vacant parcel over one-acre in size and adjacent to another vacant parcel, the applicant shall submit for review and approval by the County Planning Director, a biological resource survey prepared by a qualified biologist acceptable to the County. Should the parcel be found to contain potentially significant biological resources, mitigation measures recommended by the resources consultant shall be considered for inclusion in the project.

4.4.6 Conclusions

There is some potential for future development in the Amendment Area to impact biological resources. BIO-1 is recommended for inclusion to reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

4.4.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section addresses potential impacts regarding cultural resources in the Amendment Area, specifically related to archaeological resources, paleontological resources, and human remains. Existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures for resources are discussed.

4.5.1 Existing Conditions

Cultural Resources Setting

The cultural history of Riverside County is divided into three general chronological units - prehistory, ethnohistory, and history. The first two divisions are restricted to Native American traditions, beginning with the settlement of the Southern California region 10,000 to 12,000 years ago and extending through time to initial Euro-American settlement in the late 18th century when the mission system was established, disrupting native life ways. Members of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians remain active in the Western Coachella Valley Area, and members of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians Reservation remain active in the Pass Planning Area.

Western Riverside County has fault block mountains that contain the older fossiliferous sediments. Fossils in Riverside date from the late Jurassic Period (150 million years ago). Marine sandstones of the Imperial Formation in the Salton Trough are found as far northwest as Cabazon. Three million years ago, near the present I-15/SR-91 interchange, there was the white sand beach at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The Ice Ages left fossils of giant sloths, elephants, camels, and bison that were preyed upon by giant bear, American lion, and sabercats.

General Plan Cultural Resource Policies and Mitigation Measures

The General Plan Open Space Element outlines the following policies related to development in areas that contain high potential for archaeological and paleontological resources:

- Review all proposed development for the possibility of archaeological sensitivity.
- Employ procedures to protect the confidentiality of and prevent inappropriate public exposure of sensitive archaeological resources when soliciting the assistance of public and volunteer organizations.
- Require a Native American Statement as part of the environmental review process on the development projects with identified cultural resources.
- Require that whenever existing information indicates that a site proposed for development may contain biological, cultural, paleontological, or other scientific resources, a report shall be filed stating the extent and potential significance of the resource that may exist within the proposed development and appropriate measures through which the impacts of development may be mitigated.
- Transmit significant development applications subject to CEQA for review, comment, and/or preparation of recommended conditions of approval to the following agency with regard to cultural resources: Eastern Information Center, University of California Riverside.

- This policy requires that when existing information indicates that a site proposed for development may contain paleontological resources, a paleontologist shall monitor site grading activities with the authority to halt grading to collect uncovered paleontological resources, curate any resources collected with an appropriate reposition, and file a report with the Planning Department documenting any paleontological resources that are found during site grading.

To augment these policies, the General Plan EIR recommended the following mitigation measures which were subsequently adopted by the County Board of Supervisors as part of the General Plan:

- If human remains are encountered during a public or private construction activity, State Health and Safety Code 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the Riverside County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The Riverside County Coroner must be notified within 24 hours. If the coroner determines that the burial is not historic, but prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted to determine the most likely descendent (MLD) for this area. The MLD may become involved with the disposition of the burial following scientific analysis.
- Avoidance is the preferred treatment for cultural resources. Where feasible, project plans shall be developed to allow avoidance of cultural resources. Where avoidance of construction impacts is possible, capping of the cultural resource site and avoidance planting (e.g., planting of prickly pear cactus) shall be employed to ensure that indirect impacts from increased public availability to the site are avoided. Where avoidance is selected, cultural resource sites shall be placed within permanent conservation easements or dedicated open space.
- If avoidance and/or preservation in place of cultural resources is not possible, the following mitigation measures shall be initiated for each impacted site:
 - a) A participant-observer from the appropriate Indian Band or Tribe shall be used during archaeological testing or excavation in the project site.
 - b) Prior to the issuance of a grading permit for the project, the project proponent shall develop a test level research design detailing how the cultural resource investigation shall be executed and providing specific research questions that shall be addressed through the excavation program. In particular, the testing program shall characterize the site constituents, horizontal and vertical extent, and, if possible, period of use. The testing program shall also address the California Register and National Register eligibility of the cultural resource and make recommendations as to the suitability of the resource for listing on either Register. The research design shall be submitted to the County of Riverside Regional Park and Open-Space District for review and comment. For sites determined, through the Testing Program, to be ineligible for listing on either the California or National Register, execution of the Testing Program will suffice as mitigation of project impacts to this resource.

- c) After approval of the research design and prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the project proponent shall complete the excavation program as specified in the research design. The results of this excavation program shall be presented in a technical report that follows the County of Riverside outline for Archaeological Testing. The Test Level Report shall be submitted to the County of Riverside Regional Park and Open-Space District for review and comment. If cultural resources that would be affected by the project are found ineligible for listing on the California or National Register, test level investigations will have depleted the scientific value of the sites and the project can proceed.
- d) If the resource is identified as being potentially eligible for either the California or National Register, and project designs cannot be altered to avoid impacting the site, a Treatment Program to mitigate project effects shall be initiated. A Treatment Plan detailing the objectives of the Treatment Program shall be developed. The Treatment Plan shall contain specific, testable hypotheses relative to the sites under study and shall attempt to address the potential of the sites to address these research questions. The Treatment Plan shall be submitted to the County of Riverside Regional Park and Open-Space District for review and comment.
- e) After approval of the Treatment Plan, the Treatment Program for affected, eligible sites shall be initiated. Typically a Treatment Program involves excavation of a statistically representative sample of the site to preserve those resource values that qualify the site as being eligible for the California or National Register. At the conclusion of the excavation or research program, a Treatment Report, following the outline of the County of Riverside for Archaeological Mitigation or Data Recovery, shall be developed. This data recovery report shall be submitted to the County of Riverside Regional Park and Open-Space District for review and comment.

4.5.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to cultural resources are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?
- Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- Would the Project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

4.5.3 Potential Impacts

Much of the Amendment Area is already developed with urban land uses. However, in each of the sub-areas there are undeveloped parcels that could contain sensitive cultural resources. There also is potential that cultural resources occur under existing buildings and pavement which could be uncovered during redevelopment activities. The timing and depth of excavation of future development in the Amendment Area is not known at

this time. However, all future development in the Amendment Area must be consistent with applicable General Plan policies and mitigation measures, including those listed above.

Implementation of the Plan Amendment could facilitate development in accordance with the General Plan, including development of currently vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. To ensure that potential cultural resources in the Amendment Area are properly identified and protected, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 is recommended for inclusion to the Project. CUL-1 requires monitoring of future development and redevelopment construction sites to ensure compliance with General Plan policies and mitigation measures.

4.5.4 Cumulative Impacts

With the inclusion of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, the Project is not expected to significantly impact a cultural resource. Consequently, the Project is not expected to have an incremental effect that is cumulatively considerable relative to cultural resources.

4.5.5 Mitigation Measure

CUL-1: If potential archaeological resources, paleontological resources or human remains are uncovered during any grading activities, the contractor shall halt work in the immediate area of the find, inform the Planning Department immediately and retain a qualified professional acceptable to the County to examine the material to determine whether it is a unique resource or human remain. If this determination is positive, the contractor shall be required to comply with all applicable General Plan policies and mitigation measures. No further work shall occur in the immediate location of the find until all information recovery has been completed and a report concerning same filed with and accepted as complete with the County.

4.5.6 Conclusions

There is some potential for future development in the Amendment Area to impact cultural resources. CUL-1 is recommended for inclusion to reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

4.5.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.6 HYDROLOGY

This section addresses potential impacts regarding hydrology in the Amendment Area, specifically related to flooding. Existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures are discussed.

4.6.1 Existing Conditions

In the proposed Cherry Valley sub-area, there are 135.54 acres that are within a 100-year floodplain as mapped out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Cherry Valley has also seen an increase in "nuisance flows" due to a new subdivision to the north of the proposed project area, especially since the proposed sub-area is at a lower elevation from the new sub-division, causing the run-off to flow directly into the proposed

Cherry Valley sub-area. Approximately 73.3 acres of existing flood control channels occur in the Cherry Valley sub-area. According to the Draft Preliminary Report, these channels are open and unable to adequately handle the amount of drainage flow and potential 100 year flood. A Master Drainage Plan has been prepared by the County for the northern part of the sub-area, but no funding has been made available yet. Figure 11, Flooding in the Cherry Valley Area, illustrates the location of the 100 year floodplain relative to the proposed sub-area Plan Amendment boundaries.

In the Garnet sub-area, 877.53 (33.5% of the sub-area) is in the 100-year flood plain as mapped out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Approximately 44.9 acres of the Garnet sub-area are occupied by flood control facilities. To improve these existing flood control facilities and address potential flooding throughout the entire floodplain, the County of Riverside Flood Control Division is developing a master drainage plan that will cover all of the land in Garnet west of Palm Drive. The Flood Control Division is also conducting a study to put a flood control facility at Camino Campanero and the city boundary of Desert Hot Springs. If built, this basin will benefit the entire proposed Garnet sub-area. Figure 12, Flooding in the Garnet Area, illustrates the location of the 100 year floodplain relative to the proposed sub-area Plan Amendment boundaries.

General Plan Floodplain Policies

The PAP and WCVAP contain the following policies related to flood control in the Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas:

PAP 17.1 Protect life and property from the hazards of flood events through adherence to the Flood and Inundation Hazards section of the General Plan Safety Element.

PAP 17.2 Adhere to the flood proofing, flood protection requirements, and flood management review requirements of Riverside County Ordinance No. 458, Regulating Flood Hazard Areas.

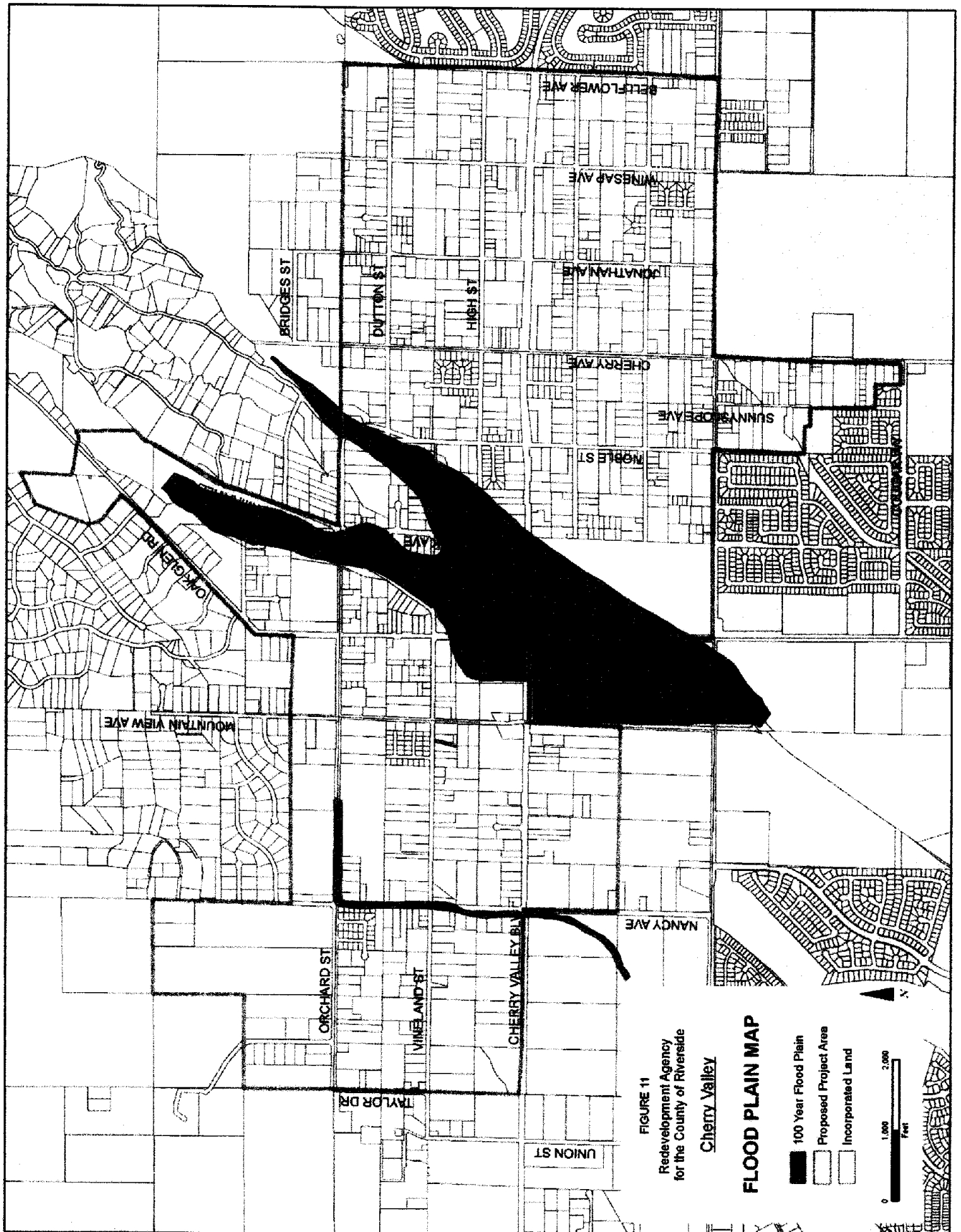
PAP 17.3 Require that proposed development projects that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential or sheet flow be submitted to the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review.

WCVAP 22.1 Adhere to the flood proofing, flood protection requirements, and Flood Management Review requirements of Riverside County Ordinance No. 458 Regulating Flood Hazard Areas.

WCVAP 22.2 Require that proposed development projects that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential, or sheet flow be submitted to the Coachella Valley Water District or the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review.

WCVAP 22.3 Create flood control projects that maximize multi-recreational use and water recharge when possible.

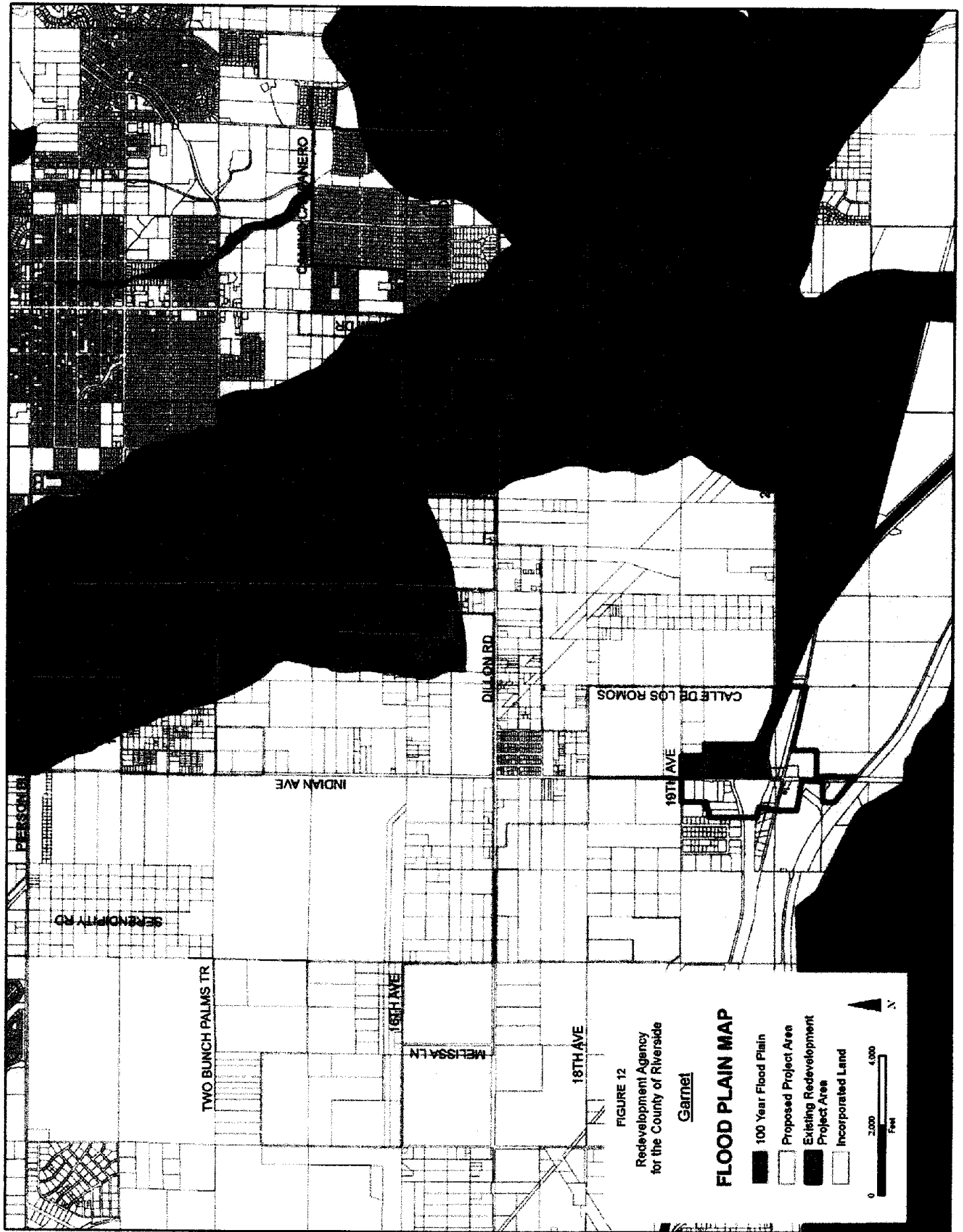
WCVAP 22.4 Protect life and property from the hazards of flood events through adherence to the Flood and Inundation Hazards section of the General Plan Safety Element.





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4.6.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to hydrology are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project 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?
- Would the Project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

4.6.3 Potential Impacts

Placement of Housing in a 100 year Flood Hazard Area

Build-out of General Plan land uses within the Amendment Area will result in increased amounts of residential land uses. As noted above, the Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas have large areas within the 100-year flood plain. Although the County has plans to address these flooding hazards, it does not currently have the funds to implement planned improvements. Consequently, potential adverse impacts associated with placing housing in a flood hazard area could occur.

One of the key objectives of the proposed Plan Amendment is to alleviate blight through the provision of infrastructure improvements to induce private investment in the Amendment Area. Such improvements could include development of drainage and flood control facilities. Implementation of the Plan Amendment will provide a new source of funding to be used for planned flood control improvements. In addition, PAP and WCVAP General Plan policies listed above provide guidance intended to reduce these potential flooding impacts.

To ensure future development in the Amendment Area complies with applicable General Plan policies regarding flood protection, Mitigation Measures HYD-1 and HYD-2 are recommended for inclusion to the Project. These measures require future development proposals in flood hazard areas to be submitted to County flood control districts for review and flood abatement.

Placement of Structures in a 100 year Flood Hazard Area

Because of the substantial areas of flood hazard within the Amendment Area, potential adverse impacts associated with placing structures in a flood hazard area and impeding flows could occur. As noted above, future funding through the Plan Amendment and existing General Plan policies will help to reduce these impacts. In addition, Mitigation Measures HYD-1 and HYD-2 will be added to the Project to ensure future development proposals comply with applicable General Plan provisions.

4.6.4 Cumulative Impacts

The Project is expected to provide funding for needed flood control improvements already planned by the County. With mitigation as proposed, the Project would not place

housing or structures in the 100 year flood plain, and would therefore not have an incremental effect that is cumulatively considerable relative to hydrology.

4.6.5 Mitigation Measure

HYD-1: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential or sheet flow shall be submitted to the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review. Such developments shall not proceed until the District and County are satisfied that adequate flood abatement measures are in place.

HYD-2: Future development proposals in areas that are subject to flood hazards, surface ponding, high erosion potential, or sheet flow shall be submitted to the Coachella Valley Water District or the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for review. Such developments shall not proceed until the Districts and County are satisfied that adequate flood abatement measures are in place.

4.6.6 Conclusions

The Project is expected to provide funding for needed flood control improvements already planned by the County. With mitigation as proposed, the Project would not place housing or structures in the 100 year flood plain, and would not result in, potential direct, indirect or cumulative impacts relative to flood control.

4.6.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.7 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section addresses potential impacts regarding population and housing in the Amendment Area/ Existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures are discussed.

4.7.1 Existing Conditions

According to the State Department of Finance January 2007 City/County Population and Housing estimates, unincorporated Riverside County has a population of 538,288 persons, 201,294 housing units, and an average household size of 3.085 persons per unit. According to the County General Plan Land Use Element, there are a total of 4,201,321 acres in the unincorporated areas of the County. Applying the January 2007 population of 538,288 persons, the unincorporated County areas are sparsely populated with less than 0.128 persons per acre.

Within the Amendment Area, as shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4, there are currently approximately 1,606 combined acres of residential land (combined total for multi-family, single-family and mobile home park). Compared to the entire unincorporated County area, the 4,511.88 acre Amendment Area is extremely small, comprising approximately 0.011% of the County unincorporated area.

General Plan Policies

The Housing Element of the General Plan provides extensive policies regarding provision and maintenance of housing.

4.7.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to population and housing are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following questions:

- Would the Project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
- Would the Project displace substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

4.7.3 Potential Impacts

As depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4, build-out of the Amendment Area as promulgated in the General Plan could result in 1716.9 additional acres of residential development. This increase in residential development will occur in accordance with the General Plan Land Use and Housing Element policies and SCAG regional plans.

Although redevelopment activities may spur market forces to redevelop blighted and nonconforming uses, these changes are expected to occur gradually during the 30 year term of the proposed Plan Amendment. However, these changes could include the transition of existing residential land uses to non-residential land uses.

The Draft Preliminary Report estimates that there are currently 42 dwelling units on Amendment Area land designated in the General Plan for non-residential uses. While the Agency has no plans to remove any residential structures from the proposed Amendment Area, and will not have eminent domain authority in order to do so, it is possible that these units would be replaced over the life of the Redevelopment Plan amendment, though not necessarily because of Agency actions.

Information regarding which of the 42 non-conforming dwelling units is occupied by low- or moderate-income persons or families is not currently available. Nevertheless, given the overall condition of housing units in the proposed Amendment Area, and the economic profile of the area, it is very likely that a high proportion of the units, if not all, would fall into the low- and moderate-income category.

As required by the CRL, the Agency would commit at least 20% of its tax increment funds to low- and moderate-income housing programs, including new construction and housing rehabilitation. In addition, because of the vast needs in the proposed Amendment Area, the Draft Preliminary Report indicates that this assistance will likely be provided within the boundaries of the proposed Amendment Area, although such assistance could occur outside of the proposed Amendment Area.

The CRL and the Relocation Guidelines of the State of California require that relocation assistance be provided to persons, businesses, and other entities displaced as a result of redevelopment activities. Relocation assistance must include relocation advisory assistance, as well as financial assistance to offset moving expenses and to otherwise assist displaced persons or businesses in locating suitable replacement facilities.

4.7.4 Cumulative Impacts

The Project would be consistent with applicable General Plan and regional land use policies. Each future development in the vicinity of the Project Area will undergo a similar project review process as the proposed Project to preclude potential population and housing impacts. The Project is not expected to result in significant adverse cumulative impacts relative to population and housing.

4.7.5 Mitigation Measure

None required.

4.7.6 Conclusions

The Project would facilitate implementation of General Plan land use policies, including the transition of certain non-conforming residential structures to non-residential uses. However, the Plan Amendment does not propose to have eminent domain authority over residential properties. Through the Plan Amendment, the Agency would have a new source of funds to facilitate housing improvement programs and to provide relocation assistance to any resident displaced as a result of redevelopment activities. Consequently, Project impacts relative to population and housing are expected to be less than significant.

4.7.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.8 PUBLIC SERVICES

This section addresses potential impacts regarding public services in the Project Area, specifically related to: fire protection, police protection, schools, and parks. Other public service facilities are not expected to be affected by the Project. Existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures for each of these services and utilizes are discussed.

4.8.1 Existing Conditions

Police Protection

Police services for the County are provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department has 2,720 employees, including 1,330 sworn personnel to provide for community policing services. Nine sheriff sub-stations are located throughout Riverside County to provide area-level community service. The Sheriff's Department is a "demand response" agency that maintains limited patrol services. The Sheriff's Department also operates five adult correction or detention centers located throughout the County, as well as juvenile detention facilities.

Riverside County Sheriff's Department has established the following criteria for its staffing requirements in unincorporated areas of the County.

- One sworn officer per 1,000 population
- One supervisor and one support staff employee per seven officers
- One patrol vehicle per three sworn officers
- One school resource officer per school.

Police Service General Plan Policies

The Land Use Element of the General Plan contains the following policies that directly address police services relative to development and redevelopment activities in the County:

- Ensure that development does not exceed the ability to adequately provide supporting infrastructure and sheriff services.
- Monitor the capacities of sheriff services, outside agencies, and jurisdictions to ensure that planned growth does not exceed acceptable levels of service.
- Riverside County shall require that new development proponents contribute their "fair share" to fund Sheriff services facilities.

Police Service Issues in the Amendment Area

According to the CRL, one of the conditions of economic blight is a high crime rate, which constitutes a serious threat to the public safety and welfare an economic condition that causes blight. Evidence presented by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and presented in the Draft Preliminary Report, the Amendment Area has a moderate rate of crime when compared to the balance of the County.

Crimes in the Amendment Area tend toward property crimes such as burglary and theft. Crimes for which individual persons are arrested are generally drug related. In the West Garnet sub-area, there are railroad crimes where good traveling via rail are stolen. In the windmills near the proposed Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas there are often thefts of copper wire.

There is some gang activity by the "Brownstown" gang in the northeastern section of the proposed Garnet sub-area. Gang activity includes assaults, shootings, homicides, and a greater amount of crime.

Fire Protection

The Riverside County Fire Department provides fire protection services to the unincorporated County, inclusive of the Amendment Area. The Department operates 85 fire stations. A total of 51 of these stations, as well as three stations operated by the California Department of Forestry, are located in the unincorporated portion of Riverside County.

To enhance fire protection responsiveness, the Department is part of a mutual aid program with all of the cities in the County. Upon the receipt of a call for mutual aid through the County's Emergency Command Center (ECC), the County's mutual aid coordinator will determine whether a city or the County will provide a response. The ECC is a combined County, State, and local agency dispatch center, located in the city of Perris. The facility is responsible for alerting and handling incidents over a 7,200-square mile area. Staffing is a mix of paid State and County dispatchers, with volunteer call taker support.

Most of the Department fire stations have a minimum of two career firefighters (typically, a Captain and a firefighter) on duty at all times. Volunteer firefighters typically augment the career firefighters.

Fire policies and regulations governing the unincorporated areas of Riverside County include Riverside County Ordinance No. 787, Riverside County Master Fire Protection

Plan, the California Public Resources Code No. 4290, the Uniform Fire Code, and the Uniform Building Code. This fire policy Ordinance is based on the Uniform Fire Code, and outlines fire protection standards for the safety, health, and welfare of the citizens of the County. Among the items regulated by the ordinance are access to a project, storage of hazardous materials, building design, water supply, and brush clearance.

The Riverside County Master Fire Protection Plan outlines the fire protection performance standards for both rural and urban areas, and establishes guidelines for facility and personnel minimum requirements.

The Riverside County standard for the establishment of a new fire station is the development of 2,000 dwelling units or 3.5 million square feet of commercial or industrial uses. To finance new fire station, Riverside County requires payment of mitigation fees, which are charged at \$400.00 per new single family dwelling unit and \$0.25 per square foot for all other types of development.

Fire Safety General Plan Policies

The Safety Element of the General Plan contains the following policies that directly address fire safety relative to development and redevelopment activities in the County:

- Riverside County should utilize ongoing brush clearance fire inspections to educate homeowners on fire prevention tips.
- Conduct and implement long-range fire safety planning, including stringent building, fire, subdivision, and municipal code standards, improved infrastructure, and improved mutual aid agreements with the private and public sector.
- Ensure coordination between the Fire Department and the Transportation Land Management Agency, Environmental Health Department and private and public water purveyors to improve firefighting infrastructure, during implementation of the County's capital improvement programs, by obtaining: Replacement and/or relocation of old cast-iron pipelines and inadequate water mains when street improvements are planned; Assessment of impact fees as a condition of development; and Redundant emergency distribution pipelines in areas of potential ground failure or where determined to be necessary.

Fire Protection Service Issues in the Amendment Area

Information by the Riverside County Fire Department and presented in the Draft Preliminary Report notes that the Cherry Valley and North Palm Springs fire stations, which serve both fire and paramedic needs and are in the Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas respectively, are old, obsolete, and in need of replacement. Both are built of unreinforced masonry, putting them in great risk of damage in the case of a substantial earthquake, likely given the close proximity of fault lines in the area. Both of the fire stations have exceeded their 50-year use plan.

Turn-outs for fire trucks are also a concern in the proposed Amendment Area, especially in the proposed Garnet sub-area. In many of the residential areas there are streets that dead-end without enough space for a fire truck to turnaround, a potential problem in an emergency. Ideally redevelopment money will also be made available to widen some of these dead-ends so that there is enough room for the fire-trucks to make an efficient turn-around in an emergency.

Schools

The General Plan EIR reports that most of the school districts serving Riverside County that provide K-12 educational services expect a significant increase in students with the implementation of the County General Plan. Most of these school districts do not have the ability to meet the needs of future growth. In general, school districts are lacking in revenue to expand existing school facilities due to local and State fiscal constraints. Adequate revenue cannot be collected from the State nor from local developer fees to construct new facilities and upgrade existing ones. Reductions in class size for lower grades have further constrained existing school facilities. Some schools districts have some schools that are within the identified capacity.

There are several Community College Districts in the County that provide advanced educational instruction. These include the Riverside Community College District, Mt. San Jacinto Community College District, and Palo Verde Community College. All the Community College Districts in Riverside County have planned growth of at least 10% per year. Mt. San Jacinto Community College District indicated its facilities were currently at capacity, and the facilities would not be adequate to meet future needs.

School Policies

The General Plan does not provide policies for the provision of schools.

School Issues in the Amendment Area

There is one, approximately 20-acre, school in the Garnet sub-area.

Parks

The County of Riverside currently maintains 35 regional parks, encompassing approximately 22,317 acres. More than half of these parks are located in the western portion of the County, with other facilities scattered in the desert, mountains, and Colorado River regions. Riverside County also contains 4 park and recreation districts. These 4 park districts provide approximately 27 neighborhood and community parks accounting for approximately 275 acres of parkland.

Recent County inventories of parkland indicate that the County has 169.77 acres of developed parks, 155.67 acres of undeveloped parkland, 85.58 acres of County special resources, and 62.51 acres of private special resources. In total, the County has 1 regional park (County), 3 community parks, 9 neighborhood parks, 4 parkettes, 10 special resource areas, and 19 school play fields.

Park Ordinances and General Plan Policies

The County has the following ordinances regarding the provision of parks within the County:

- Riverside County Ordinance 460.139 section 10.35 Riverside County has adopted provisions within Ordinance 460.137 (Subdivisions), implementing the Quimby Act by establishing a requirement for dedication of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, or payment of a fee in lieu of such dedication. The fee and/or land dedications or improvements, can only be used to provide neighborhood and community parks that serve the proposed development.

- Quimby Act (California Government Code 66477) This State Policy requires the dedication of land and/or imposes a requirement of fees for park and recreational purposes as a condition of approval of tentative map or parcel map.

The Open Space Element of the General Plan contains the following policies that directly address parks relative to development and redevelopment activities in the County:

- Require that development of recreation facilities occurs concurrent with other development in an area.
- Require new development to provide implementation strategies for the funding of both active and passive parks and recreational sites.
- Require that new development meet the parkland requirements as established in the Quimby Act and County enabling ordinances such as Riverside County Ordinance 460.137.

Park Issues in the Amendment Area

The General Plan Land Use Element designates approximately 45 acres of the Garnet sub-area as "Open Space-Recreation", which allows for active and passive recreational uses such as parks, trails, camp grounds, athletic fields, golf courses, and off-road vehicle parks.

4.8.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to public services are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the following question:

- Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection; Police protection; Schools; Parks?

4.8.3 Potential Impacts

Police Protection Services

The Plan Amendment is expected to alleviate blight in the Amendment Area. New and rehabilitated developments would incorporate better building design, lighting, security hardware, location, visibility and landscape treatments than currently exists without redevelopment. These improvements, in turn, would enhance public safety and potentially result in fewer calls for police protection services than would result without redevelopment.

On the other hand, the proposed Plan Amendment is expected to facilitate development and redevelopment of underutilized properties in the Amendment Area. There is some possibility that this transition of vacant and underutilized properties to new, perhaps more intensive, development could create an increased demand for police services not currently anticipated by current Police Department facility, equipment and staffing levels.

With property values and sales activity relatively stagnant in the Amendment Area, General Fund revenues available for public facilities are limited. The Project would provide a new source of funding for public facilities, inclusive of sheriff substation facilities.

However, to maintain current levels of service additional mitigation would be required. Consistent with Land Use Element policies, new development proponents should be required to contribute their "fair share" to fund Sheriff services facilities. Mitigation Measure PS-1 is added to the Project to ensure that adequate police services are implemented within the Amendment Area.

With the inclusion of this measure, the Project would result in less than significant impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police facilities, or the need for new or physically altered police facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for police services.

Fire Protection Services

Implementation of the Plan Amendment would stimulate new development and rehabilitation of older structures. New and rehabilitated construction projects would be required to comply with recent fire code provisions, including installation of smoke alarms, fire sprinklers and/or use of the latest approved fire retardant/resistant materials. As stated in the Draft Preliminary Report, the Agency intends to encourage existing property owners and businesses to correct code violations and assist in installing fire suppression systems. Construction activities that include these improvements would help to reduce both the current and further demand on fire protection services for the Amendment Area.

On the other hand, the proposed Plan Amendment is expected to facilitate development and redevelopment of underutilized properties in the Amendment Area. This transition of vacant and underutilized properties to new, perhaps more intensive, development could create an increased demand for fire protection services not currently anticipated by the Department.

The Fire Department notes in its response to the NOP, that Amendment Area projects will add to the cumulative adverse affect on the Fire Department's ability to maintain the current level of service. These impacts include fire and medical emergencies as well as public service calls, all due to the increased population and presence of structures.

In addition, as noted above, the Fire Department's Strategic Planning Section has identified the need to rebuild the current Cherry Valley Fire Station and North Palm Springs Fire Station which have exceeded their 50 year use plan.

With property values and sales activity relatively stagnant in the Amendment Area, General Fund revenues available for public facilities are limited. The Project would provide a new source of funding for public facilities, inclusive of Fire Protection facilities, such as the replacement or improvement of the Cherry Valley and North Palm Springs fire stations.

However, to maintain current levels of service additional mitigation would be required. Consistent with Safety Element policies, assessment of impact fees and compliance with

fire safety planning and development standards would be required. Mitigation Measure PS-2 is added to the Project to ensure that adequate fire safety provisions are implemented within the Amendment Area.

With the inclusion of this measure, the Project would result in less than significant impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection services.

Schools

The Plan Amendment is consistent with the General Plan and would not increase the amount or density of development already planned by the County. Similarly, implementation of the Project would not increase expected populations or the need for school services over that already anticipated in the General Plan.

Pursuant to Section 33607.5 of the CRL, the school districts serving the Amendment Area, would receive annual mandatory tax increment sharing payments from the Plan Amendment. The monies may be used to provide facilities and ongoing education programs, and are expected to benefit the provision of school services in the Amendment Area. In addition, the school districts currently collect development impact fees to the extent allowable under State law.

As noted above, the Project would provide a new source of funding for public facilities, inclusive of School facilities. With property values and sales activity relatively stagnant in the Amendment Area, revenues available for public facilities are limited.

The Project would not substantially increase the need for new or improved school facilities. No potential adverse impacts to schools are expected to result from the Project, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively.

Parks

The Plan Amendment is consistent with the General Plan and would not increase the amount or density of development already planned by the County. Similarly, implementation of the Project would not increase the need for park services over that already anticipated in the General Plan.

Pursuant to the Quimby Act, the County collects fees from new development to contribute to park improvements. These fees are collected consistent with state law and local ordinance. In addition, the Project would provide a new source of funding for public facilities, inclusive of parks, and could therefore assist with County identified improvements to park facilities. However, to ensure payment of required park fees and park planning are properly incorporated into future development proposals within the Amendment Area, Mitigation Measure PS-3 is added to the Project.

With the inclusion of this measure, the Project would result in less than significant impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered park facilities, or the need for new or physically altered park facilities, the construction of which could cause

significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for park services.

4.8.4 Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the Project would not increase demand for public services over that already anticipated in the General Plan. At the same time, the Project will provide a new source of funding for public improvements, including police, fire safety and park facilities. However, there is some possibility that incremental development in the Amendment Area could impact service ratios. With inclusion of Mitigation Measures PS-1, PS-2 and PS-3, cumulative impacts relative to public services are expected to be reduced to less than significant levels.

4.8.5 Mitigation Measure

PS-1: Future development shall pay their fair share toward sheriff services and facilities as determined by the Sheriff Department and County.

PS-2: Future development shall pay their fair share toward fire protection services and facilities as determined by the Fire Department and County.

PS-3: Future development shall pay applicable park fees and incorporate private and public park and recreational facilities consistent with County policies.

4.8.6 Conclusions

Increases in development and public service demands would be consistent with the General Plan. Further, the availability of redevelopment funds to assist in providing additional public services is expected to offset potential acceleration of development that could occur as a result of redevelopment plan implementation. In addition, payment of applicable school and park fees are expected to mitigate future demand for these services. Mitigation Measures PS-1, PS-2 and PS-3 are added to the Project to ensure County policies applicable to development and redevelopment activities in the Planning Area are properly implemented.

4.8.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.9 UTILITIES

This section addresses potential impacts regarding utilities in the Amendment Area, specifically related to: water, wastewater, water quality, storm drainage and solid waste. Existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures for each of these utilities are discussed.

4.9.1 Existing Conditions

Water

Primary water sources in Riverside County are from local surface and groundwater projects; supplemental water sources are from the Federal Central Valley Project (CVP), the State Water Project (SWP), and the Colorado River (managed by the federal government). The SWP is a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts,

power plants, and pumping plants that distributes water to suppliers throughout the state. Within the County, the following water agencies contract for SWP deliveries.

- Coachella Valley Water District.
- Desert Water Agency.
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.
- San Geronio Pass Water Agency.

Short-term water supply for the County is provided by local water agencies that purchase water from the above listed suppliers. Long-term storage of large quantities of water is provided by Metropolitan Water District (Metropolitan) and State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) facilities. DWR is charged with the management of water resources within the State. Metropolitan acts as a regional wholesale provider. Total storage capacity of Metropolitan's existing reservoir system is 871,000 acre feet (af). With a combined storage capacity of 342,300 af, Lake Mathews, Lake Skinner, and Lake Perris are three storage facilities that are located in Riverside County. The completion of Diamond Valley Lake south of Hemet added 800,000 af and brought the total capacity of these four reservoirs to 1,142,300 af. Other surface water storage areas within Riverside County include Vail Lake, Lake Hemet, Canyon Lake, and Lake Elsinore.

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) encompasses 995 square miles, extending from San Geronio Pass to the Salton Sea, inclusive of the Amendment Area. CVWD provides water to approximately 284,700 residents, 72,900 acres of irrigated farmland, and a variety of commercial, resort, and industrial users. Services provided by the CVWD include the delivery of domestic and irrigation water; water conservation; wastewater reclamation and recycling; stormwater protection; agricultural drainage; groundwater recharge; and water education. In addition to groundwater supplies, the CVWD obtains water from the SWP and Metropolitan. The CVWD's SWP entitlement totals 23,100 af/yr. The CVWD does not receive this allotment directly, rather it is delivered to Metropolitan, which in turn delivers to the CVWD an equal amount of Colorado River water.

Water General Plan Policies and Mitigation Measures

The Open Space Element of the General Plan contains the following water-related policy applicable to development and redevelopment projects within the Amendment Area:

- Encourage the use of native, drought-resistant landscaping planting.

The General Plan EIR further supports provision water supply and water conservation through the following mitigation measures:

- Proponents of new development within unincorporated areas of Riverside County that consist of a residential development of more than 500 dwelling units; a shopping center or business establishment employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space; a commercial office building employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 250,000 square feet of floor space; a hotel/motel development of more than 5,000 rooms; an industrial, manufacturing/processing plant, or industrial park employing more than 1,000 persons or occupying more than 650,000 square feet of floor space or

40 acres of land; a mixed-use development that includes any of the previously referenced projects; or a project with a water demand equivalent to that used by 500 residential units with projected water demand of more than 250 af per year shall be required to submit a water supply assessment report prior to approval of a project.

- For projects smaller than those stated above, with an estimated annual water use of 250 acre feet (af) or less, the County shall require evidence that the project is in compliance with the Urban Water Management Plan for the area in which the development is located, prior to the issuance of development permits. Evidence of such compliance shall take the form of written verification by the water provider that the project is in compliance with said plan.
- Development within unincorporated areas of the County shall not use water of any source of quality suitable for potable domestic use for nonpotable uses, including cemeteries, golf courses, parks, highway landscaped areas, industrial and irrigation uses, or other non-domestic use if suitable recycled water is available as provided in Sections 13550-13566 of the State Water Code and/or Sections 65591-65600 and 65601-65607 of the State Public Resource Code. Prior to the issuance of any land use permit, the County shall determine to what extent and in which manner the use of recycled water is required for individual water projects. Future development shall be designed, constructed, and maintained accordance with the recycled water measures mandated by the County.

Water Quality

The County General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2002051143) reports that water quality in Riverside County has been generally poor due to inadequate subsurface sewage disposal, waste disposal management of the Santa Ana River watershed, agricultural operations (e.g., agricultural runoff), the buildup of sediment resulting from construction-related erosion, and urban stormwater runoff.

The Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. § 1251, et seq., is the primary federal law in the United States governing water pollution. The CWA prohibits potentially harmful spills of oil and certain hazardous substances. Its intent is to end all discharges of pollutants and to restore, maintain, and preserve the integrity of the nation's waters. CWA aims to create waters that would be safe enough for activities such as fishing and swimming.

To achieve these stated goals, the CWA regulates both the direct and indirect discharge of pollutants into the nation's waters. It requires individuals and corporations to obtain permits before releasing any pollutants into "navigable waters". The system for granting and regulating discharge permits through the CWA is the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Regions 7 (Colorado River Basin), Region 8 (Santa Ana River Basin), and Region 9 (San Diego Basin) provide state-level water quality policy for Riverside County. The RWQCBs monitor NPDES implementation, mandating Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize the adverse effects of pollution and to protect water quality.

In June 2006, the County adopted a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) to further address post-construction urban runoff from new development and significant

redevelopment projects under the jurisdiction of the co-permittees⁸. The WQMP is implemented with watershed-specific variations to reflect the differences within the County.

The WQMP provides guidelines for project-specific post-construction (BMPs) and for regional and sub-regional Source Control BMPs and Structural BMPs to address management of Urban Runoff quantity and quality to protect Receiving Waters.

According to the CVWD 2007-2008 Annual Water Quality Report, all of CVWD's domestic water supply meets current requirements⁹.

Wastewater

There are multiple wastewater collection and/or treatment districts that serve different geographical areas within the County. The principal wastewater collection and treatment agency in the Amendment Area is CVWD.

CVWD operates six wastewater reclamation plants, with capacity to treat more than 31 million gallons of sewage a day, and currently handle on average slightly more than 18 million gallons daily¹⁰. Three of its reclamation plants create recycled water, two at a tertiary (three-stage) level. Several CVWD plants are undergoing expansion to handle increased demand as a result of tremendous area growth, residentially and commercially. Demand is compounded by the switch in some areas from septic tanks to sewer systems, better for groundwater quality.

More than 90 miles of pipeline are in use to collect raw sewage and transport it to the closest treatment facility. Tons of sludge created by the process are treated, then hauled away and used by private companies in making fertilizer.

Wastewater General Plan Policies

The Land Use Element of the General Plan contains the following wastewater policies applicable to development and redevelopment projects within the Amendment Area:

- Ensure that development does not exceed the ability to adequately provide supporting wastewater infrastructure and services.
- Require that new development contribute its "fair share" to fund wastewater infrastructure and public facilities.

Storm Drainage

CVWD also provides regional storm drainage protection to the Coachella Valley, inclusive of the Amendment Area. CVWD has primary flood control protection responsibility for a 590 square mile area. The backbone of the system is 25 miles of naturally-occurring Whitewater River riverbed. The river has been channelized to protect against its waters spreading across the lower valley during flooding. The river channel,

⁸ <http://www.floodcontrol.co.riverside.ca.us/downloads/NPDES/APP-O-RC-WQMP.pdf>; accessed September 2008.

⁹ http://www.cvwd.org/news/publicinfo/2008_water_quality_report.pdf; accessed September 2008.

¹⁰ <http://www.cvwd.org/about/waterandcv.php#waste>; accessed September 2008.

which is 24-5 miles in length, is known as the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, downstream from Point Happy in La Quinta near Highway 111 and Washington Avenue.

The riverbed and channel are fed by several smaller channels, dikes and levees designed and built to collect rapidly moving floodwater as it pours from the adjacent mountains onto the valley floor. CVWD reports that many of the facilities were built or improved in the 1970s in cooperation with cities and other agencies following severe floods¹¹.

Stormwater protection recipients are not directly assessed any fees. Federal funding occasionally is available for significant flood control protection, but competition for this revenue is intense. Funding for CVWD flood control improvements comes primarily from local property taxes.

Storm Drainage General Plan Policies

The Safety Element of the General Plan contains the following storm drainage related policies applicable to development and redevelopment projects within the Amendment Area:

- Prohibit substantial modification to water courses, unless modification does not increase erosion or adjacent sedimentation, or increase water velocities, so as to be detrimental to adjacent property, or adversely affect adjacent wetlands or riparian habitat.
- Direct flood control improvement measures toward the protection of existing and planned development.
- Require all projects anywhere in the County to address and mitigate any impacts that they may have on the carrying capacity of the local and regional storm drain systems.
- Require that the design and upgrade of street storm drains be based on the depth of inundation, relative risk to public health and safety, the potential for hindrance of emergency access and regress from excessive flood depth, and the threat of contamination of the storm drain system with sewage effluent. In general, the 10-year flood flows shall be contained within the top of curbs and the 100-year flood flows within the street right-of-way.

Solid Waste

Riverside County's trash and recycling services are administered through the Riverside County Waste Management Department (RCWMD). Commercial and residential waste is hauled to one of seven County landfills: Badlands, Blythe, Desert Center, El Sobrante, Lamb Canyon, Mecca II, Oasis. The Lamb Canyon landfill, located in Beaumont, is the disposal facility closest to the Amendment Area¹².

Commercial and residential municipal solid waste is delivered to County landfills by both waste hauling companies and self-haulers. Within the unincorporated portion of the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² http://www.rivcowm.org/landfill_info/landfill_hours.html; accessed September 2008.

County, the waste hauling companies operate under franchise agreements with RCWMD. Through these agreements, the haulers are required to implement residential curbside recycling programs and some commercial recycling.

Solid Waste Recycling

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB939) was enacted to reduce, recycle, and reuse solid waste generated in California. The Act requires cities and counties to implement plans to divert 50 percent of the total waste stream from landfill disposal by the year 2000 and 70 percent by the year 2020.

Riverside County adopted its Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP) in January 1997, and it was subsequently approved by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) in September 1998. The CIWMP outlines the County's goals, policies, and programs to comply with the provisions of AB 939. The CIWMP is composed of the Riverside Countywide Summary Plan, the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) for the County and each of its cities, the Nondisposal Facility Element (NDFE) for the County and each of its cities, the Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE) for the County and each of its cities, and the Riverside Countywide Siting Element.

RCWMD is specifically charged with the responsibility of: 1) implementing programs that adhere to the goals, policies, and objectives outlined in the County's SRRE that enable the unincorporated portion of Riverside County to achieve 50 percent diversion of solid waste from landfill disposal; 2) implementing programs that adhere to the goals, policies and objectives outlined in the County's HHWE to reduce the amount of household hazardous waste (HHW) that is disposed within landfills; 3) meeting the solid waste disposal needs of all Riverside County residents; and 4) maintaining and updating the CIWMP and reporting to the CIWMB on the County's progress in complying with AB 939.

Solid Waste General Plan EIR Mitigation Measures

In addition to the County CIWMP, the General Plan EIR provides the following mitigation measures applicable to development and redevelopment projects within the Amendment Area:

- The County shall require all future commercial, industrial and multifamily residential development to provide adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials (i.e., paper products, glass, and other recyclables) in compliance with the State Model Ordinance, implemented on September 1, 1994, in accordance with AB 1327, Chapter 18, California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991.
- The County shall require all development projects to coordinate with appropriate County departments and/or agencies to ensure that there is adequate waste disposal capacity to meet the waste disposal requirements of the project, and the County shall recommend that all development projects incorporate measures to promote waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.

4.9.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to utilities are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project Initial Study, and as assessed through the

following questions:

Utilities:

- 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 storm water 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 adequate 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?

4.9.3 Potential Impacts

Water; Wastewater and Storm Drainage

The Plan Amendment would be consistent with the General Plan and is not expected to increase the amount or density of development already planned by the County. The availability of redevelopment funds to assist in providing additional public utilities is expected to offset, at least in part, potential acceleration of development that could occur as a result of the Redevelopment Plan amendment implementation.

On the other hand, the proposed Plan Amendment is expected to facilitate the development and redevelopment of underutilized properties in the Amendment Area. This transition of vacant and underutilized properties to new, perhaps more intensive, development could create an increased demand for water, wastewater and storm drainage facilities.

With property values and sales activity relatively stagnant in the Amendment Area, General Fund revenues available for public infrastructure improvements are limited. The Project would provide a new source of funding for public service infrastructure improvements to induce private investment in the proposed Amendment Area. Such improvements could include the construction and reconstruction of water storage and distribution facilities; the construction and reconstruction of sewerage systems, and the development of drainage and flood control facilities.

However, to ensure that County and state policies and regulations regarding water, wastewater and storm drainage are properly incorporated into future development proposals within the Amendment Area, Mitigation Measures PS-1, PS-2, PS-3, PS-5 and PS-6 are added to the Project.

With inclusion of these measures, Project impacts will be less than significant relative to exceedence of wastewater treatment requirements or capacities, or exceedences of projected water supplies; or relative to the need to construct of new or expanded existing water or wastewater facilities, or new or expanded existing storm water drainage facilities.

Water Quality

Each new development within the County, inclusive of the Amendment Area, is required to retain and filter storm water runoff on-site in compliance with the water quality requirements of the CWA, RWQCB and County's WQMP. The Plan Amendment would provide a new source of funding to be used to assist new development within the Amendment Area to install required water quality facilities. By encouraging new development and redevelopment, the Project is expected to facilitate compliance with regional water quality requirements.

However, to ensure that County and state policies and regulations regarding water quality are properly incorporated into future development proposals within the Amendment Area, Mitigation Measure PS-4 is added to the Project. Therefore, Project impacts relative to direct, indirect and cumulative water quality impacts would be less than significant.

Solid Waste

The Plan Amendment is consistent with the General Plan and would not increase the amount or density of development already planned by the County. All future development in the Amendment Area would be required to comply with California Integrated Waste Management Act requirements for recycling and trash reduction. Consistency with the General Plan and compliance with applicable state, regional and local solid waste requirements are expected to ensure adequate solid waste services.

However, to ensure that County and state policies and regulations regarding solid waste recycling are properly incorporated into future development plans within the Amendment Area, Mitigation Measure PS-7 is added to the Project. Therefore, Project impacts relative to direct, indirect and cumulative solid waste capacity and facilities would be less than significant.

4.9.4 Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the Project would not significantly increase demand for utilities over that already anticipated in the General Plan. With the addition of Mitigation Measures UTL-1 through UTL-7, the Project is not expected to impact the regional demand for utilities, which is based on local general plan projections inclusive of the General Plan. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts relative to utilities.

4.9.5 Mitigation Measures

UTL-1: Future development shall comply with County policies regarding water conservation, including: provision of drought tolerant landscaping; and use of non-potable water, if determined by the County to be available, for landscaped and other outdoor areas.

UTL-2: Future development shall prepare water supply assessments consistent with County policies and state laws, prior to project approval.

UTL-3: Future developments below state and County water supply assessment criteria, with an estimated annual water use of 250 af or less, shall demonstrate to the County that compliance with the Urban Water Management Plan for the area in which the development is located.

UTL-4: Future development shall comply with County requirements regarding NPDES requirements.

UTL-5: Future development shall contribute its fair share to fund wastewater facilities as required by the County.

UTL-6: Future development shall design storm drain improvements consistent with County policies.

UTL-7: Future commercial, industrial and multifamily residential development shall provide adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials.

4.9.6 Conclusions

Increases in development and utility demands would be consistent with the General Plan. Further, the availability of redevelopment funds to assist utilities (for example, new or upgraded storm drainage facilities) is expected to offset potential acceleration of development that could occur as a result of Redevelopment Plan implementation. To ensure future development compliance with existing policies and regulations, Mitigation Measures UTL-1 through UTL-7 are added to the Project

The proposed Project is not expected to substantially increase the need for new or improved water quality or solid waste facilities. Therefore the Plan Amendment would not result in significant impacts to utilities.

4.9.7 Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

4.10 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section addresses issues related to agricultural resources within the Amendment Area. Existing agricultural resources, potential adverse Project impacts, if any, and appropriate mitigation measures necessary to resolve impacts are discussed. Primary data for this section are drawn from the field surveys performed by Urban Futures, Inc./GRC in support of the Project and the County's General Plan Land Use Element.

4.10.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Agricultural Land Uses

In the Cherry Valley sub-area, there is one parcel, consisting of 27.12 acres, identified as containing an agricultural land use. According to Urban Futures, Inc./GRC field surveys, the use on that parcel is a hen farm. The parcel is not under a Williamson Act contract or any other agricultural preservation designation.

General Plan Agricultural Resource Policies

The General Plan Land Use Map does not specifically designate properties within the Amendment Area for agricultural use.

4.10.2 Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts relative to agricultural resources are evaluated in this section based on CEQA Guidelines, as described in the Project's Initial Study and assessed by the following questions:

- Would the Project 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?
- Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?
- Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

4.10.3 Potential Impacts

Conversion of Mapped Farmland

Preservation of agricultural resources and activities is regulated by both the state of California Department of Conservation (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These agencies work to enforce the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), which is intended to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses..." (7 U.S.C. 4201(b), *et seq.*).

To protect agricultural resources and activities, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) rates the agricultural suitability of soils for most types of field crops and land use compatibility. The NRCS then maps all land within the state according to its suitability for agriculture. The mapping, known as the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), classifies land according to the following categories:

Prime Farmland: Lands with the best combination of physical and chemical features and able to sustain long term production of agricultural crops. This land

must have been used to produce irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance: Lands similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. This land must have been used to produce irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland: Lands with lesser quality soils used to produce leading agricultural crops. Includes non-irrigated orchards or vineyards.

Farmland of Local Importance: Lands of importance to the local agricultural economy, as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

Grazing Land: Lands on which existing vegetation is suited to livestock grazing. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association and U.C. Cooperative Extension.

There is one parcel in the Amendment Area, located in the Cherry Valley sub-area that contains the agricultural use (hen farm). According to the Agricultural Resource Map of the RCIP, this parcel is designated as Urban Built-up land and does not contain any of the FMMP classified farmlands. Therefore, no potentially significant Project impacts are expected relative to conversion of state mapped farmlands to nonagricultural use.

Agricultural Zoning and Contracts

There one Cherry Valley agricultural parcel is designated by the General Plan as Very Low Density Residential – Rural Community. There is no Williamson Act contract or any other agricultural preservation designation on the parcel. Therefore, no potentially significant Project impacts are expected relative to conversion of agricultural zoned or contracted lands to nonagricultural use.

Other Changes that Could Result in Conversion of Farmland

There is one parcel that is zoned for very low density residential use in the Amendment Area. The proposed Plan Amendment does not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use

4.10.4 Cumulative Impacts

The Project would be consistent with applicable General Plan and regional land use policies. It is expected to facilitate development and redevelopment of compatible land uses. It is not expected to significantly impact agricultural resources.

Each future development in the vicinity of the Amendment Area would undergo a similar project review process as the proposed Project to address potential agricultural resource impacts. The Project is not expected to result in significant adverse cumulative impacts relative to agricultural resources.

4.10.5 Mitigation Measures

None required.

4.10.6 Conclusions

Although there is one existing agricultural use in the Amendment Area, the parcel does not qualify as an agricultural resource according to the thresholds of significance identified in Section 4.10.2, above. Consequently, Project impacts associated with agricultural resources are less than significant.

4.10.7 Significance After Mitigation

None.

5.0 LONG-TERM IMPACTS SUMMARY

This chapter summarizes long-term implications of the Project should it be implemented. Specifically, this chapter discusses expected Project growth-inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided, and the significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed Project. Mandatory findings of significance are also discussed.

5.1 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Pursuant to Section 15126.2 (d) of the CEQA Guidelines, growth-inducing impacts are the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this discussion are direct and indirect growth-inducing impacts.

Types of Growth-Inducing Impacts

Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when a project would remove obstacles to population growth (e.g., a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant or a new road into an undeveloped area might increase economic or population growth). These types of growth-inducing projects may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects.

Indirect growth-inducing impacts occur when a project encourages or facilitates other activities that could cause significant environmental effects. (e.g., a new residential subdivision in a previously undeveloped area might generate the need for new commercial development and subsequently new roads.)

Project Growth-Inducing Impacts

Redevelopment plans are required by State law to be consistent with a community's general plan. The proposed Plan Amendment would specifically adopt the County's General Plan by reference. Consequently, the Project would be consistent with the General Plan.

The Project does not propose new roads or infrastructure that could substantially induce population growth.

However, the proposed Plan Amendment provides a new funding source to support planned road and infrastructure improvements. Many planned roadway and infrastructure improvement projects that have been based on the Circulation Element of the General Plan do not have adequate available funding sources. Consequently, without the assistance of redevelopment funds, these improvements and the economic and population growth they would generate are not expected to occur. With implementation of the Project, the Amendment Area would achieve projected General Plan development over time.

In this manner, the Project would remove obstacles to economic and population growth, and could result in direct growth inducing impacts. However, the County has already planned for this growth through its General Plan process. As the County updates its General Plan, it would be required to plan for any additional growth through the General Plan process. Consequently, the growth-inducing aspects of the Project would not tax

existing community service facilities, and would not require construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Similarly, the growth-inducing aspects of the Project are not expected to encourage or facilitate other activities that could cause significant environmental effects. No significant adverse growth inducing impacts, either direct or indirect, are expected to occur as a result of Project implementation.

5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that EIRs consider the cumulative impacts of a project. A cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. If a project does not result in a project-level impact of any dimension for a specific environmental issue, the project would not contribute to a significant, cumulative impact. However, it is possible for a less-than-significant project-level impact to contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

In identifying projects that may contribute to cumulative impacts, the CEQA Guidelines allow the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects, producing related or cumulative impacts, including those that are outside of the control of the lead agency. Alternatively, the CEQA Guidelines also allow the use of a summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document, which is designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions. For the purposes of this EIR, the growth projections assumed for the General Plan are used for the cumulative analysis.

As discussed in Section 4.0, the Project is expected to result in less than significant adverse impacts relative to land use, population and housing, schools and agricultural resources. Because there would not be a project-level impact of any dimension relative to these topics, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impact relative to these topics.

Potential project impacts relative to traffic, air quality, hydrology, biological resources, cultural resources, public services (police, fire, parks) and utilities are expected to result in potentially significant impacts relative to compliance with applicable County and state policies and regulations. However, in each instance, mitigation measures are recommended to reduce these potential impacts to less than significant levels. No potential adverse cumulative impacts relative to these topics are identified.

Consequently, the Project would not contribute to significant unavoidable adverse regional or cumulative impacts.

5.3 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided include any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. Section 4.0, above, evaluates impacts relative to land use, traffic, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology, population and housing, public services, utilities and agricultural resources. All potential impacts are expected to be reduced to less than significant levels. No significant unavoidable adverse impacts are expected to occur as a result of Plan Amendment adoption or implementation.

5.4 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Regarding "Mandatory Findings of Significance", as defined in the Project Initial Study (Reference Appendix A), with the inclusion of recommended mitigation measures, the Project is not expected to degrade the quality of the environment. The Project is not expected to adversely affect human beings, either directly or indirectly, specifically in regard to existing contaminants (hazards) that may be present within the Project site.

The Project is not expected to contribute to impacts that are individually limited but potentially cumulatively considerable. Consequently, no additional Project impacts are expected relative to mandatory findings of significance, and no additional mitigation measures are required.

5.5 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the extent to which a proposed project would commit nonrenewable resources to uses, which future generations would probably be unable to reverse. A project would generally result in a significant irreversible impact if:

- Primary and secondary impacts would commit future generations to similar uses.
- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.
- The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

Implementation of the Project would result in an amended Redevelopment Plan that would provide potential funding for improvements identified by County policies, consistent with the General Plan. The Project is expected to assist in the reuse and improvement of existing urbanized and abandoned areas, alleviating existing conditions of blight.

Improvements conducted under the Project would be consistent with the General Plan. The Project would not commit future generations to uses not already planned. It would facilitate infill development, which would not involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources. The Project would facilitate General Plan industrial, residential and commercial development, which would not involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project. The Project would not result in significant irreversible environmental changes.



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6.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Pursuant to Section 15126(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, this Chapter examines environmental consequences of a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project that could also feasibly attain the basic objectives of the Project. The Guidelines further require that the discussion focus on alternatives capable of eliminating significant adverse impacts of the project. A "no project" alternative must be discussed as part of the alternatives evaluation. If the environmentally superior alternative is the "no project" alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives.

The term "environmentally superior" refers only to the comparative environmental effects of the proposed project and the alternatives. The project objectives, and whether a particular alternative meets the objectives, must also be considered in the evaluation of alternatives. An alternative may be "environmentally superior" to the proposed project, but the alternative may not meet all of the criteria required to make the project feasible as defined by the lead agency. Therefore, environmental impacts and project objectives must be carefully weighed by decision makers before an informed decision can be made.

The alternatives generally reflect modest modifications specific to the overall Project, eliminating or modifying one of the Project components.

Alternative sites were not considered. In order for an alternative project area to be considered as a redevelopment area, it must first meet the CRL's criteria regarding blight contained in the CRL. The Amendment Area meets the criteria for blight established by the State of California. Selection of an alternative project area would mean that no benefits associated with redevelopment would be undertaken in the identified Amendment Area, which has been found to be blighted. Because an alternative location could not meet the basic objectives of the proposed Project, an alternative location is not considered feasible.

Two potential alternatives to the proposed Project are analyzed below:

1. **No Project Alternative:**

As required by CEQA, this alternative would consider the potential environmental consequences if none of the proposed Project components were to occur.

2. **Reduced Amendment Area:**

Under this alternative, the size of the Amendment Area would be reduced. This reduction could involve the removal of one of the six sub-areas.

6.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

This alternative requires that the proposal to adopt the Plan Amendment be terminated. If the proposal was terminated, the Amendment Area would not be formed, the Project would not occur and various planned infrastructure improvements would not be funded. Without the Project, existing levels of blight would be perpetuated, resulting in continued physical and economic deterioration throughout the Amendment Area. Blighting conditions cannot be eliminated through the efforts of the private sector acting alone, because sufficient funding to provide roadway and other public improvements would continue to be lacking.

Documentation of existing blighting conditions in the Amendment Area can be found in the Preliminary Report and in Chapter 3.0 of this EIR. Without redevelopment authority and the proposed financial mechanisms, blighted conditions in the Amendment Area may not be reversed in whole or in part, or at worst, they may become more widespread and severe. This latter case would contribute to a continuing decline of the area, as well as the affecting physical, social and economic conditions in surrounding areas.

As development occurs in the Amendment Area as promulgated by the General Plan, potential impacts could occur relative to land use, traffic, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology, population and housing, public services, utilities and agricultural resources. However, without the Project, new funds to encourage improvement of existing development and infrastructure improvements would not be available.

This alternative would not meet the Project objective to eliminate blight, and could allow potential impacts to go unmitigated. Consequently, the No Project Alternative is not considered environmentally superior to the Project.

6.2 REDUCE REDEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT AREA SIZE

This alternative to the Plan Amendment would reduce the size of the territory encompassed by the Amendment Area. The effect of such a reduction would vary with the specific reduction, but could involve the removal of one of the sub-areas. In general, there would be commensurate reductions in the Agency's ability to undertake the redevelopment program as contemplated by the Redevelopment Project. These would include reductions in: proposed public improvements and facilities; rehabilitation and relocation assistance to be offered; ability to eliminate conditions of blight; ability to implement the goals of the General Plan; ability to eliminate existing environmental deficiencies and problems occurring in the Amendment Area.

This alternative would allow the blighting conditions in the areas removed from the Project to continue indefinitely and would reduce the ability of the Agency to implement needed improvements throughout the Amendment Area. As development occurs in the sub-area to be removed Area as promulgated by the General Plan, potential impacts to land use, traffic, public services and utilities could occur in the area removed. However, without the Project, new funds to encourage improvement of existing development and infrastructure improvements would not be available.

This Alternative is not considered environmentally superior to the Project.

6.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Sections 21002 and 21081 of the Public Resources Code require lead agencies to adopt feasible mitigation measures or feasible environmentally superior alternatives in order to substantially lessen or avoid otherwise significant adverse environmental effects of proposed projects, unless specific social or other conditions make such mitigation measures or alternatives infeasible. The California Court of Appeals has upheld the requirement to examine an environmentally superior alternative when the adoption of all feasible mitigation measures would leave an unmitigated significant impact (*Citizens for Quality Growth vs. County of Mount Shasta* (3d Dist. 1988) 198 Cal.App.3d 433 [243 Cal.Rptr. 727]).

The proposed Plan Amendment would not result in unavoidably significant impacts. Therefore, there is no requirement for this EIR to identify an environmentally superior alternative.

Both the No Project and Reduced Amendment Area alternatives would allow remaining conditions of blight in the Amendment Area to continue. The new funds expected to be generated through Project implementation would not be available or would be reduced. Under either alternative, there would be less funds than there would be under the Project through which the Agency could finance planned improvements and alleviate existing blight. From this perspective, the proposed Project is considered superior to either alternative.



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7.0 INFORMATION SOURCES

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7.2 PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

- Deanna Lorson, Deputy Executive Director, Redevelopment Agency
- Rohini Dasika, Principal Development Specialist, Redevelopment Agency
- Lance Noland - Senior Development Specialist, Redevelopment Agency

7.3 PREPARATION STAFF

- Ernie Glover, Principal Project Consultant, Urban Futures Inc. / GRC,
- Kiran Bhalla, Project Manager, Urban Futures Inc. / GRC
- Joann Lombardo, Principal Environmental Consultant, Urban Futures Inc. / GRC



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8.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS

Throughout this EIR, acronyms are used as abbreviations for technical terms, agencies, regulations, and public documents. When the acronym is first referenced, the EIR text provides a definition. However, for the convenience of the reader, the following lists and defines all acronyms used in this EIR:

AAQS: Ambient Air Quality Standards
a.f.: Acre feet
AQMP: Air Quality Management Plan
bgs: Below ground surface
BMP(s) : Best Management Practice(s)
CAAQS: California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CARB: California Air Resources Board
CDC: California Department of Conservation
CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act
CIWMB: California Integrated Waste Management Board
CIWMP: Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan
CMP: Congestion Management Program
CNEL: Community Noise Equivalent Level
CO: Carbon Monoxide
CRL: Community Redevelopment Law
CVWD: Coachella Valley Water District
CVP: Central Valley Project
CWA: Federal Clean Water Act
DTSC: Department of Toxic Substances Control
DUs: Dwelling Units
DWR: State of California Department of Water Resources
ECC: County's Emergency Command Center
EIR: Environmental Impact Report
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
FMMP: California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FPPA: Farmland Protection Policy Act
HHWE: Household Hazardous Waste Element
H2S: Hydrogen Sulfide

I-10: Interstate Highway 10
ICU: Intersection Capacity Utilization
LOS: Level of Service
LST: Localized Significance Threshold
MBTA: Migratory Bird Treaty Act
Metropolitan: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NCCP: Natural Community Conservation Plan
NDFE: Nondisposal Facility Element
NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NOP: Notice of Preparation
NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide
NOx: Nitrogen Oxides
NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service
O3 : Ozone
PAP: The Pass Plan
PM2.5: Fine Particulate Matter
PM10: Respirable Particulate Matter
ppm: parts per million
PRC: Public Resources Code
RCIP: County of Riverside Integrated Project General Plan
RCP: Regional Comprehensive Plan
RCPG: Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide
RCWMD: Riverside County Waste Management Department
ROG: Reactive Organic Gases
RWQCB: California Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAB: South Coast Air Basin
SCAG: Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD: Southern California Air Quality Management District
SCH: State Clearing House
SCS: Soil Conservation Service
SOC: Statement of Overriding Considerations
SO2: Sulfur Dioxide
SOx: Sulfur Oxides
Sq. Ft. : Square Feet

SWP: State Water Project

SWPPP: Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture

USGS: U.S. Geological Survey

U.S. : United States

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

V/C: Volume to Capacity

VOC: Volatile Organic Compounds

WCVAP: Western Coachella Valley Area Plan.



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APPENDICES



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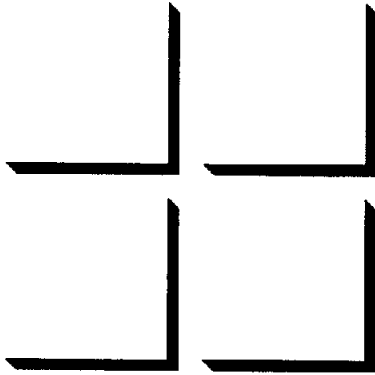
APPENDIX A

INITIAL STUDY AND NOTICE OF PREPARATION



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March 3, 2008

**Initial Study for
Mid-County Redevelopment
Project Area, Amendment No. 2
– Cherry Valley, Garnet, and
West Garnet Sub-Areas**

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY for the COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

 GRC REDEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS
701 S. Parker Street
Suite 7400
Orange, CA 92868

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Meeting

TO:

FROM: Redevelopment Agency for the County
of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street
Riverside, CA 92507

Notice is hereby given that the County of Riverside acting as a Co-Lead Agency, with the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside acting as both a Co-Lead Agency and Applicant, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified below. We request your comments as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

PROJECT TITLE: Mid-County Project Area – Amendment No. 2, Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet.

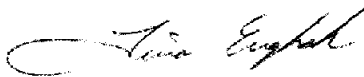
PROJECT APPLICANT: Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside, 1325 Spruce Street, Riverside, CA 92507.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Project is Redevelopment Plan amendment to three sub-areas in the existing Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, located in the western region of Riverside County. The Amendment Area includes approximately 11,720 acres (1,844 acres for Cherry Valley sub-area; 9,671 acres for Garnet sub-area; and 205 acres for West Garnet sub-area.) A description of the Project, its location, and its potential environmental effects are contained in the attached Initial Study. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than thirty (30) days after the date below.

Please send your response to: Mr. Ernest Glover, GRC Redevelopment, Inc., 701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400, Orange, CA 92868, (714) 234-1122. If applicable, please provide the name for a contact person in your agency.

SCOPING MEETING: Pursuant to Section 21083.9 of the Public Resources Code, a Scoping Meeting for interested agencies will be held to discuss the proposed EIR and assist the Agency in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the EIR. The Scoping Meeting will be held at the time, date and place indicated below:

Time: 10:30 a.m. **Date:** March 19, 2008
Place: Riverside County Economic Development Agency
Fourth Floor, Conference Room 4A
1325 Spruce Street, Riverside, CA 92507
(951)-955-896



Date: February 29, 2008 **Signature:** _____

Tina English, Deputy Director
Economic Development Agency

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside

Initial Study

for

**Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 –
Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet Sub-Areas**

March 3, 2008

Prepared for:

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA 92507
(951)951-8916

Prepared by:

GRC Redevelopment Consultants, Inc.
701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
Orange, California 92868
(714) 234-1122

Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2

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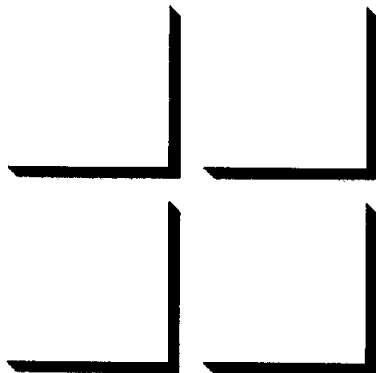
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PREFACE

This Initial Study has been prepared in conjunction with the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 in the County of Riverside (the "Project"). The Project is a proposal by the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside (the "Agency") to adopt a Redevelopment Plan amendment to the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area. The proposal consists of expanding the existing project area by approximately 11,720 acres. The addition of this additional acreage (referred to as the "Amendment Area") is the focus of this environmental assessment.

The adoption and implementation of a redevelopment plan amendment is classified as a Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). As such, this Initial Study has been prepared pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063.

The County of Riverside ("County") and the Redevelopment Agency are the Co-Lead Agencies, with the Redevelopment Agency also acting as the Responsible Agency for this environmental review pursuant to the State Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA Section 15050. Consistent with these guidelines, this Initial Study identifies non-significant and potentially significant environmental impacts, and recommends that an Environmental Impact Report be prepared to address the identified potentially significant impacts.

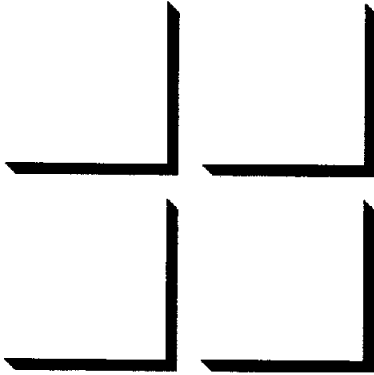
CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

In accordance with California Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code Section 33000 *et seq.*; the "CRL"), future development within the Amendment Area that is directly or indirectly attributable to Agency activities must be consistent with land use policies established within the applicable General Plan, Area Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Municipal Code. The Land Use Element of the County of Riverside General Plan details policies related to the properties within the Amendment Area.

Because future development within the Amendment Area must occur within the established parameters of the prevailing General Plan, implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment will not result in any unanticipated development or densities within the Amendment Area. Redevelopment programs and activities established and supported in conjunction with the Redevelopment Plan are ultimately intended to eliminate blighting conditions that constrain the ability of the Amendment Area to develop to its full General Plan potential.

Adoption of the Redevelopment Plan amendment will allow the Agency to participate in various programs and activities aimed at encouraging private investment within the Amendment Area. These activities could accelerate the rate of development over that anticipated in the County General Plan. As such, this Initial Study (as well as the pending focused Program Environmental Impact Report) will focus on potential environmental impacts associated with future Amendment Area growth in accordance with the County of Riverside General Plan (the "General Plan").

Environmental issues to be assessed through the EIR are those where important resources or unique hazards are expected to occur in the Amendment Area; or those where the Redevelopment Plan amendment may cause certain impacts to accelerate ahead of available mitigation; or cause new impacts not anticipated by County General Plan policies to occur. These environmental issues include agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, population and housing, traffic, air quality, public services, utilities, and mandatory findings of significance.



1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Title:

Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2.

B. Name and Address of Lead Agency:

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400,
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 955-8916

C. Name and Address of Project Sponsor:

Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400,
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 955-8916

D. Contact Person and Phone Number:

Mr. Ernest Glover
GRC Redevelopment Consultants, Inc.
701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
Orange, California 92868
(714) 234-1122

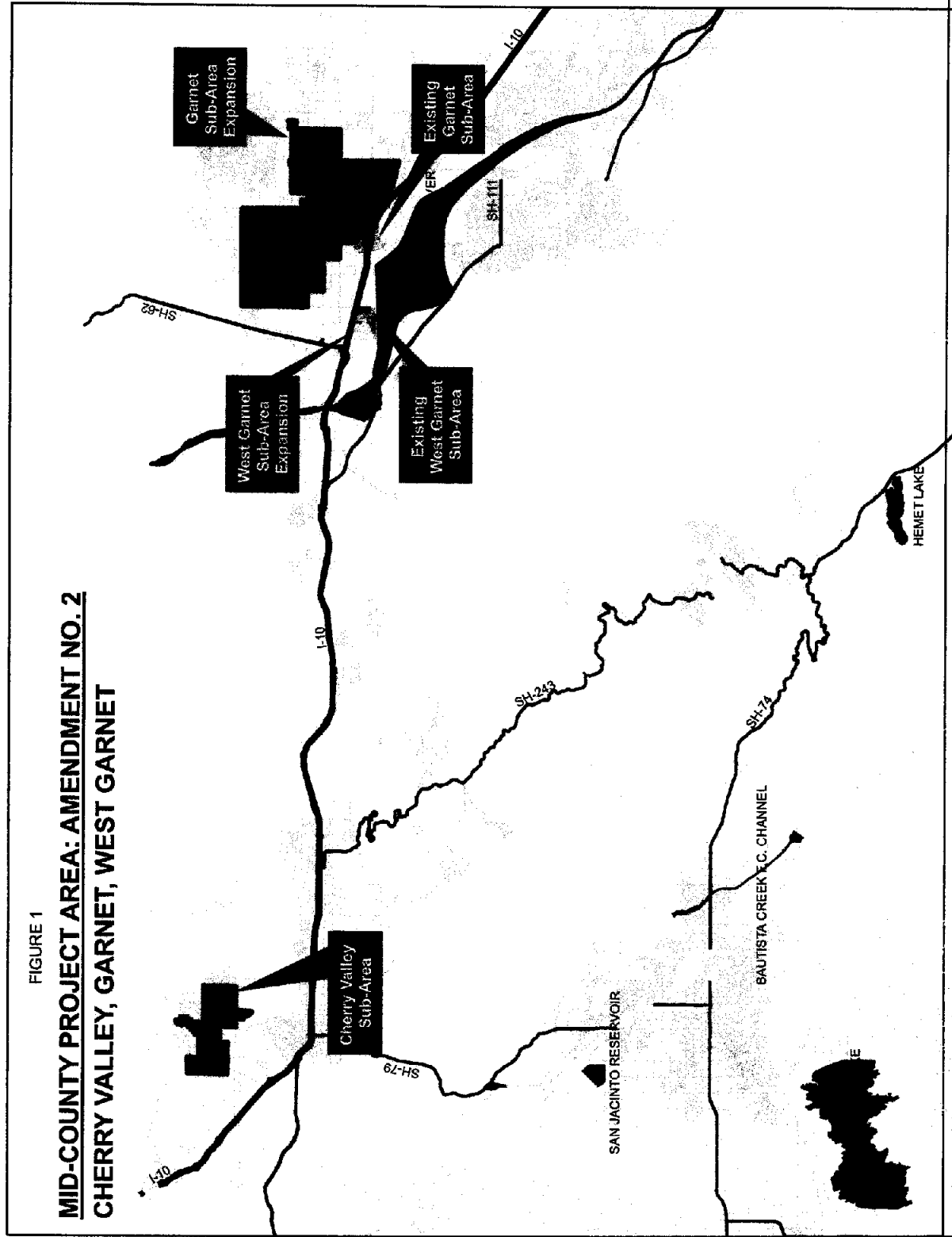
E. Project Location:

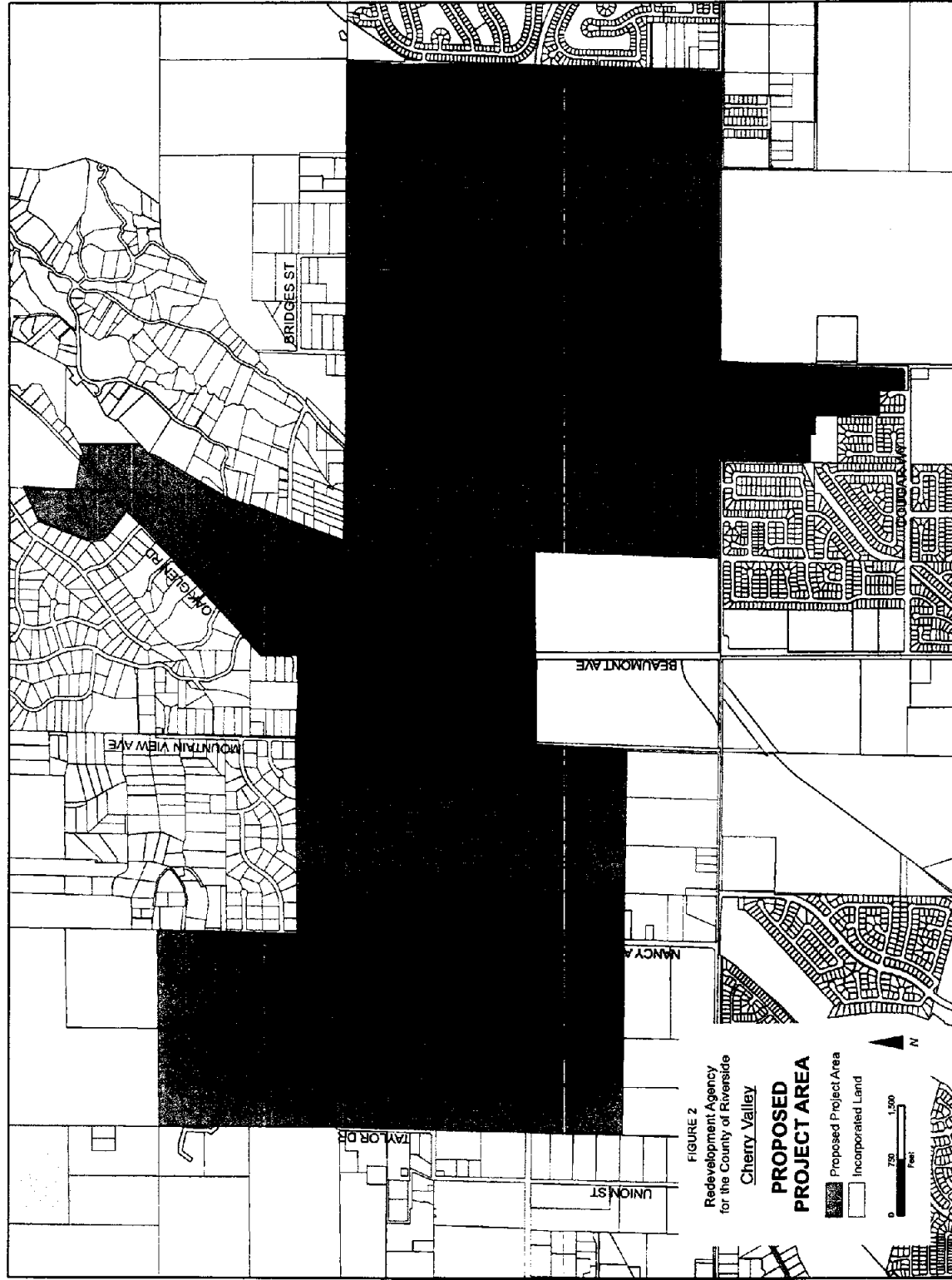
The Amendment Area consists of three sub-areas and is located in the western region of Riverside County. (See Figure 1, Amendment Area Location Map). The three sub-areas are located as follows:

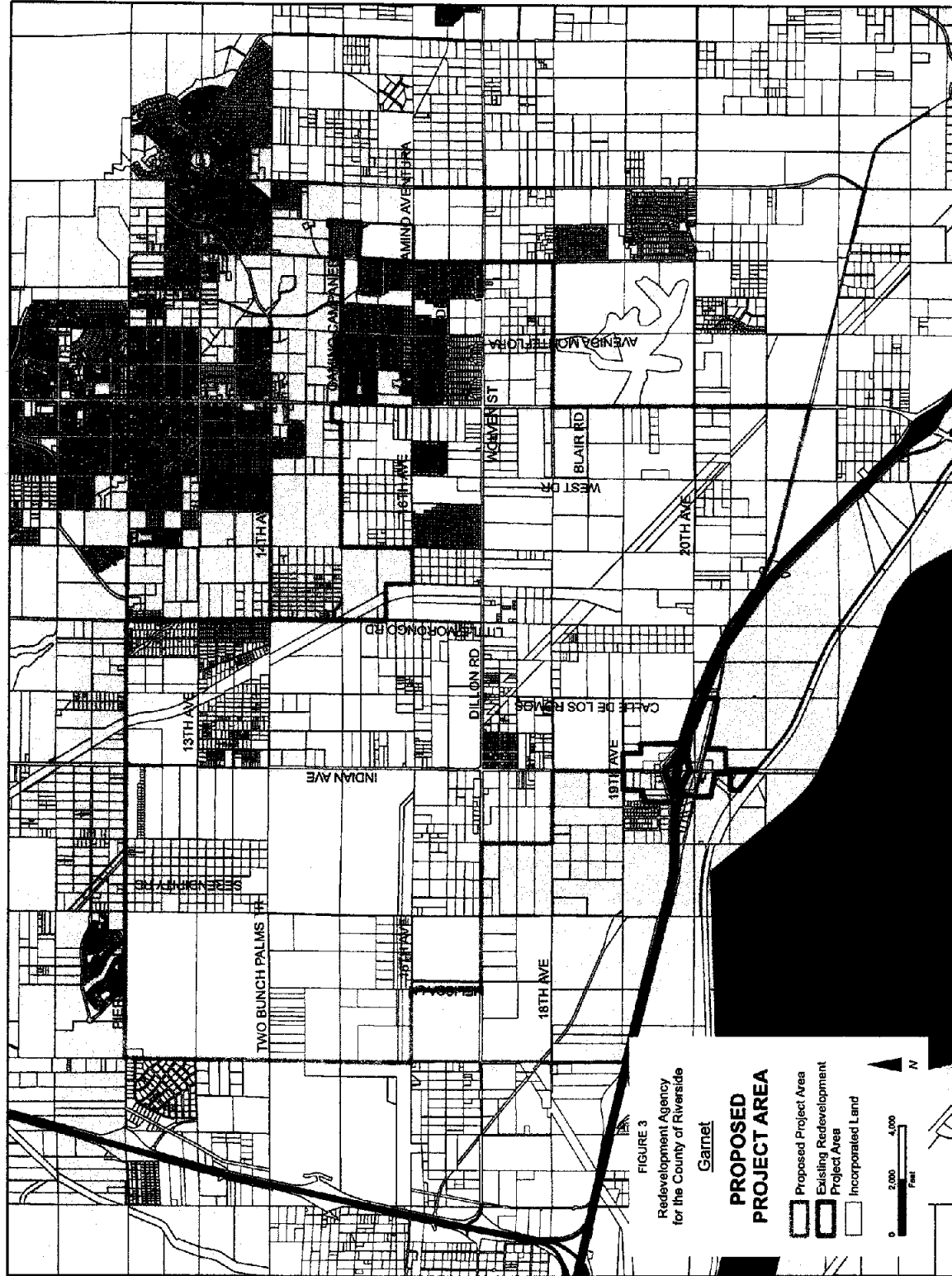
- Cherry Valley is located generally south of Orchard Street, east of Taylor Road, west of Bellflower Avenue and generally north of Cougar Way. (See Figure 2, Cherry Valley Boundary Map).

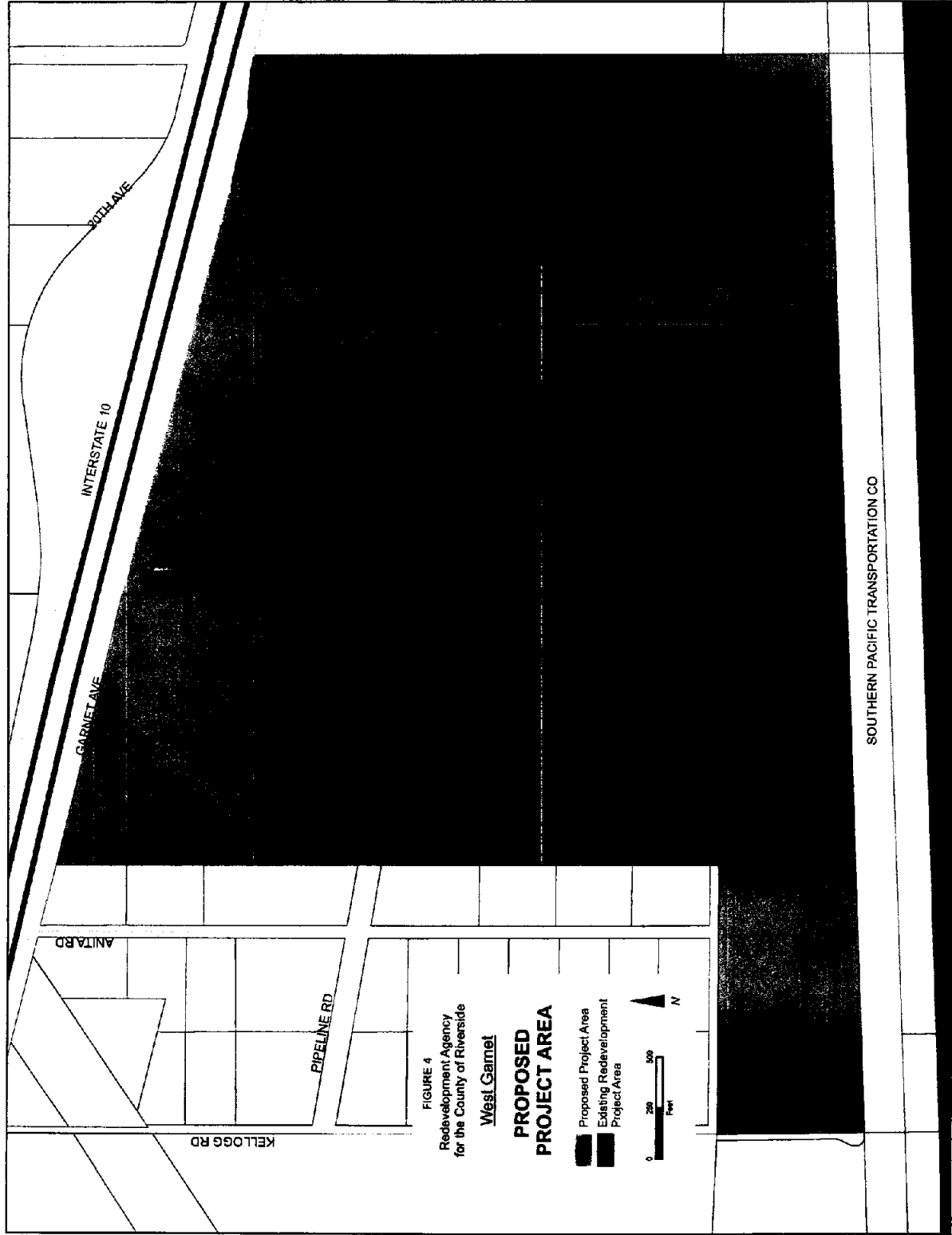
- Garnet is located generally south of Pierson Boulevard, generally east of Serendipity Road, generally east of Avenida Monte Flora, and generally north of 20th Avenue. (See Figure 3, Garnet Boundary Map).
- West Garnet is located south of Garnet Avenue, generally east of Kellogg Road, generally west of Diablo, and north of the Southern Pacific Transportation Corridor and Whitewater River. (See Figure 4, West Garnet Boundary Map).

F. Assessor's Book and Lot Number:
Various.









G. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:

Tina English, Deputy Director
Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400,
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 955-8916

H. Description of Project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the Project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation.)

The Project is a proposal by the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside to adopt a Redevelopment Plan amendment to the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area. The proposed amendment consists of an approximately 11,720 acre expansion of the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area. The Amendment Area is comprised of three non-contiguous sub-areas. Size of each sub-area is as follows: 1,844 acres for Cherry Valley sub-area; 9,671 acres for Garnet sub-area; and 205 acres for West Garnet sub-area.

The purpose of the Project is to abate the relative stagnation and conditions of blight in each of the sub-areas, and to facilitate the continued elimination of blight in the existing Mid-County Project Area (MCPA).

Project Background:

The Economic Development Agency of Riverside County (the "EDA") has facilitated the adoption of several redevelopment areas throughout the County of Riverside (the "County") under the authority of the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside. Over the years, the redevelopment areas have been combined, or merged, into five distinct Amendment Areas:

- Jurupa Valley
- Mid-County
- 1-1986
- Desert Communities
- I-215 Corridor.

The MCPA was formed by the merger, on May 11, 1999, via Ordinance No. 786, of the 3-1986, 3-1987, and the 3-1989 project areas. The MCPA includes a total of 7,047 acres and is located in the western region of the County. The merger

consolidated the previous amendments and brought the existing number of sub-areas in the Mid-County project area to seven. The latest amendment, adopted on May 11, 1999, consolidated the previous amendments and brought the existing number of sub-areas in the Mid-County Project Area to seven.

Project Goals: Below is a list of potential goals of the Redevelopment Plan amendment. These goals will be refined, expanded upon, or otherwise modified as part of the adoption process.

- Implementing the goals, policies, and strategies identified in the existing Redevelopment Plan and the General Plan.
- Providing the various public improvements identified in the amended Redevelopment Plan and the General Plan.
- Developing housing programs, with an emphasis on rehabilitation, to meet the needs of residents in the amended Project Area.
- Providing for a general program of redevelopment assistance for new and existing businesses.
- Providing a general program for market-rate housing.

I. Existing Setting: (Briefly describe the Project site's existing land uses and features)

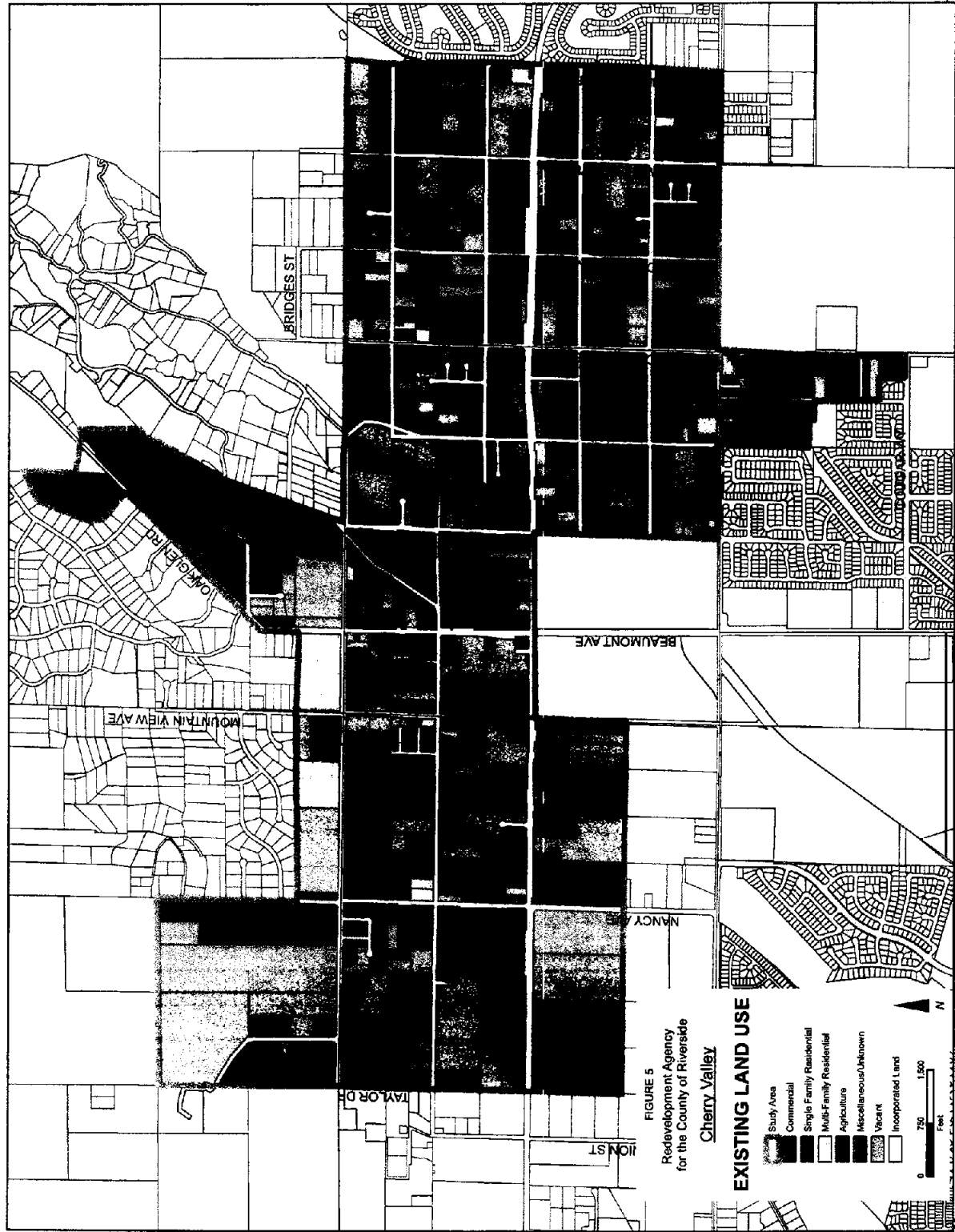
Blight: Within the Amendment Area, conditions of notable blight include: building deterioration, obsolete commercial structures, vacant stores, piecemeal development, incompatible land uses, odd-shaped parcels, junk and equipment openly stored, and old or nonexistent infrastructure.

Existing Land Uses: Existing land uses as well as proposed General Plan land uses are listed in the following tables for each of the three sub-areas. Table 1 and Figures 5 and 6 describe existing and proposed uses for Cherry Valley. Table 2 and Figures 7 and 8 describe existing and proposed uses for Garnet. Table 3 and Figures 9 and 10 describe existing and proposed uses for West Garnet.

Table 1
EXISTING LAND USES AND
GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
FOR
CHERRY VALLEY
(Proposed Project Area)
(Estimated at this time)

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Existing Land Use		
Commercial	130	7
Single-Family	958	52
Multi-Family	52	3
Agricultural	32	2
Miscellaneous/Unknown	80	4
Vacant	408	22
Streets/R.O.W.	184	10
Total	1,844	100
General Plan Land Use		
Commercial-Office	4	< 1
Commercial-Retail	62	3
Light-Industrial	2	< 1
Very Low Density Residential – Rural Community	1,300	70
Very Low Density Residential	52	3
Medium Density Residential	82	4
Medium High Density Residential	8	< 1
High Density Residential	8	< 1
Agricultural	75	4
Rural Residential	67	4
Streets/R.O.W.	184	10
Total	1,844	100

Source: CD Data (Parcel Quest Series 4, Riverside County, August 2007), Riverside County GIS, GRC Redevelopment Consultants.



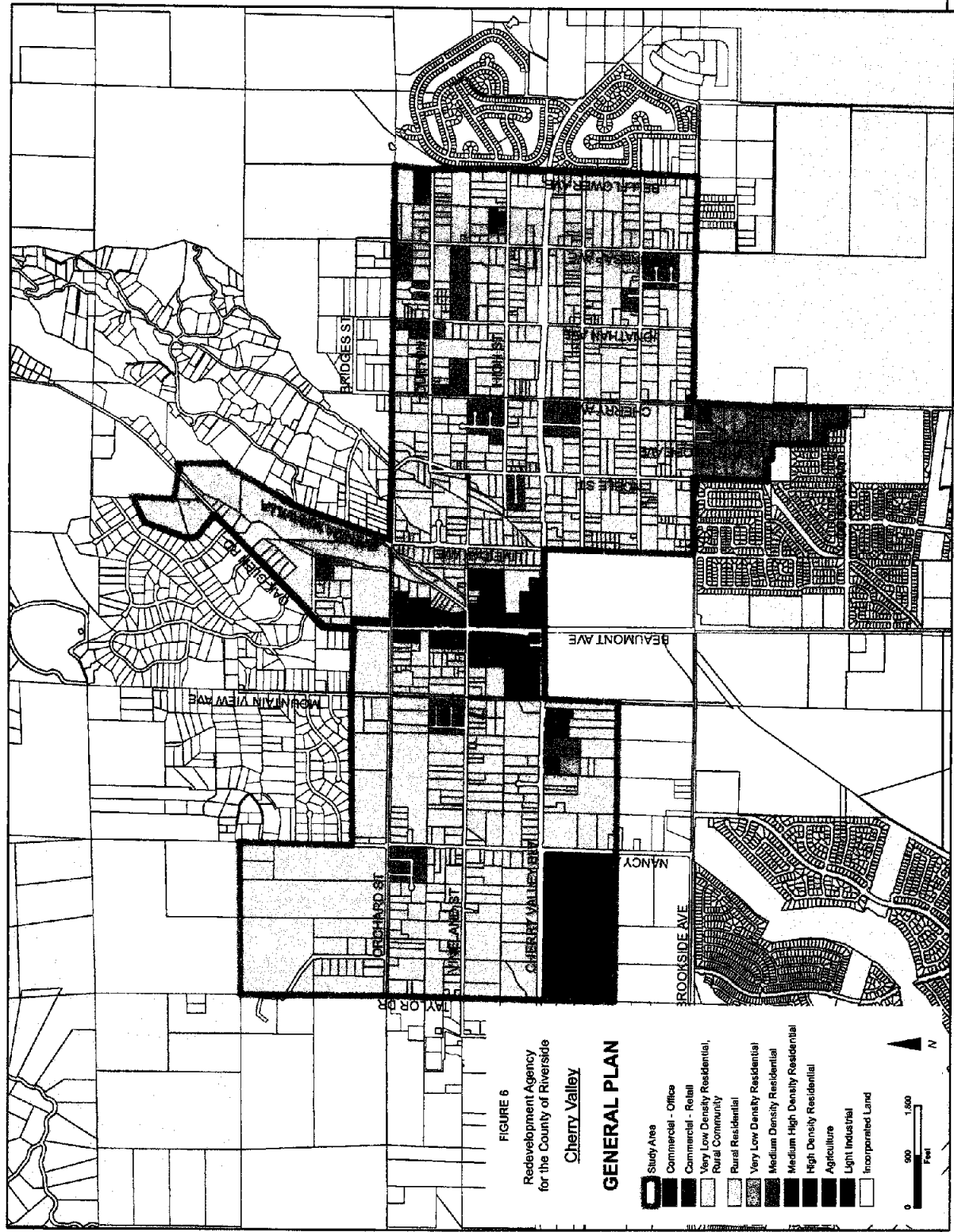


Table 2
EXISTING LAND USES AND
GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
FOR
GARNET
(Proposed Project Area)
(Estimated at this time)

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Existing Land Use		
Commercial	242	3
Single-Family	559	6
Multi-Family	19	< 1
Agricultural	39	< 1
Miscellaneous/Unknown	274	3
Vacant	8,163	84
Streets/R.O.W.	375	4
Total	9,671	100
General Plan Land Use		
Commercial-Retail	100	1
Estate Density Residential	426	4
Medium Density Residential	1,445	15
Medium High Density Residential	178	2
High Density Residential	55	1
Rural Residential	1,646	17
Rural Desert	2,680	28
Light Industrial	1,651	17
Open Space Recreation	45	< 1
Open Space Water	582	6
Public Facilities	405	4
Incorporated Land	83	1
Streets/R.O.W.	375	4
Total	9,671	100

Source: CD Data (Parcel Quest Series 4, Riverside County, August 2007), Riverside County GIS, GRC Redevelopment Consultants.

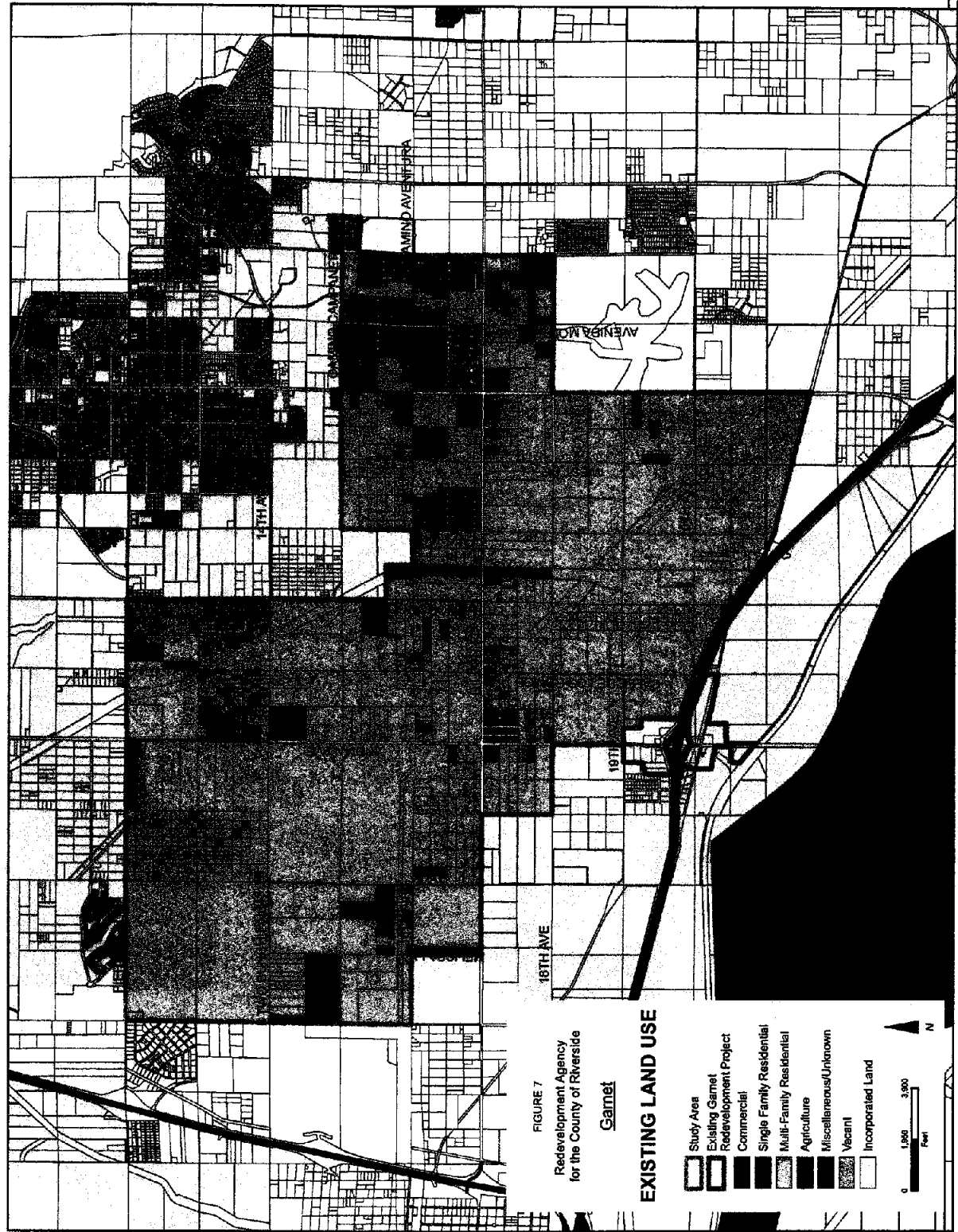
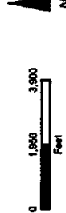


FIGURE 7
Redevelopment Agency
for the County of Riverside

Gamet

EXISTING LAND USE

- Study Area
- Existing Gamet Redevelopment Project
- Commercial
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Agriculture
- Miscellaneous/Unknown
- Vacant
- Incorporated Land



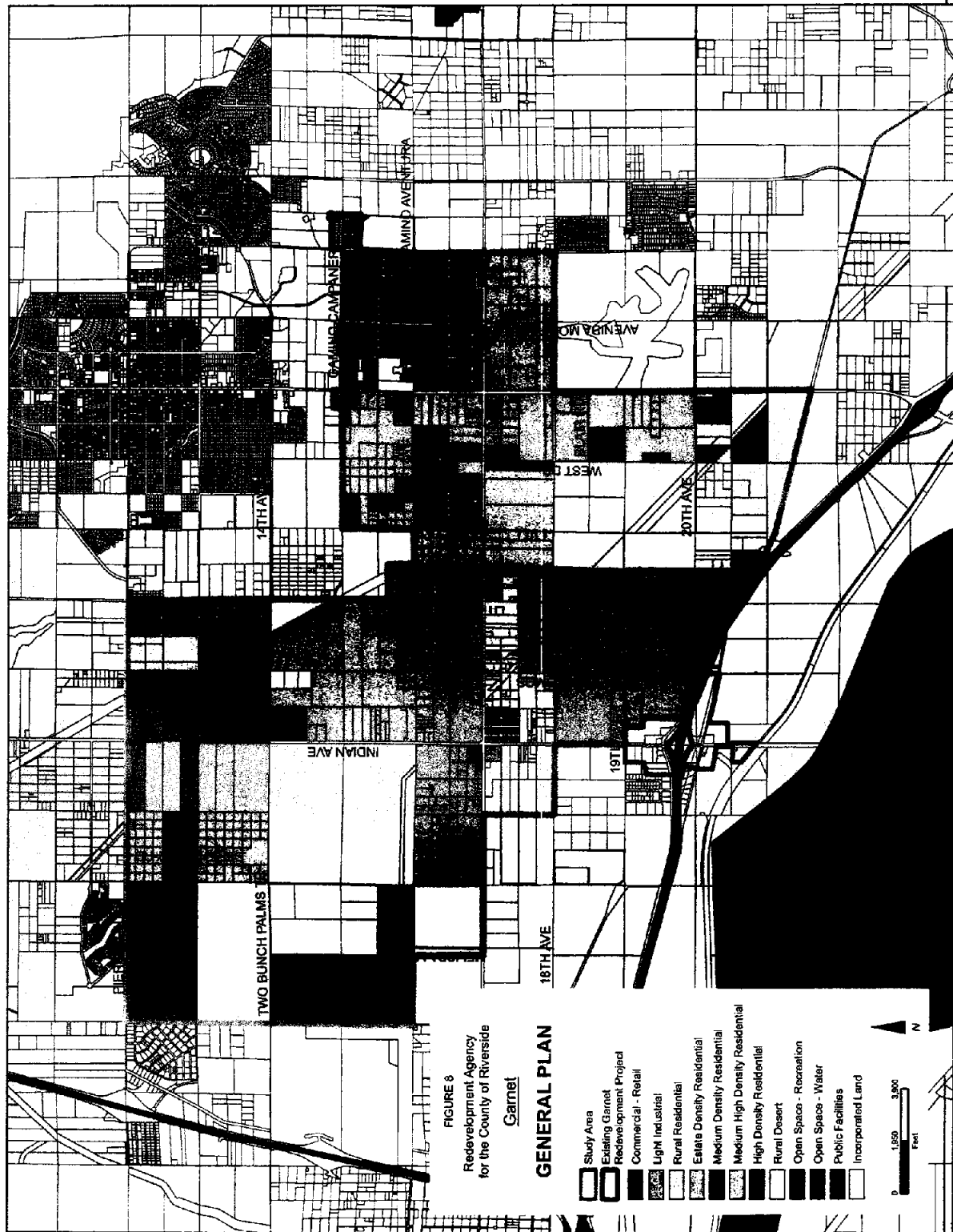
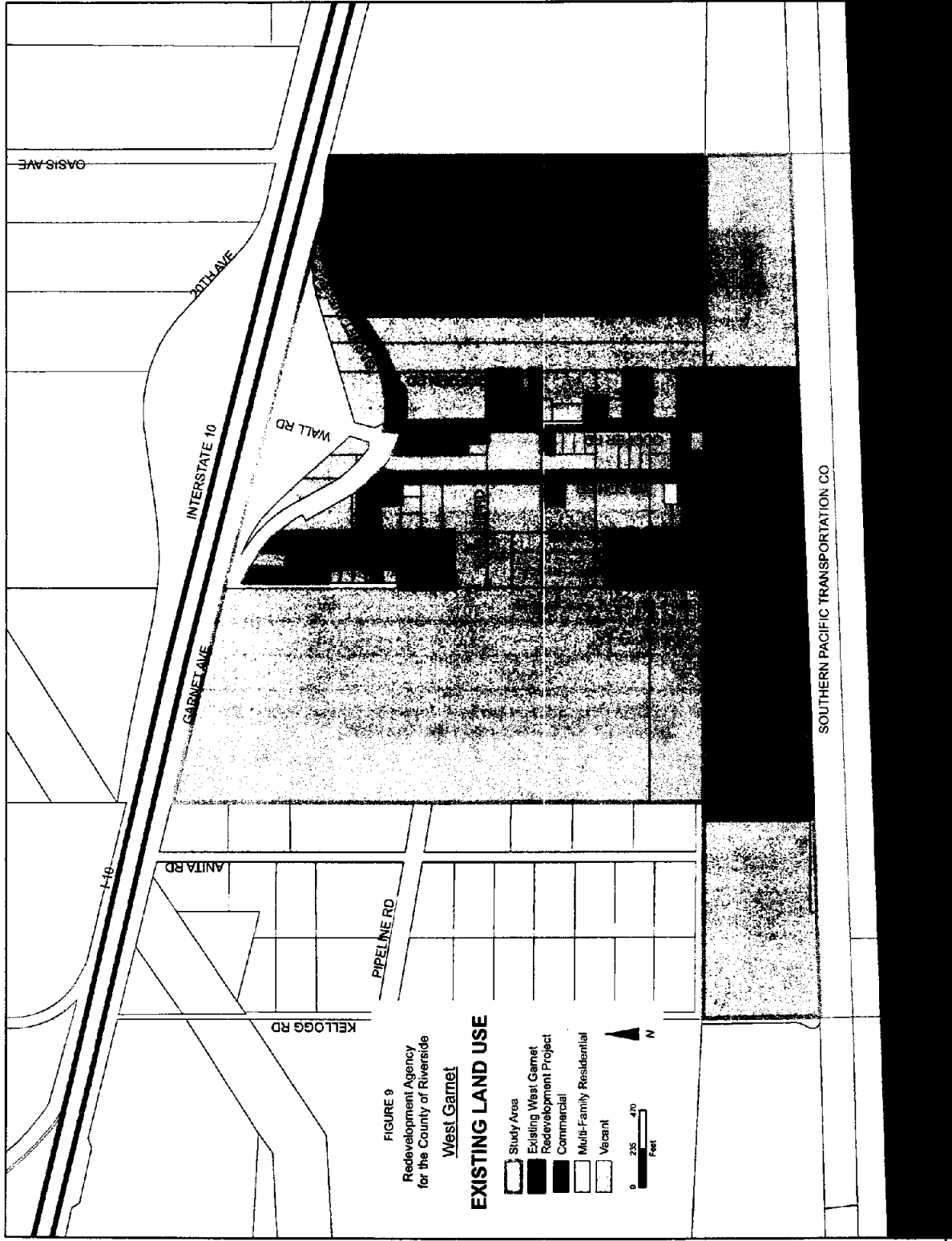
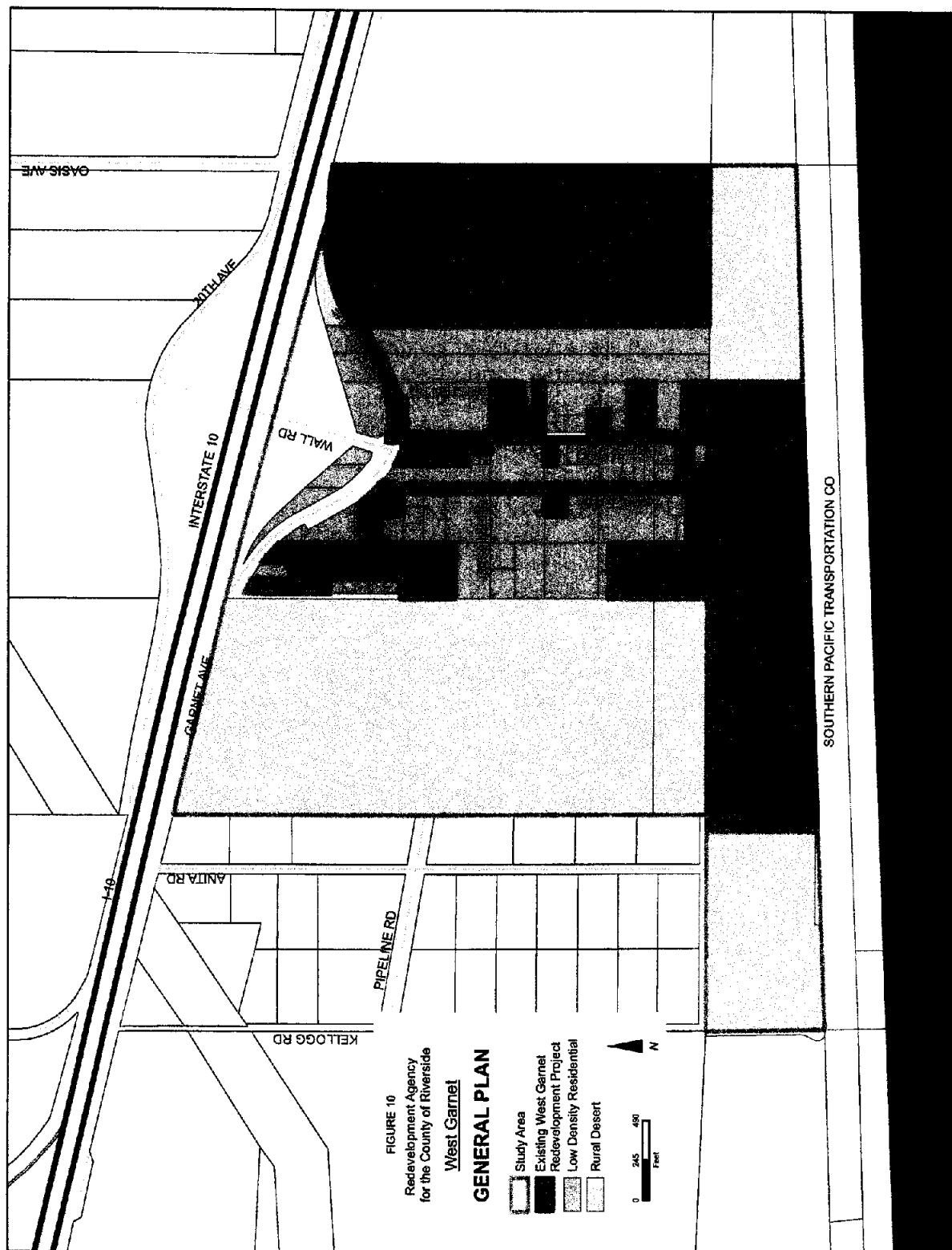


Table 3
EXISTING LAND USES AND
GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
FOR
WEST GARNET
(Proposed Project Area)
(Estimated at this time)

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Existing Land Use		
Commercial	< 1	< 1
Multi-Family Residential	< 1	< 1
Vacant	190	93
Streets/R.O.W.	15	7
Total	205	100
General Plan Land Use		
Low Density Residential	130	64
Multi-Family Residential	60	29
Streets/R.O.W.	15	7
Total	205	100

Source: CD Data (Parcel Quest Series 4, Riverside County, August 2007), Riverside County GIS, GRC Redevelopment Consultants.





Western Coachella Valley Area Plan (WCVAP): The Amendment Area is within the WCVAP, one of the County of Riverside General Plan designated planning areas. The area plan boundary is framed by the San Jacinto Mountains and Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument to the west and Joshua Tree National Park to the north and east. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's Colorado River Aqueduct traverses from east to west along the majority of the Area Plan, paralleling Interstate 10 north of Dillon Road. The following is a description of the geographically unique areas found in the Western Coachella Valley.

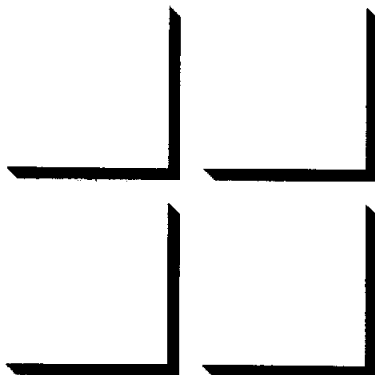
Physically, the Western Coachella Valley area is characterized by a variety of geographic features. Ringed by the rugged San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and Little San Bernardino Mountains, the Coachella Valley contains a series of low-lying desert flatlands, sloping dunes and rolling foothills. The Whitewater River runs the length of the Valley.

J. Describe the Surrounding Land Uses:

The Amendment Area is located western Riverside County. Surrounding uses in the Cherry Valley sub-area include residential, commercial and undeveloped properties. Surrounding uses in the Garnet sub-area include the existing Garnet Project Area; the Whitewater River; and residential, commercial and undeveloped properties. Surrounding uses in the West Garnet sub-area include the existing West Garnet Project Area; and residential, commercial and undeveloped properties.

K. List and Describe Any Other Related Permits and Other Public Approvals Required for This Project, Including Those Required by County, Regional, State, and Federal Agencies:

Adoption of the Plan will be by ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside. No other permits or approvals from other public agencies are required.

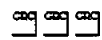


2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

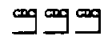
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. Additionally, environmental factors relevant to implementation of the Project and intended for inclusion in the EIR are also checked.

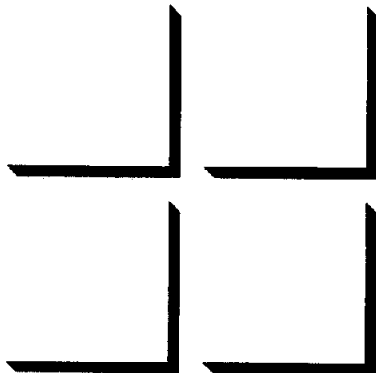
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ Aesthetics | ☒ Agriculture Resources | ☒ Air Quality |
| ☒ Biological Resources | ☒ Cultural Resources | ☐ Geology/Soils |
| ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials | ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality | ☒ Land Use/Planning |
| ☐ Mineral Resources | ☐ Noise | ☒ Population/Housing |
| ☒ Public Services | ☐ Recreation | ☒ Transportation/Traffic |
| ☒ Utilities/Service Systems | ☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

Pursuant to these findings of potential significance and the requirements of the CRL and CEQA guidelines, a program EIR will be prepared for the Project. The program EIR is expected to focus on issues related to the environmental topics of agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, population and housing, traffic, air quality, public services, utilities, and mandatory findings of significance.



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3.0 DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the Project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find the proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and a program ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

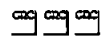
Date: 2/29/08

Tina English, Deputy Director
Economic Development Agency, County of Riverside
Telephone:
(951) 955-8916

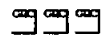
CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present the data and information required for this initial evaluation to the best of my ability, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

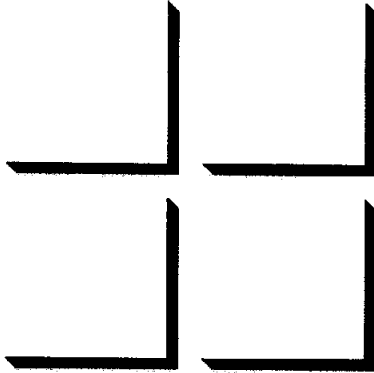
Date: 2/29/08

Ernest W. Glover, GRC Redevelopment Consultants, Inc.
Telephone: (714) 234-1122



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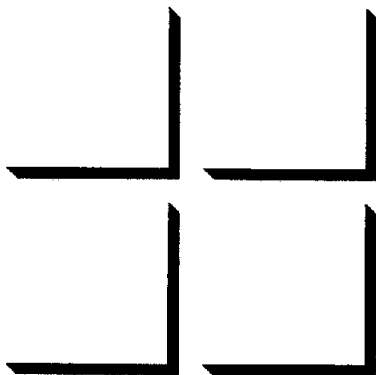
4.0 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

An Environmental Checklist Form (Form) has been used to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. The Form has been prepared by the Resources Agency of California to assist local governmental agencies, such as the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside, in complying with the requirements of the Statutes and Guidelines for implementing the California Environmental Quality Act. In the Form, environmental effects are evaluated as follows:

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in its response. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is "Potentially Significant", "Less Than Significant With Mitigation", or "Less Than Significant". "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is

substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from an "Earlier Analyses," as described in #5 below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - (a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - (b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - (c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances).
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - (a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question.
 - (b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.



5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS. 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation: I.a-d. *Less than Significant.* The WCVAP identifies the natural features of the Western Coachella Valley as part of its scenic character. It also identifies scenic highways that provide the motorist with a view of distinctive natural characteristics that are not typical of other areas in the County. Within the planning area, scenic highways include State Route 111 and Interstate 10. These scenic resources are protected by area plan policies.

As noted above, the primary purpose of the Redevelopment Plan amendment is to facilitate the removal of blight from the Amendment Area. Consequently, the Project is expected to have a demonstrable positive aesthetic effect on the Amendment Area and its scenic resources. Any future development activities in the Amendment Area will be subject to area plan policies, and the County's development and architectural review processes, all which are designed to eliminate potential for adverse visual impacts. Future development may produce new sources of light and glare that would come from parking lot and building lighting. Accepted planning policies can reduce potential impacts to an acceptable level. Consequently, adverse impacts from the Project relative to the above-defined aesthetics

factors are considered less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES. In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.				
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. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: II.a-c. *Potentially Significant.* According to the WCVAP, the area contains row crops, groves, and other related agricultural uses. Portions of the Amendment Area are currently used for agricultural production, and portions are designated by the General Plan for continued agricultural use. Because important agricultural resources are expected to occur in the Amendment Area, an evaluation of potential Project impacts relative to these above listed agricultural resource issues will be included in the EIR. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will identify, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY. Where applicable, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.				
Would the Project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation: III.a. *Less Than Significant.* Western Riverside County (west of the San Geronio Pass) is located within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which includes all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Air quality conditions in the SCAB are under the jurisdiction of the South Coast

Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD is responsible for the development of the regional Air Quality Management Plan and efforts to regulate pollutant emissions from a variety of sources.

According to the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), the worst air quality problem in the nation occurs in the South Coast Air Basin. With very light average wind speeds, the basin atmosphere has a limited capability to disperse air contaminants horizontally. The dominant daily wind pattern is a daytime sea breeze (onshore breeze) and a nighttime land breeze (offshore breeze), broken only occasionally by winter storms and infrequent strong Santa Ana winds from the Great Basin, Mojave, and deserts to the north.

The SCAB is designated as a non-attainment area for federal and state ozone standards. Ozone is a pungent, colorless gas typical of southern California smog. Elevated ozone concentrations result in reduced lung function, particularly during vigorous physical activity. Ozone levels peak during the summer and early fall months.

The SCAB also is designated as a non-attainment area for Particulate Matter (PM) 10. Particulate matter is the term used for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Coarse particles (larger than 2.5 but smaller than 10 micrometers, or PM10) come from a variety of sources, including windblown dust and grinding operations.

Although it produces less than 10% of the SCAB's particulate matter, western Riverside County exceeds federal standards more than any other urban area in the nation, and has the highest particulate concentration in the SCAB. These high levels of particulate matter are largely imported from the urbanized portions of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This imported particulate is generally composed of photochemical precipitates rather than dust, smoke or soot. Riverside County is also responsible for generating large amounts of particulate matter from sources such as agriculture, warehousing operations, and truck traffic.

Any development proposed within the Amendment Area, including those that receive Agency assistance, are required to be reviewed and processed in accordance with the CEQA, and SCAQMD provisions relative to pollutants and odors. As appropriate, individual mitigation measures shall be applied. Adoption and implementation of the proposed Redevelopment Plan amendment will not affect the existing project review process. Redevelopment activities are expected to stimulate the elimination of blight and the pace of new energy-efficient development. Consequently, Project impacts relative to the above-defined air quality impact are considered less than significant.

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| 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 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? ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

Explanation: III.b-e. *Potentially Significant.* Pollutants are introduced into the Air Basin through a variety of natural and man-made sources, although the vast majority of the air pollution in the local vicinity can be attributed to mobile sources, such as motor vehicles. Implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment will not contribute to any existing air quality violations. Although mitigation measures to limit increases in air emissions will be adopted pursuant to the SCQMD and County policy, future new development and redevelopment in the Amendment Area could result in incremental increases in local air pollutant and particulate emissions. The exact character of such new development is not known, and whether or not such emissions would result is indeterminable at this time. Such increases in air pollutants may accelerate beyond available mitigation, resulting in potentially significant adverse impacts.

The EIR for the Project will evaluate potential impacts related to the above-defined air quality factors. In addition, to respond to the recently enacted State of California AB 32 - Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, effective as of January 2007, a discussion of potential effects of global warming and an update of state regulation to address global warming will be included in the EIR. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the Project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and 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?	☒	☐	☐	☐

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| e. | Conflict with any local policies or ordinance 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? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Explanation: *IV. a-f. Potentially Significant.* The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) encompasses approximately 1.26 million acres (approximately 1,997 square miles). This MSHCP includes unincorporated and incorporated County land (excluding Indian land) west of the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line. The plan is the largest HCP and covers multiple species and multiple habitats within multiple jurisdictions. The MSHCP covers a diverse landscape from urban cities to undeveloped foothills and forests. In addition to the presence of multiple habitats, the plan stretches across the Santa Ana Mountains, Riverside Lowlands, San Jacinto Foothills, San Jacinto Mountains, Aqua Tibia Mountains, Desert Transition and San Bernardino Mountain bio-regions.

The MSHCP serves as a Habitat Conservation Plan pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as well as a Natural Communities Conservation Plan under the NCCP Act of 1991. The purpose of the MSHCP is for the Wildlife Agencies to grant "take authorization" for otherwise lawful actions that may incidentally take or harm individuals of a species outside of preserve areas, in exchange for supporting assembly of a coordinated reserve system. Conservation and management duties, as well as implementation assurances, are provided by the County and other signatory agencies or jurisdictions identified as permittees through a corresponding Implementation Agreement.

The WCVAP establishes policies requiring compliance with the MSHCP. Because important biological resources are expected to occur in the Amendment Area, the EIR for the Project will evaluate the consistency of the proposed Redevelopment Plan amendment with applicable biological resource policies. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the Project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: *V. a. No Impact.* Information provided in Table 4-7A of the County General Plan Final EIR, Volume I, identifies historic resources within the County. No identified historic resources are located within the proposed Amendment Area. Consequently, no Project impacts relative to historic resources are expected to occur.

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| 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? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Explanation: V. b-d. *Potentially Significant.* The cultural history of Riverside County is divided into three general chronological units - prehistory, ethnohistory, and history - the last two of which overlap in the early years. The first two divisions are restricted to Native American traditions, beginning with the settlement of the Southern California region 10,000 to 12,000 years ago and extending through time to initial Euro-American settlement in the late 18th century when the mission system was established, disrupting native life ways.

Western Riverside County has fault block mountains that contain the older fossiliferous sediments. Fossils in Riverside date from the late Jurassic Period (150 million years ago). Marine sandstones of the Imperial Formation in the Salton Trough are found as far northwest as Cabazon. Three million years ago, near the present I-15/SR-91 interchange, there was the white sand beach at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The Ice Ages left fossils of giant sloths, elephants, camels, and bison that were preyed upon by giant bear, American lion, and sabercats.

The County General Plan establishes policies to protect cultural resources. As required by the CRL, future development in the Amendment Area will be required to be consistent with General Plan and cultural resource protection policies. Because important cultural resources are expected to occur in the Amendment Area, the EIR for the Project will evaluate the consistency of the proposed Redevelopment Plan amendment with applicable cultural resource policies. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. 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 on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation: VI. a-e. *Less Than Significant.* The Western Coachella Valley is traversed by several active and potentially active fault zones, including the San Andreas Fault, and has experienced several earthquakes of moderate magnitude since records have been kept. The primary seismic hazards which result are ground shaking and the potential for ground rupture along the surface trace of the fault. Secondary seismic hazards result from the interaction of ground shaking with existing soil and bedrock conditions, and include liquefaction, settlement, and landslides.

The WCVAP and County ordinances establish building techniques, the enforcement of setbacks, and practical avoidance measures to mitigate potential geologic hazards. Construction projects in the County are required to comply with the California Building Code, which is intended to reduce structural risks related to unstable geologic or soil conditions.

These potential geologic hazards occur county wide and are not unique to the Amendment Area. Compliance with WCVAP and County ordinances are expected to reduce potential adverse impacts relative to geology and soils hazards in the Amendment Area to less than significant levels.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the Project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

Explanation: VII. a-d. *Less Than Significant.* The Amendment Area does not contain any industrial land. The Cherry Valley and Garnet sub-areas contain land designated for future industrial development. Any new industrial uses to locate in or adjacent to the Amendment Area would be subject to separate review by the County of Riverside. New industrial uses also would be subject to federal and state regulations and local ordinances that regulate the transport, manufacture, use and disposal of hazardous materials. The Amendment Area may contain hazardous materials associated with past agricultural use or from asbestos containing materials and/or lead-based paint in older structures. This potential is not unique to the Amendment Area. Identification and removal of potential hazardous materials, should they occur, are regulated by federal and state regulations and local ordinances. These regulations and ordinances are expected to reduce potential adverse impacts relative to hazardous materials in the Amendment Area to less than significant levels. In addition, the Redevelopment Plan amendment could provide a source of funding to assist with the removal of such materials. Therefore, the potential for any adverse impacts on the environment due to hazards and hazardous materials is less than significant.

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| 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 Amendment 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 Amendment Area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Explanation: VII. e-g. *No Impact.* The March, Flabob, Bermuda Dunes, Chino, and Skylark Airports are located in the portions of the WCVAP. However, the Amendment Area is not within an airport land use plan area or safety area for these airports. Consequently, implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment is not expected to result in a safety hazard for persons residing or working in the Amendment Area.

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| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Explanation: VII. g, h. *No Impact.* Future development and redevelopment activities in

the Amendment Area will be subject to City public safety requirements, including adopted emergency response and evacuation plans, consequently no impacts to these plans are expected. According to the WCVAP, wildfire risks are located west and south of Highway 74; and the Amendment Area is outside areas of high wildland fire risk. Therefore, there is no potential for the Project to expose people or structures to risks associated with wildland fires.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. 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 which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation: VIII. a-f. *Less Than Significant.* All development within Riverside County is required to comply with an approved Water Quality Management Plan and/or a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. The Project does not propose any wells or any activities that would interfere with groundwater recharge or deplete groundwater supplies. All development within Riverside County is required to comply with the Riverside County Flood Control Department Master Drainage Plan. These issues related to water quality, drainage and groundwater are county-wide and not unique to the Amendment Area. Any development that occurs within the Amendment Area, including those that receive Agency assistance, would be required to be reviewed and processed in accordance with the County hydrology and water quality goals and policies. Therefore, the potential for the Project to impact to these above listed hydrology and water quality issues is considered

less than significant.

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| 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? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Explanation: VIII. g-h. Potentially Significant. As discussed in the WCVAP, the Whitewater River is the primary drainage course in the area, spanning the length of the Coachella Valley. The upper part of the river, in the San Gorgonio Wilderness, is dry throughout most of its length with the exception of its most westerly end, which quickly percolates into the groundwater basin or is diverted for use. The river is fed by several tributaries, including the San Gorgonio River, Mission Creek, Little and Big Morongo Creeks, and Box Canyon Wash. The Whitewater River floodplain, which is a preserve for the endangered Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard, is located south of Interstate 10 and east of Indian Avenue. Portions of the Garnet and West Garnet sub-areas adjacent to the River are expected to within or adjacent to 100-year and/or 500-year flood hazard areas.

Policies of the WCVAP and General Plan Safety Element regulate the location of structures in flood prone areas. Because flooding hazards are unique to certain portions of the Amendment Area, the EIR for the Project will evaluate the consistency of the proposed Redevelopment Plan amendment with applicable flood protection policies. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

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| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

Explanation: VIII. i-j. Less Than Significant. The Amendment Area is not within an identified dam inundation zone. A tsunami is a destructive ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. The Amendment Area is located 60 miles from the ocean with mountain ranges in between. A tsunami onsite is improbable. Mudflows are soft wet earth and debris, made fluid by rain or melted snow that may travel at speed. The Amendment Area is relatively level and mudflows are improbable. A seiche occurs when waves oscillate in lakes, bays, or gulfs as a result of seismic disturbances. It is remotely possible but highly unlikely that seiches from Whitewater River would impact the Amendment Area. Therefore, the potential for the Project to impact the above listed hydrology and water quality issues is considered less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the Project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: IX. a-b. *No Impact.* The proposed Project is not a land use proposal. Rather, it is an enabling tool to be used by the Agency for the purpose of raising funds to encourage the rehabilitation and upgrading of currently underutilized land to more efficient uses with greater economic potential. Future construction activities will occur in accordance with the General Plan and WCVAP, and with applicable environmental plans or policies. As such, the Project will be compatible with existing planned land uses and will not result in the physical division of established communities. Consequently, no impacts to the above listed land use and planning topics are expected to result from the Project.

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| 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, General Plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
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Explanation: IX. c. *Potentially Significant.* As required by the CRL, future development in the Amendment Area will be required to be consistent with General Plan and WCVAP policies. To ensure the Redevelopment Plan amendment considers these policies, the EIR for the Project will evaluate the consistency of the proposed Redevelopment Plan amendment with applicable land use plans. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. MINERAL RESOURCES. 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, General Plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: X. a-b. *No Impact.* No known mineral resources occur in the Amendment Area. All activities accomplished pursuant to the Redevelopment Plan amendment will be

consistent with the General Plan. Consequently, the Project will not cause the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local plan.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. NOISE. 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation: XI. a-d. *Less Than Significant.* As the level of residential, commercial and industrial activity intensifies in the Amendment Area, existing noise levels from local traffic increases also may occur. High noise levels associated with construction activities involved in development and redevelopment may cause temporary impacts. However, noise standards established by the General Plan and County ordinance regulate construction noise as well as potential noise impacts from new development. Therefore, the potential for significant adverse impacts on the environment relative to ambient noise or ground vibrations in the Amendment Area or as a result of Project implementation is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

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| 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 Amendment 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 Amendment Area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Explanation: XI. e-f. *No Impact.* The Amendment Area is located more than 2 miles away from the March, Flabob, Bermuda Dunes, Chino, and Skylark Airports. Consequently, implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment is not expected to result in noise impacts associated with an airport or airstrip.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING. 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 extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: XII. a. *No Impact.* As discussed under item IX, above, the proposed Project is not a land use proposal. Rather, it is an enabling tool to be used by the Agency for the purpose of raising funds to encourage the rehabilitation and upgrading of currently underutilized land to more efficient uses with greater economic potential. Future construction activities will occur in accordance with the General Plan and WCVAP policies. Although redevelopment activities may accelerate the rate of development, they are not expected to increase the density of population beyond that permitted by the General Plan. As such, the Project is not expected to induce substantial population growth.

b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Displace substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: XII. b-c. *Potentially Significant.* Some displacements of residents or businesses could occur because of the redevelopment activities that the Project will facilitate. The EIR for the Project will evaluate potential displacement of housing and people. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the Project:				
a. Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Police protection?	☒	☐	☐	☐
Schools?	☒	☐	☐	☐
Parks?	☒	☐	☐	☐
Other public facilities?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: XIII. a. *Potentially Significant.* The Riverside County Fire Department operates 85 fire stations. A total of 51 of these stations, as well as three stations operated by the California Department of Forestry, are located in the unincorporated portion of Riverside County.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department has 2,720 employees, including 1,330 sworn personnel to provide for community policing services. Nine sheriff sub-stations are located throughout Riverside County to provide area-level community service. Riverside County Sheriff's Department has established the following criteria for its staffing requirements in unincorporated areas of the County: One sworn officer per 1,000 population; One supervisor and one support staff employee per seven officers; One patrol vehicle per three sworn officers; One school resource officer per school.

Currently, there are no schools, parks or government facilities in the Amendment Area. Redevelopment activities resulting from adoption and implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment could increase the rate of development in the Amendment Area, and subsequently could accelerate demand for fire protection, police protection, schools, public facility maintenance and other governmental services. There may be discrepancies between the County's land use policies for the area and public service capacities. The need for public services could accelerate beyond available capacity, resulting in potentially significant adverse impacts. The EIR for the Project will evaluate current public service levels, identify any existing or expected deficiencies and assess whether the Project would result in potentially significant adverse impacts related to the above-defined public service factors. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. RECREATION.				
a. Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: XIV. a-b. *No Impact.* No specific recreation projects are identified by the Project at this time. In addition, because the Redevelopment Plan amendment will be

consistent with land use policies of the General Plan, the Redevelopment Plan amendment will not increase demand for recreational facilities above and beyond that contained in the General Plan. Therefore, no public recreational facilities are expected to be negatively affected by implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. Would the Project:				
a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☒	☐	☐	☐
Explanation: XV. a-b. <i>Potentially Significant.</i> Future development of underutilized portions of the Amendment Area that may result from implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment will increase the overall intensity of activity in the Amendment Area. This will, in turn, increase traffic generation. Although such increases in development and traffic generation will be consistent with the General Plan, increases in traffic volumes may accelerate beyond available roadway capacity, resulting in potentially significant adverse impacts. The EIR for the Project will evaluate potential impacts related to the above-defined transportation and traffic factors. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.				
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a 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. Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation: XV. c-g. *No Impact.* Future road improvements in the Amendment Area will be required to be constructed in accordance with the General Plan and County standards. Improvements constructed in connection with the Project are expected to facilitate development consistent with the goals and standards of the Regional Plan and General Plan, including those related to emergency access, parking, and pedestrian and

bicycle circulation. The Amendment Area is outside the influence area of West Coachella Valley airports. Therefore, the Project is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on the environment relative to the above listed traffic issues.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. 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 storm water 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 adequate 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?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: XVI. a-g. *Potentially Significant Impact.* Future development of underutilized portions of the Amendment Area that may result from implementation of the Redevelopment Plan amendment will increase the overall intensity of activity in the Amendment Area. This will, in turn, increase demand of utility and service systems, which could accelerate beyond available capacity, resulting in potentially significant adverse impacts. The EIR for the Project will evaluate potential impacts related to the above-defined utility and service system factors. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified, the EIR will propose, where feasible, mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 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 a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

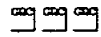
Explanation: *Potentially Significant.* As discussed under items IV and V, biological and cultural resources are expected to occur in the Amendment Area. County policies designed to protect these resources need to be evaluated in the context of the Redevelopment Plan amendment. Further assessment of the Project potential to substantially degrade the environment will be provided in the EIR.

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 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.) | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

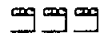
Explanation: *Potentially Significant.* As discussed under item XV, above, future new development and redevelopment in the Amendment Area could result in air pollutant and traffic increases, and public service and utility demands that are not fully mitigated by existing County policies. These conditions could result in cumulative impacts requiring mitigation. Further assessment of potential cumulative air quality and traffic impacts associated with the Project will be provided in the EIR.

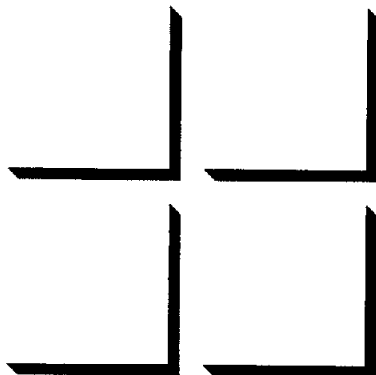
- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| c. | Does the Project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects to human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Explanation: *Less Than Significant.* All future development and redevelopment activities accomplished under the proposed Redevelopment Plan are expected to conform to applicable federal, state and local guidelines. These regulations and ordinances are expected to reduce potential adverse impacts relative to environmental effects to human beings to less than significant levels. Therefore, the potential for any adverse impacts on the environment due to these effects is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.



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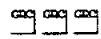




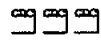
6.0 SOURCES CITED IN EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines permits an environmental document to incorporate by reference other documents that provide relevant data. The documents outlined below are hereby incorporated by reference, and the pertinent material is summarized throughout this Initial Study where that information is relevant to the analysis of impacts of the proposed Project. All documents incorporated by reference are available for review at the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside 1325 Spruce Street, Suite 400 Riverside, CA 92507. The office hours are Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

1. *County of Riverside General Plan / Riverside County Integrated Program* (current)
2. *Riverside County Zoning Code* (current)
3. *Preliminary Plan for Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 - Cherry Valley, Garnet, and West Garnet Sub-Areas; prepared by GRC Redevelopment Consultants, Inc; January 2, 2008*
4. *General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report Volume I and Volume II; LSA Associates, Inc. 2002.*



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APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT



CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

Notice of Preparation

March 4, 2008

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2
SCH# 2008031016

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

Please direct your comments to:

Ernest Glover
Riverside County Redevelopment Agency
c/o GRC Redevelopment Consultants
701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
Orange, CA 92868

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,


Scott Morgan
Project Analyst, State Clearinghouse

Attachments
cc: Lead Agency

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2008031016
Project Title Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2
Lead Agency Riverside County Redevelopment Agency

Type NOP Notice of Preparation

Description The project proposal by the Redevelopment Agency for the County of Riverside to adopt a Redevelopment Plan amendment to the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area. The proposed amendment consists of an approximately 11,720 acre expansion of the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area. The Amendment Area is comprised of three non-contiguous sub-areas. Size of each sub-area is as follows: 1,844 acres for Cherry Valley sub-area; 9,671 acres for Garnet sub-area; and 205 acres for West Garnet sub-area.

The purpose of the Project is to abate the relative stagnation and conditions of blight in each of the sub-areas, and to facilitate the continued elimination of blight in the existing Mid-County Project Area (MCPA).

Lead Agency Contact

Name Ernest Glover
Agency Riverside County Redevelopment Agency
Phone 714-234-1122 **Fax**
email
Address c/o GRC Redevelopment Consultants
701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
City Orange **State** CA **Zip** 92868

Project Location

County Riverside
City
Region
Cross Streets 1: Orchard, Taylor, Bellflower, Cougar/ 2: Pierson, Serendipity/ 3: Garnet, Kellog
Parcel No. Various

Township	Range	Section	Base
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Proximity to:

Highways I-10
Airports
Railways
Waterways Whitewater River
Schools
Land Use

Project Issues

**Reviewing
Agencies**

Date Received 03/04/2008 **Start of Review** 03/04/2008 **End of Review** 04/02/2008

IOP Distribution List

County: Kiverside

SCH#

2008031010

☐ Sources Agency	☐ Fish & Game Region 2 Jeff Drongesen	☐ Public Utilities Commission Ken Lewis	☒ Caltrans, District 8 Dan Kopulsky	☐ Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
☐ Resources Agency Nadell Gayou	☐ Fish & Game Region 3 Robert Floerke	☐ Santa Monica Bay Restoration Guangyu Wang	☐ Caltrans, District 9 Gayle Rosander	☐ RWQCB 1 Cathleen Hudson North Coast Region (1)
☐ Dept. of Boating & Waterways David Johnson	☐ Fish & Game Region 4 Julie Vance	☒ State Lands Commission Marina Brand	☐ Caltrans, District 10 Tom Dumas	☐ RWQCB 2 Environmental Document Coordinator San Francisco Bay Region (2)
☐ California Coastal Commission Elizabeth A. Fuchs	☐ Fish & Game Region 5 Don Chadwick Habitat Conservation Program	☐ Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Cherry Jacques	☐ Caltrans, District 11 Jacob Armstrong	☐ RWQCB 3 Central Coast Region (3)
☒ Colorado River Board Gerald R. Zimmerman	☐ Fish & Game Region 6 Gabrina Gatchel Habitat Conservation Program	<u>Business, Trans & Housing</u>	☐ Caltrans, District 12 Ryan P. Chamberlain	☐ RWQCB 4 Teresa Rodgers Los Angeles Region (4)
☐ Dept. of Conservation Sharon Howell	☐ Fish & Game Region 6 I/M Gabrina Gatchel Inyo/Mono, Habitat Conservation Program	☐ Caltrans - Division of Aeronautics Sandy Hesnard	<u>Cal EPA</u>	☐ RWQCB 5 Central Valley Region (5)
☐ California Energy Commission Dale Edwards	☐ Dept. of Fish & Game M George Isaac Marine Region	☐ Caltrans - Planning Terri Pencovic	☐ Air Resources Board	☐ RWQCB 5F Central Valley Region (5) Fresno Branch Office
☐ Cal Fire Allen Robertson	<u>Other Departments</u>	☒ California Highway Patrol Shirley Kelly Office of Special Projects	☐ Airport Projects Jim Lerner	☐ RWQCB 5R Central Valley Region (5) Redding Branch Office
☐ Office of Historic Preservation Wayne Donaldson	☐ Food & Agriculture Steve Shaffer Dept. of Food and Agriculture	☐ Housing & Community Development Lisa Nichols Housing Policy Division	☐ Transportation Projects Ravi Ramalingam	☐ RWQCB 6 Lahontan Region (6)
☐ Dept of Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Section	☐ Dept. of General Services Public School Construction	<u>Dept. of Transportation</u>	☐ Industrial Projects Mike Tollstrup	☐ RWQCB 6V Lahontan Region (6) Victorville Branch Office
☐ Central Valley Flood Protection Board Mark Herald	☐ Dept. of General Services Robert Sleppy Environmental Services Section	☐ Caltrans, District 1 Rex Jackman	☒ California Integrated Waste Management Board Sue O'Leary	☒ RWQCB 7 Colorado River Basin Region (7)
☐ S.F. Bay Conservation & Dev't. Comm. Steve McAdam	☐ Dept. of Health Services Veronica Malloy Dept. of Health/Drinking Water	☐ Caltrans, District 2 Marcelino Gonzalez	☐ State Water Resources Control Board Student Intern, 401 Water Quality Certification Unit Division of Water Quality	☒ RWQCB 8 Santa Ana Region (8)
☐ Dept. of Water Resources Resources Agency Nadell Gayou	<u>Independent Commissions, Boards</u>	☐ Caltrans, District 3 Jeff Pulverman	☐ State Water Resources Control Board Steven Herrera Division of Water Rights	☐ RWQCB 9 San Diego Region (9)
☐ Conservancy	☐ Delta Protection Commission Debbie Eddy	☐ Caltrans, District 4 Tim Sable	☒ Dept. of Toxic Substances Control CEQA Tracking Center	☐ Other
<u>Land and Game</u>	☐ Office of Emergency Services Dennis Castrillo	☐ Caltrans, District 5 David Murray	☐ Department of Pesticide Regulation	
☐ Dept. of Fish & Game Scott Flint Environmental Services Division	☐ Governor's Office of Planning & Research State Clearinghouse	☐ Caltrans, District 6 Moses Stiles		
☐ Fish & Game Region 1 Donald Koch	☒ Native American Heritage Comm. Debbie Treadway	☐ Caltrans, District 7 Vin Kumar		
☐ Fish & Game Region 1E Laurie Hamsberger				

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 653-6251
Fax (916) 657-5390
www.nahc.ca.gov
ds_nahc@pacbell.net



March 7, 2008

Mr. Ernest Glover

Riverside County Redevelopment Agency

c/o 701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
Orange, CA 92868

Re: SCH# 2008031016: CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2, Riverside County, California

Dear Mr. Glover:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced document. The Native American Heritage Commission is the state agency designated for the protection of California's Native American cultural resources. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that any project that causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource, that includes archeological resources, is a 'significant effect' requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR per the California Code of Regulations § 15064.5(b)(c) (CEQA Guidelines). In order to comply with this provision, the lead agency is required to assess whether the project will have an adverse impact on these resources within the 'area of potential effect (APE),' and if so, to mitigate that effect. To adequately assess the project-related impacts on historical resources, the Commission recommends the following action:

✓ Contact the appropriate California Historic Resources Information Center (CHRIS). Contact information for the 'Information Center' nearest you is available from the State Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento (916/653-7278). The record search will determine:

- If a part or the entire (APE) has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
- If any known cultural resources have already been recorded in or adjacent to the APE.
- If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
- If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
- ✓ If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
- The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum, and not be made available for public disclosure.
- The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional archaeological Information Center.
- ✓ Contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for:
 - * A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search of the project area and information on tribal contacts in the project vicinity who may have information on cultural resources in or near the APE. Please provide us site identification as follows: USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle citation with name, township, range and section. This will assist us with the SLF.
 - Also, we recommend that you contact the Native American contacts on the attached list to get their input on the effect of potential project (e.g. APE) impact. In many cases a culturally-affiliated Native American tribe or person will be the only source of information about the existence of a cultural resource.
- ✓ Lack of surface evidence of archeological resources does not preclude their subsurface existence.
- Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of accidentally discovered archeological resources, per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) §15064.5 (f) of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American, with knowledge in cultural resources, should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
- Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the disposition of recovered artifacts, in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.

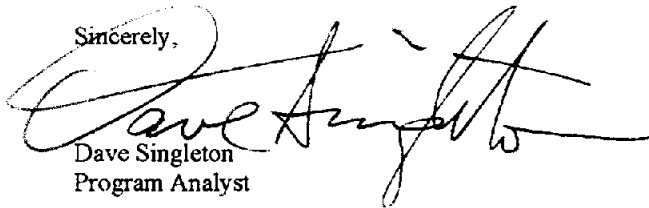
√ Lead agencies should include provisions for discovery of Native American human remains or unmarked cemeteries in their mitigations plans.

- CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) requires the lead agency to work with the Native Americans identified by this Commission if the Initial Study identifies the presence or likely presence of Native American human remains within the APE. CEQA Guidelines provide for agreements with Native American groups, identified by the NAHE, to ensure the appropriate and dignified treatment of Native American human remains and any associated grave goods.
- Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097.98 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) mandate procedures to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

√ Lead agencies should consider avoidance, as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15370 when significant cultural resources are discovered during the course of project planning or execution.

Please feel free to contact me at (916) 653-6251 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Singleton", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Dave Singleton
Program Analyst

Attachment: Native American Contact List.

Cc: State Clearinghouse

**Native American Contacts
Riverside County
March 7, 2008**

Cahuilla Band of Indians
Anthony Madrigal, Jr., Chairperson
P.O. Box 391760 Cahuilla
Anza , CA 92539
tribalcouncil@cahuilla.net
(951) 763-2631

(951) 763-2632 Fax

Pechanga Band of Mission Indians
Paul Macarro, Cultural Resource Center
P.O. Box 1477 Luiseno
Temecula , CA 92593
(951) 308-9295 Ext 8106
(951) 676-2768
(951) 506-9491 Fax

Ramona Band of Mission Indians
Joseph Hamilton, vice chairman
P.O. Box 391670 Cahuilla
Anza , CA 92539
admin@ramonatribe.com
(951) 763-4105
(951) 763-4325 Fax

Soboba Band of Mission Indians
Chairperson
P.O. Box 487 Luiseno
San Jacinto , CA 92581
varres@soboba-nsn.gov
(951) 654-2765
(951) 654-4198 - Fax

Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians
John Marcus, Chairman
P.O. Box 609 Cahuilla
Hemet , CA 92546
srtribaloffice@aol.com
(951) 658-5311
(951) 658-6733 Fax

Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Robert Martin, Chairperson
11581 Potrero Road Cahuilla
Banning , CA 92220 Serrano
Robert.Martin@morongo.org
(951) 849-8807
(951) 755-5200
(951) 922-8146 Fax

Pechanga Band of Mission Indians
Mark Macarro, Chairperson
P.O. Box 1477 Luiseno
Temecula , CA 92593
tbrown@pechanga-nsn.gov
(951) 676-2768
(951) 695-1778 Fax

Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians
Harold Arres, Cultural Resources Manager
P.O. Box 487 Luiseno
San Jacinto , CA 92581
harres@soboba-nsn.gov
(951) 654-2765
FAX: (951) 654-4198

This list is current only as of the date of this document.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native American with regard to cultural resources for the proposed SCH#2008031016; CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP); draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Aarea, Amendment No. 2; Riverside County, California.

**Native American Contacts
Riverside County
March 7, 2008**

Cahuilla Band of Indians
Maurice Chacon, Cultural Resources
P.O. Box 391760 Cahuilla
Anza , CA 92539
cbandodian@aol.com
(951) 763-2631

(951) 763-2632 Fax

This list is current only as of the date of this document.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native American with regard to cultural resources for the proposed SCH#2008031016; CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP); draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2; Riverside County, California.



**Riverside County
Waste Management Department**

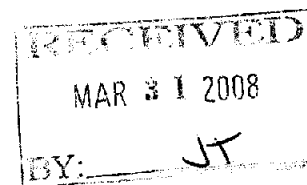
Hans W. Kernkamp, General Manager-Chief Engineer

RECEIVED

MAR 21 2008

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

March 18, 2008



Michelle
Tina English, Deputy Director
Economic Development Agency for the County of Riverside
1325 Spruce Street
Riverside, CA 92507

**RE: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Environmental Impact Report
Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2**

Dear Ms. English:

The Riverside County Waste Management Department (RCWMD) has reviewed the proposed Amendment Area, which consists of an expansion of approximately 11,720 acres split into three (3) non-contiguous sub-areas located within the unincorporated western area of the County. The three (3) subareas are identified as: 1) Cherry Valley Area, 2) Garnet Area, and 3) West Garnet Area. The RCWMD understands that the purpose of the Project is to abate the relative stagnation and conditions of blight in each of the sub-areas, and to facilitate the continued elimination of blight in the existing Mid-County Project Area, and requests the following issues be considered and discussed in the Environmental Impact Report:

1. Solid Waste Management/Impacts

a. The proposed project has the potential to impact waste facilities and capacity during construction and upon buildout of the project. It also has the potential to impair the County of Riverside's ability to maintain the State-mandated 50 percent diversion if waste generated by the project is primarily landfilled and not recycled. To assess waste impacts, the EIR will need to estimate the amount of waste generated by the project, especially construction/demolition and green waste. Waste generation rates for residential, business, and non-residential type land uses are published on the website for the California Integrated Waste Management Board. In addition, your analysis needs to account for how much of the permitted daily capacity at El Sobrante Landfill and/or Lamb Canyon is already being used to determine if there is available daily capacity.

The following information will be useful to you in the analysis of potential solid waste impacts:

El Sobrante Landfill:

The El Sobrante Landfill is located east of Interstate 15 and Temescal Canyon Road to the south of the City of Corona and Cajalco Road at 10910 Dawson Canyon Road. The landfill is owned and operated by USA Waste of California, a subsidiary of Waste Management, Inc., and encompasses 1,322 acres, of which 645 acres are permitted for landfill operation. The El Sobrante Landfill is currently permitted to receive 10,000 tons of refuse per day (tpd), of which 4,000 tpd is reserved for refuse generated within Riverside County. The landfill has a total capacity of approximately 109 million tons or 184.93 million cubic yards, of which approximately 48 million tons are reserved for in-County waste. **As of December 31, 2007, the landfill had a remaining in-County disposal capacity of approximately 36.449 million tons.** During the second half of 2007, the El Sobrante Landfill accepted a total of approximately 1.088 million tons of waste, of which approximately 0.484 million tons were generated within Riverside County.¹ The daily average for in-County waste was 3,162 tons. The landfill is expected to reach capacity in approximately 2031.

¹ Annual tonnage figures as reported in SiteInfo.

Lamb Canyon Landfill:

The Lamb Canyon Landfill is located between the City of Beaumont and City of San Jacinto at 16411 Lamb Canyon Road (State Route 79), south of Interstate 10 and north of Highway 74. The landfill is owned and operated by Riverside County. The landfill property encompasses approximately 1,189 acres, of which 353.4 acres encompass the current landfill permit area. Of the 353.4-acre landfill permit area, approximately 144.6 acres are permitted for waste disposal. The landfill is currently permitted to receive 3,000 tons of refuse per day and had an estimated total disposal capacity of approximately 16.244 million tons, as of June 30, 2006.² **As of December 31, 2007**, the landfill had a **total remaining capacity** of approximately **11.076 million tons**³. The current landfill remaining disposal capacity is estimated to last, at a minimum, until approximately 2016.⁴ During the second half of 2007, the Lamb Canyon Landfill accepted a daily average volume of 1,936 tons and a period total of approximately 305,915 tons. Landfill expansion potential exists at the Lamb Canyon Landfill site.

Badlands Landfill

The Badlands Landfill is located northeast of the City of Moreno Valley at 31125 Ironwood Avenue and accessed from State Highway 60 at Theodore Avenue. The landfill is owned and operated by Riverside County. The existing landfill encompasses 1,168.3 acres, of which 150 acres are permitted for refuse disposal and another 96 acres are designated for existing and planned ancillary facilities and activities. The landfill is currently permitted to receive 4,000 tons per day and had an estimated total capacity of approximately 15.237 million tons, as of June 30, 2006⁵. **As of December 31, 2007**, the landfill had a **total remaining disposal capacity** of approximately **8.033 million tons**.⁶ The current lined landfill area will reach its capacity in, at the earliest time, 2011; however, development of the remaining, unlined portion of the 150-acre refuse footprint could provide additional capacity until 2016/2017.⁷ During the second half of 2007, the Badlands Landfill accepted a daily average volume of 1,999 tons and a period total of approximately 305,839 tons. Further landfill expansion potential exists at the Badlands Landfill site.

b. The EIR should identify how waste generated by the project will be handled. Mitigation of project impacts should include recycling measures to reduce waste with special focus given to construction/demolition waste and green waste in common landscape areas. The project proponent is encouraged to consider incorporating the following measures to help reduce the project's potential solid waste impacts and to help in the County's efforts to comply with State law in diverting solid waste from landfill disposal:

- Green waste generated by the project should be kept separate from other waste types in order that it can be recycled through the practice of grass recycling (where lawn clippings from a mulching type mower are left on the lawn) or onsite composting or directed to local wood grinding and/or composting operations.
- The use of mulch and/or compost in the development and maintenance of landscape areas is recommended.
- Construction and demolition waste should be reduced and/or diverted from landfill disposal by the use of onsite grinders or by directing the materials to recycling facilities.

² GASB 18 – 2006- Engineering Estimate for total landfill capacity

³ GASB 18- 2006 – Engineering Estimate and 2006 tonnage data from SiteInfo.

⁴ Based on a countywide disposal capacity projection prepared in March 2006 for the 2004 Annual Report on the implementation of the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. The Countywide projection is a "worst-case" scenario, as it has assumed no landfill expansions beyond what is currently permitted for operation.

⁵ GASB 18 – 2006 – Engineering Estimate.

⁶ GASB 18- 2006 – Engineering Estimate and 2006 tonnage data from SiteInfo .

⁷ Latest Site Engineer's estimate.

2. Transportation/Traffic

Projected traffic generated by the proposed project should include estimates of truck trips attributed to the collection and transportation of waste and recyclables from land uses within the proposed project area

3. Air Quality

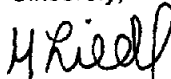
Potential air quality impacts associated with the collection and transportation of solid waste from the project, i.e., disposal truck traffic, on a local and cumulative level.

4. Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste materials are not accepted at County landfills. Future specific development projects will be required to include CEQA analysis of the impacts related to future hazardous waste and household hazardous waste. Any hazardous wastes, including paint, used during construction would need to be properly disposed of at a licensed facility in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. During specific development, the applicant shall contact the Riverside County Household Hazardous Waste Collection (HHW) Program – 24-Hour Hotline, at 1.800.304.2226 for further information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at 951/486-3284.

Sincerely,



Mirtha Liedl, Planner IV



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South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

March 7, 2008

Mr. Ernest Glover
GRC Redevelopment, Inc.
701 South Parker Street, Suite 7400
Orange, CA 92868

Dear Mr. Glover:

**Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the
Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2 – Cherry Valley, Garnet,
and West Garnet Sub-Areas**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The SCAQMD's comments are recommendations regarding the analysis of potential air quality impacts from the proposed project that should be included in the draft environmental impact report (EIR). Please send the SCAQMD a copy of the Draft EIR upon its completion. **In addition, please send with the draft EIR all appendices or technical documents related to the air quality analysis and electronic versions of all air quality modeling and health risk assessment files. Without all files and supporting air quality documentation, the SCAQMD will be unable to complete its review of the air quality analysis in a timely manner. Any delays in providing all supporting air quality documentation will require additional time for review beyond the end of the comment period.**

Air Quality Analysis

The SCAQMD adopted its California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Handbook in 1993 to assist other public agencies with the preparation of air quality analyses. The SCAQMD recommends that the Lead Agency use this Handbook as guidance when preparing its air quality analysis. Copies of the Handbook are available from the SCAQMD's Subscription Services Department by calling (909) 396-3720. Alternatively, the lead agency may wish to consider using the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved URBEMIS 2007 Model. This model is available on the SCAQMD Website at: www.urbemis.com.

The Lead Agency should identify any potential adverse air quality impacts that could occur from all phases of the project and all air pollutant sources related to the project. Air quality impacts from both construction (including demolition, if any) and operations should be calculated. Construction-related air quality impacts typically include, but are not limited to, emissions from the use of heavy-duty equipment from grading, earth-loading/unloading, paving, architectural coatings, off-road mobile sources (e.g., heavy-duty construction equipment) and on-road mobile sources (e.g., construction worker vehicle trips, material transport trips). Operation-related air quality impacts may include, but are not limited to, emissions from stationary sources (e.g., boilers), area sources (e.g., solvents and coatings), and vehicular trips (e.g., on- and off-road tailpipe emissions and entrained dust). Air quality impacts from indirect sources, that is, sources that generate or attract vehicular trips should be included in the analysis.

The SCAQMD has developed a methodology for calculating PM_{2.5} emissions from construction and operational activities and processes. In connection with developing PM_{2.5} calculation methodologies, the SCAQMD has also developed both regional and localized significance thresholds. The SCAQMD requests that the lead agency quantify PM_{2.5} emissions and compare the results to the recommended PM_{2.5} significance thresholds. Guidance for calculating PM_{2.5} emissions and PM_{2.5} significance thresholds can be found at the following internet address: http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/PM2_5/PM2_5.html.

In addition to analyzing regional air quality impacts the SCAQMD recommends calculating localized air quality impacts and comparing the results to localized significance thresholds (LSTs). LST's can be used in addition to the recommended regional significance thresholds as a second indication of air quality impacts when preparing a CEQA document. Therefore, when preparing the air quality analysis for the proposed project, it is recommended that the lead agency perform a localized significance analysis by either using the LSTs developed by the SCAQMD or performing dispersion modeling as necessary. Guidance for performing a localized air quality analysis can be found at <http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/LST/LST.html>.

It is recommended that lead agencies for projects generating or attracting vehicular trips, especially heavy-duty diesel-fueled vehicles, perform a mobile source health risk assessment. Guidance for performing a mobile source health risk assessment ("Health Risk Assessment Guidance for Analyzing Cancer Risk from Mobile Source Diesel Idling Emissions for CEQA Air Quality Analysis") can be found on the SCAQMD's CEQA web pages at the following internet address: http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/mobile_toxic/mobile_toxic.html. An analysis of all toxic air contaminant impacts due to the decommissioning or use of equipment potentially generating such air pollutants should also be included.

Mitigation Measures

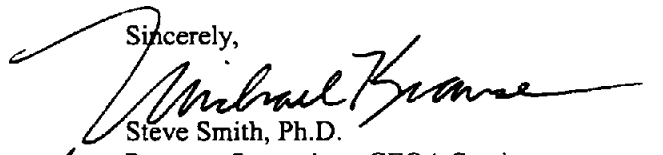
In the event that the project generates significant adverse air quality impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures that go beyond what is required by law be utilized during project construction and operation to minimize or eliminate significant adverse air quality impacts. To assist the Lead Agency with identifying possible mitigation measures for the project, please refer to Chapter 11 of the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook for sample air quality mitigation measures. Additional mitigation measures can be found on the SCAQMD's CEQA web pages at the following internet address: www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/mitigation/MM_intro.html. Additionally, SCAQMD's Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust, and the Implementation Handbook contain numerous measures for controlling construction-related emissions that should be considered for use as CEQA mitigation if not otherwise required. Other measures to reduce air quality impacts from land use projects can be found in the SCAQMD's Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning. This document can be found at the following internet address: <http://www.aqmd.gov/prdas/aqguide/aqguide.html>. In addition, guidance on siting incompatible land uses can be found in the California Air Resources Board's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Perspective, which can be found at the following internet address: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf>. Pursuant to state CEQA Guidelines §15126.4 (a)(1)(D), any impacts resulting from mitigation measures must also be discussed.

Data Sources

SCAQMD rules and relevant air quality reports and data are available by calling the SCAQMD's Public Information Center at (909) 396-2039. Much of the information available through the Public Information Center is also available via the SCAQMD's World Wide Web Homepage (<http://www.aqmd.gov>).

The SCAQMD is willing to work with the Lead Agency to ensure that project-related emissions are accurately identified, categorized, and evaluated. Please call Charles Blankson, Ph.D., Air Quality Specialist, CEQA Section, at (909) 396-3304 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

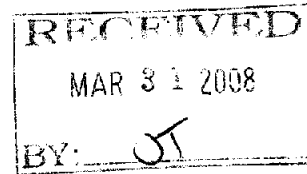


Steve Smith, Ph.D.
for Program Supervisor, CEQA Section
Planning, Rule Development and Area Sources

SS:CB:AK
RVC080306-01AK
Control Number



City Of Calimesa



March 27, 2008

Mr. Ernest Glover
GRC Redevelopment, Inc.
701 South Parker Street, Ste.7400
Orange, CA 92868

SUBJECT: NOP Mid-County Redevelopment Project Area, Amendment No. 2

Dear Mr. Glover:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study for the above referenced project. A portion of the project area is contiguous to the City of Calimesa north of Orchard Street and Taylor Drive. The Riverside County General Plan designates this area within the redevelopment plan as Very Low Density Residential- Rural Community. The adjacent area in the City is designated by the City of Calimesa General Plan as Open Space Residential (1 du/10 ac.). Since the redevelopment plan implements the existing Riverside County General Plan, the City of Calimesa has no specific comments. We would appreciate receiving a copy of the Draft EIR when available.

Sincerely,

Ernest Perea, AICP
Contract Planner

cc: Gus Romo, Community Development Director



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RIVERSIDE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

In cooperation with the
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

210 West San Jacinto Avenue • Perris, California 92570 • (951) 940-6900 • Fax (951) 940-6910

John R. Hawkins
Fire Chief

Proudly serving the
unincorporated
areas of Riverside
County and the
Cities of:

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Lake Elsinore
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Moreno Valley
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Temecula

Board of Supervisors

Bob Buster,
District 1

John Tavaglione,
District 2

Jeff Stone,
District 3

Roy Wilson,
District 4

Marion Ashley,
District 5

April 2, 2008

Ernest Glover
GRC Redevelopment, Inc.
701 South Parker St., Suite 7400
Orange, CA. 92868

Re: Fire Services for the Mid County Redevelopment Project Area

With respect to the referenced proposed Project Area, the Riverside County Fire Department offers the following:

The proposed project(s) will add to the cumulative adverse affect on the Fire Department's ability to maintain the current level of service. These impacts include fire and medical emergencies as well as public service calls, all due to the increased population and presence of structures.

The Fire Department's Strategic Planning Section has identified the need to rebuild the current Cherry Valley Fire Station and North Palm Springs Fire Station which have exceeded their 50 year use plan.

Riverside County Fire Stations operate 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, with a minimum 3 person crew, including Paramedics, operating "Type-1" structural fire fighting apparatus.

Response time service goals are be at scene of any given incident within five minutes of dispatch with 90% accuracy as defined within National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710. As with any additional construction within a response area, a "cumulative" increase in requests for service will add to the Fire Department's ability to provide adequate service thus enhancing the significance of the two facilities in meeting response time requirements.

Tony Fox

Tony Fox, Captain
Strategic Planning Division
Riverside County Fire Department
(760) 863-8886



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