SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
INITIAL STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

This form and the descriptive information in the application package constitute the contents of Initial Study pursuant to County Guidelines under Ordinance 3040 and Section 15063 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

PROJECT LABEL

APN:	0631-283-07	***USGS Quad:***	Joshua Tree North, CA
Applicant:	Steve Lam	***T, R, Section:***	T2N, R6E, Section 36, NW1/4
Location:	The project is located at 2082 Stonehill Avenue in Joshua Tree, California. The Project is located approximately 5.5 miles north of Highway 62, a few hundred feet north of Moonlight Mesa Street and a few hundred feet west of Border Avenue. The approximate GPS coordinates of the project site are 30°20'22.85" N and 117°30'10.32" W (33.3396799 and -117.5028698). Figure 1 shows the Regional Location and Figure 2 shows the site location. Figure 3 is aerial photo of the project site.	***Thomas Bros:***	Page 4819, coordinates 3-D
Project No:	PROJ-2022-00040	***Community Plan:***	Joshua Tree Community Plan/Action Guide
Rep:	Ignisio Studios	***LUZD:***	GP: Rural Living (RL) ZD: Joshua Tree Rural Living (JT/RL)
Proposal:	A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Joshua Tree Camp Site Project, a four-unit camp site on a 2.39-acre site.	***Overlays:***	Burrowing Owl (SE) and Desert Tortoise-Medium Population

PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Contact person: Reuben Arceo
Phone No: 909-387-4110
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Existing Site Conditions

The site aerial photo (Figure 3) was reviewed to assemble the following information. The project site is located on an alluvial fan in the northern portion of the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree. The site has a shallow slope to the southeast and a small desert wash is located on the southern portion of the property. The site is located on the west side of Stonehill Avenue which is a graded dirt road adjacent to the site. As illustrated on the aerial photo of the project area, there are scattered rural residences in the vicinity of the project site, including a residence just east of the property on the east site of Stonehill Avenue. Electric

power lines are located within the project area. Surface runoff follows the flow line of the desert wash on the southern portion of the property. Surface runoff on the site appears to be sheet flow as no incised channel occurs north of the referenced wash. The project site is relatively undisturbed. The background sound level at the project site appears relatively low, with travel on local roadways (particularly Moonlight Mesa Street and Border Avenue) constituting the primary source of background noise in the project area.

Table 1
EXISTING LAND USE AND LAND USE ZONING DISTRICTS

Location	Existing Land Use	Land Use Category / Land Use Zoning District
Project Site	Vacant	Rural Living/Joshua Tree Rural Living
North	Vacant	Rural Living/Joshua Tree Rural Living
South	Vacant	Rural Living/Joshua Tree Rural Living
East	A Single-Family Residence	Rural Living/Joshua Tree Rural Living
West	Two Single-Family Residences	Rural Living/Joshua Tree Rural Living

Project Operations

The proposed Joshua Tree Camp site consists of four geo dome structures that encompass a few hundred square feet each. Figures 4 and 5 show examples of the dome campgrounds in a desert setting. Figure 6a and 6b show the proposed site plan for the four camp site units. As shown on Figures 5, 6a and 6b, each unit will consist of the following components: the Camping Dome, wood decking, outdoor jacuzzi, hot tub, fire pit, concrete step seating adjacent to the fire pit, sand base walkway, planter areas (using desert plant species), stairs to access the Camp site, and perimeter wall and steel fencing around each unit. Each unit will have a four-space vehicle parking area adjacent.

A total of four units will be installed on the approximate 2.4-acre site. Access will be provided to the developed Camp site off Stonehill Lane. The applicant intends to open the Campground in Spring of 2023. The facility will be open daily and activities will be reduced for quite time at 10 pm each evening. A maximum of 16 people will be allowed at the Campground at any one time. A property manager (offsite) will handle daily operations and units will be visited daily for cleaning and maintenance.

Construction Scenario

Project construction will begin with clearing and grubbing the sites for the individual geo domes. As shown on Figure 5, this activity will consist of removing the vegetation from the areas supporting the four domes and the site access area. There will be no mass grading and a small grader and an estimated three employees will complete this phase of site preparation. In addition to clearing each geo dome campsite, this phase of site development will include the installation of one or more septic tank/leach line wastewater management systems. These systems will require approval by San Bernardino County. A potable water line is available in Stonehill Avenue and it will be extended onto the property to provide water to future campers, from a single water meter. These utilities will require a backhoe and two employees for one week.

The project will require some fine grading for the driveway and the individual camp sites. It is anticipated that this effort will require a week with two employees. Once the fine grading is complete, the wood decks will be installed along with any perimeter walls. Some footings may be required to support the wooden decks. The geo dome will be supported on the wooden deck and it is estimated that all four decks can be installed over a month by three or four employees. The geo domes will then be transported to the project site where they will be assembled for occupancy. Appropriate living equipment and furniture will be installed in each geo dome unit. Desert-appropriate landscaping will be installed at the site, including native shrubs and other plants. No asphalt or paving is proposed, and access roads and parking areas will be covered with gravel or chemicals to minimize generation of fugitive dust.

Figure 1

FIGURE 1

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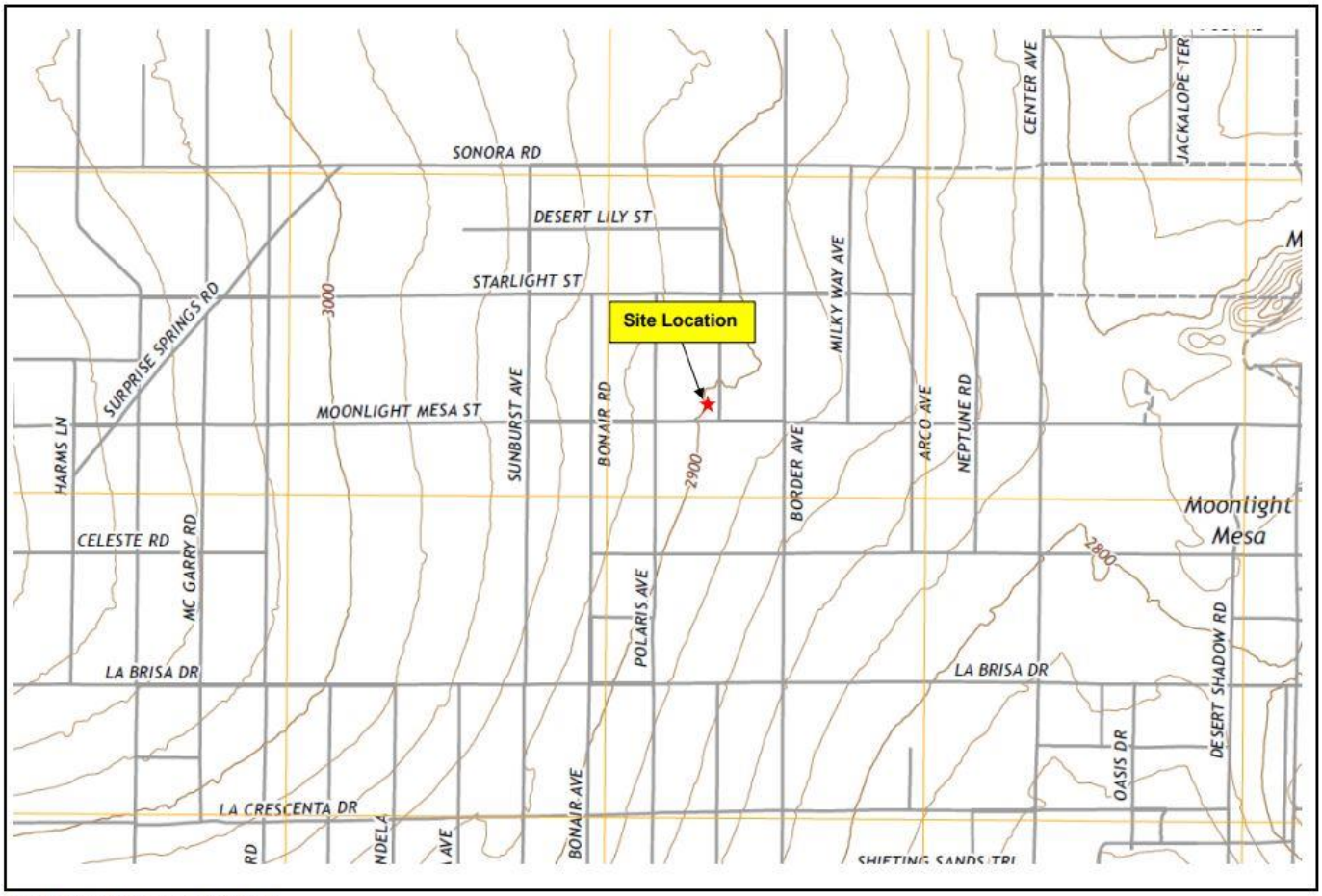
Regional Location Map

Figure 2



SOURCE: USGS Joshua Tree North

FIGURE 2

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Site Location Map

Figure 3

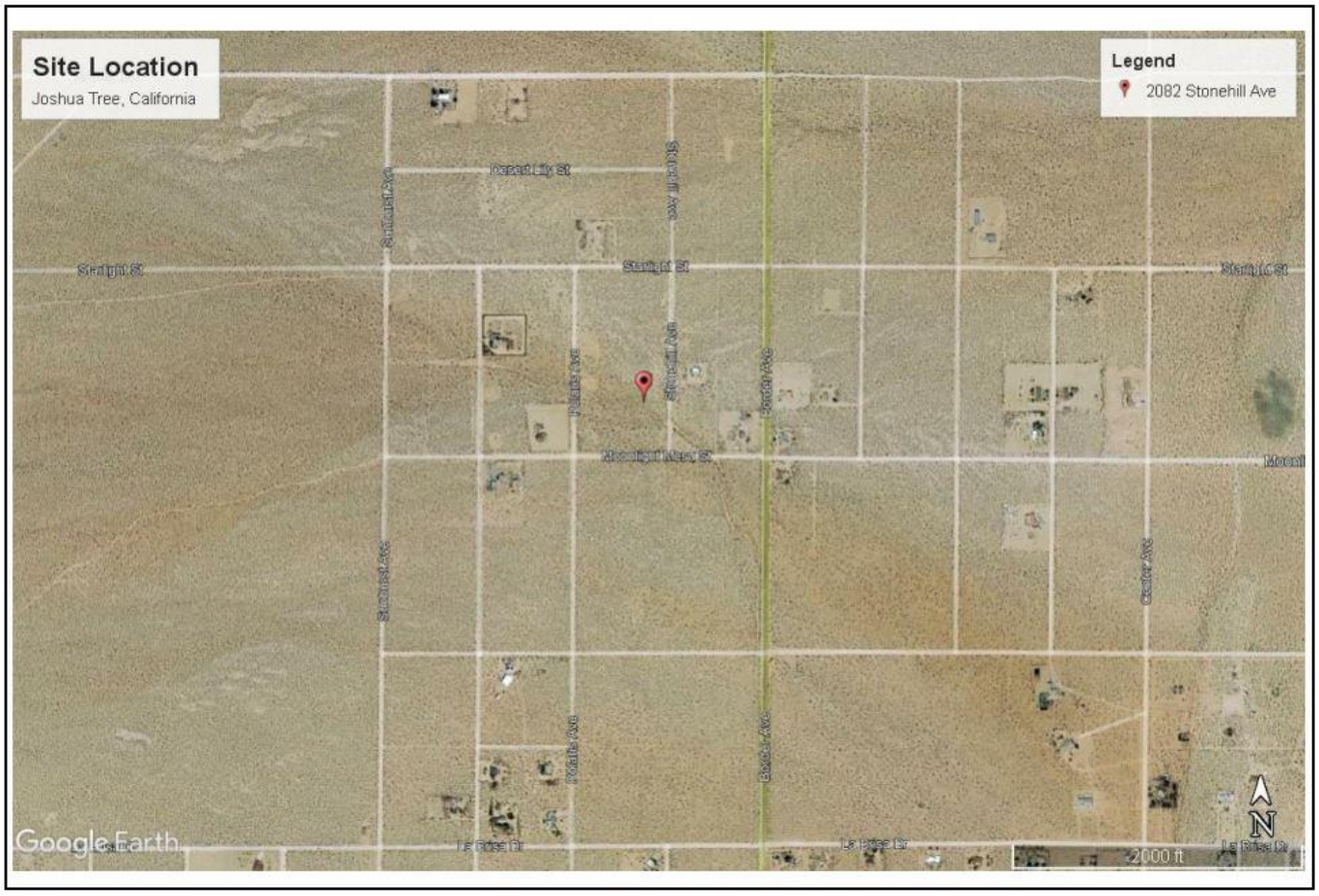

FIGURE 3

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Site Location (Aerial Photo)

Figure 4

SOURCE: https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/49118131

FIGURE 4

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Examples of Camp Sites

Figure 5

SOURCE: https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/49118131

FIGURE 5

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Examples of Camp Sites

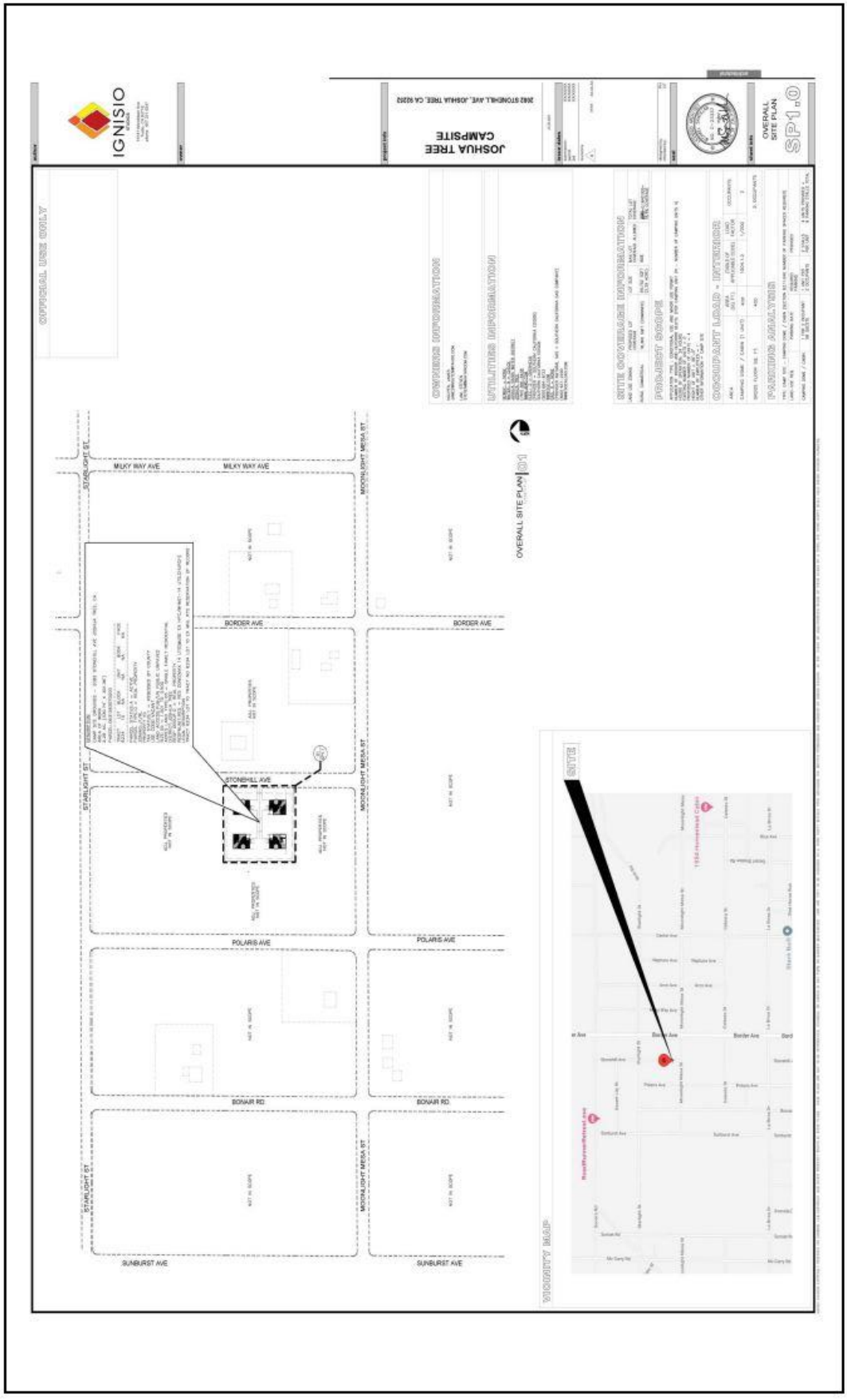

FIGURE 6a

Overall Site Plan

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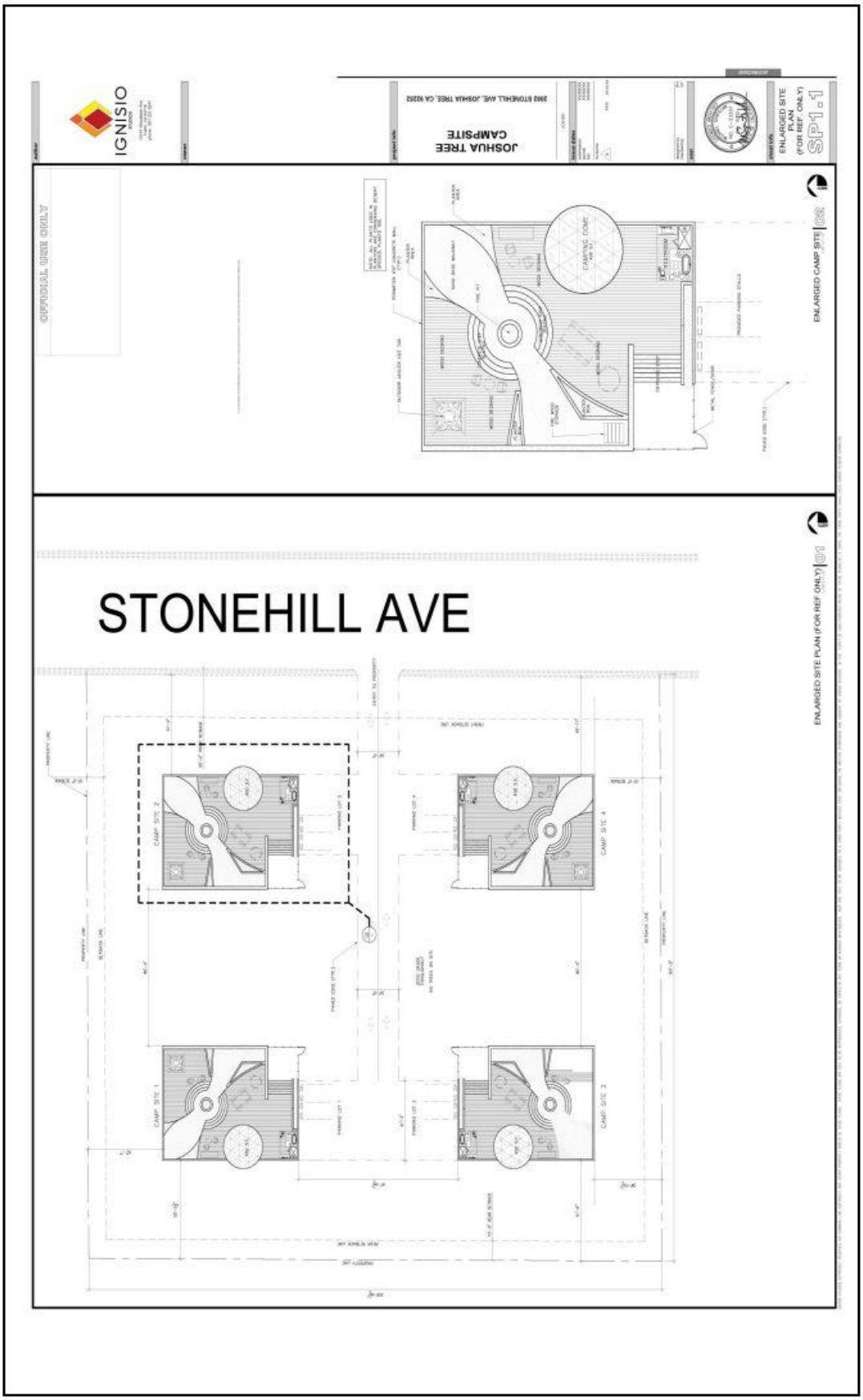

FIGURE 6b
Enlarged Site Plan (for Ref. only)

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ADDITIONAL APPROVALS THAT MAY BE REQUIRED BY OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

Because the project site is greater than one acre in size, the County will require the preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). The SWPPP is processed through the State Water Resources Control Board and enforced by the County and Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board. No other permits are known to be required at this location.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

In May 2022, the County of San Bernardino staff notified the following tribes pursuant to AB 52: (1) Colorado River Indian Tribes, (2) Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, (3) Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, (4) Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, (5) Morongo Band of Mission Indians, (6) San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, (7) San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and (8) Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians. The San Manuel submitted a list of mitigation measures to be included in the Tribal Cultural Resources section of the Initial Study.

EVALUATION FORMAT

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

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Substantiation is then provided to justify each determination. One of the four following conclusions is then provided as a summary of the analysis for each of the major environmental factors.

1. **No Impact**: No impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

2. **Less than Significant Impact**: No significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

3. **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**: Possible significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated and the following mitigation measures are required as a condition of project approval to reduce these impacts to a level below significant. The required mitigation measures are provided in each section and a list of mitigation measures is provided at the end of this Initial Study

4. **Potentially Significant Impact**: Significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to evaluate these impacts, which are identified in each section, where they occur.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

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

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

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

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

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

March 13, 2023
Signature (prepared by) Date

David Prusch March 13, 2023
Signature (Dave Prusch, Supervising Planner) Date
Land Use Services Department/Planning Division

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

I. AESTHETICS

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

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Adverse impacts to scenic vistas can occur in one of two ways. First, an area itself may contain existing scenic vistas that would be altered by a proposed development. The proposed project is located on a vacant site containing typical desert Creosote Scrub Vegetation. A review of the project area determined that there are no scenic resources located internally within the area proposed for the development of the Camp Site. A scenic vista impact can also occur when a scenic vista can be viewed from the project area or immediate vicinity and a proposed development may interfere with public a view to a scenic vista. The project is situated in the Morongo Basin of San Bernardino County in an area of low-density residential uses. Hills, ridges, and mountains are visible to the west, east, and south (towards Joshua Tree National Park). Development at this location would not interfere with general public mountain views experienced in this area, because the geo-domes are low to the ground and will not interfere substantially with the long-distance public views. Given that there are no pristine viewpoints in the vicinity the project from which to observe the mountain vistas, the development of the low elevation Camp Site in this area of the County is not considered significant. As such, implementation of the proposed development is not expected to cause any substantial adverse effects on any important scenic vistas. This potential impact is considered a less than significant adverse aesthetic impact. No mitigation is required.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor. The project site is located on Stonehill Avenue, and none of the nearby roadways are considered by the State or County to be a scenic highway. The County's recently adopted General Plan—the "Countywide Plan"[1]—identifies several county scenic routes as shown on Figure I-1, and Highway 62 is designated as a county scenic route in this area, and as an eligible state scenic highway. Note that Highway 62 is not designated as a state scenic highway in the vicinity of the project site. The proposed project would be compatible with the Countywide Policy Plan visual resource and aesthetic policies including:

[1] http://countywideplan.com/theplan/

- **Policy LU-2.1 Compatibility with existing uses.** We require that new development is located, scaled, buffered, and designed to minimize negative impacts on existing conforming uses and adjacent neighborhoods. We also require that new residential developments are located, scaled, buffered, and designed so as to not hinder the viability and continuity of existing conforming nonresidential development.
    - The proposed project is at a similar scale as the surrounding rural residential uses.
- **Policy LU-2.4 Land use map consistency.** We consider proposed development that is consistent with the Land Use Map (i.e., it does not require a change in Land Use Category), to be generally compatible and consistent with surrounding land uses and a community's identity. Additional site, building, and landscape design treatment, per other policies in the Policy Plan and development standards in the Development Code, may be required to maximize compatibility with surrounding land uses and community identity.
    - The proposed project is compatible with the land use map designation.
- **Policy LU-4.7 Dark skies.** We minimize light pollution and glare to preserve views of the night sky, particularly in the Mountain and Desert regions where dark skies are fundamentally connected to community identities and local economies. We also promote the preservation of dark skies to assist the military in testing, training, and operations.
    - The proposed project would not utilize extensive night lighting; thus, promoting dark skies due to the limited nighttime operating hours. Furthermore, the proposed use is one that would benefit from dark skies.
- **Policy LU-4.1 Context-sensitive design in the Mountain/Desert regions.** We require new development to employ site and building design techniques and use building materials that reflect the natural mountain or desert environment and preserve scenic resources.
    - The proposed project would be installed to be compatible with the types of surrounding uses.
- **Policy NR-4.1 Preservation of scenic resources.** We consider the location and scale of development to preserve regionally significant scenic vistas and natural features, including prominent hillsides, ridgelines, dominant landforms, and reservoirs.
    - As discussed under this topic, the proposed project would not conflict with the preservation of scenic resources.
- **Policy NR-4.3 Off-site signage.** We prohibit new off-site signage and encourage the removal of existing off-site signage along or within view of County Scenic Routes and State Scenic Highways.
    - The proposed project would install not install onsite signage, thus meeting the provisions of this policy. The proposed project would not result in a significant change in view shed in the vicinity of any County Scenic Route (Highway 62).

A review of the project area suggests that the proposed project would not be visible from Highway 62, as the proposed project would be installed at such a small scale given the open landscape, thus minimizing the views to the site from the Highway to the project site. As described above, the proposed project would comply with the Countywide Policy Plan, and by the standards of the San Bernardino Countywide Plan PEIR, the proposed project would have a less than significant potential to damage scenic resources within a state or County scenic highway.

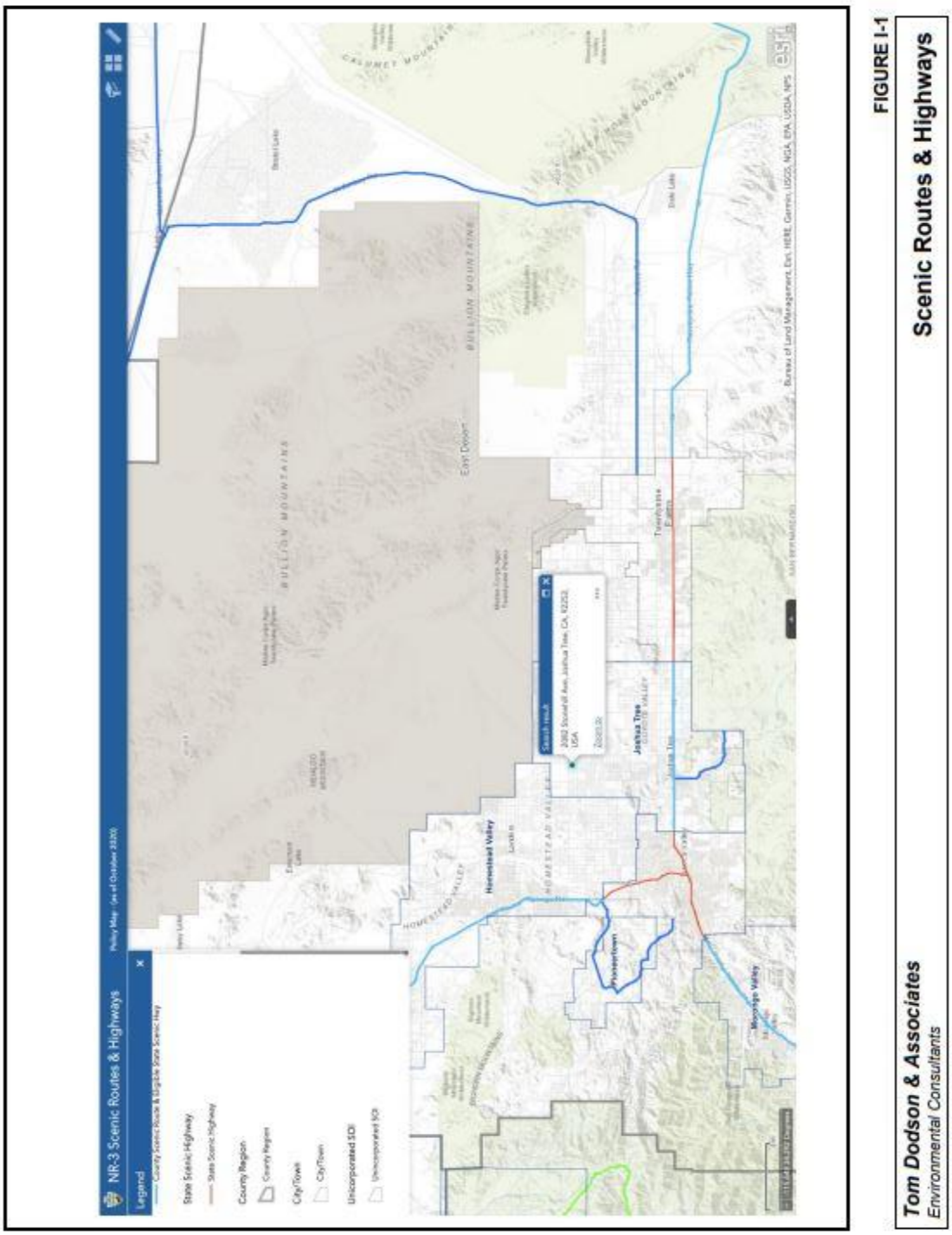
Furthermore, no historic buildings are located within the area proposed that would be disturbed as part of the proposed project. No rock outcroppings would be impacted by the proposed project, as none have been observed within the project site or adjacent to the project site. As stated under issue (a), above, the proposed project consists of desert scrub vegetation, with no trees on site that would fall under the County's tree ordinance. No other scenic resources have been identified on the site. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant potential to substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed Camp Site is located in a rural desert environment. The proposed project is located in a relatively sparsely developed portion of the County, and according to the State Office of Planning and Research site check, it does not meet the legal criteria for an urbanized area. Refer to Figure 3, which contains an aerial view to the project area.

Furthermore, by developing this vacant site in accordance with the proposed camp site design, this site will provide visitors with an opportunity inhabit the surrounding desert environment first hand and intimately. Thus, the design elements incorporated in the project will minimize the potential aesthetic impacts to a less than significant level.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Implementation of the proposed project will create only limited new sources of light during the occupancy phase of the project. Existing sources of light in the project area include nearby rural residence and occasional headlights from the adjacent roadways. The San Bernardino County Development Code requires new projects to adhere to the provisions of the Chapter 83.07.060 Glare and Outdoor Lighting – Mountain and Desert Requirements. The Development Code requires that outdoor lighting to meet shielding requirements, light pollution standards, automated control standards, dark sky curfew, and other requirements. While the proposed project will generate a new source of lighting, the project lighting will occur in a background of rural residences where limited lighting consistent with the County lighting requirements is not considered intrusive or significantly adverse. No mitigation will be required for lighting at this location and with mandatory compliance with the County Development Code, potential light and glare impacts associated with the proposed project will be a less than significant impact.

Figure I-1


NR-3 Scenic Routes & Highways
Legend
State Scenic Highway
County Region
City/Town
Unincorporated SOI
BULLION MOUNTAINS
Homestead Valley
Joshua Tree
Twentynine Palms
Yucca Valley
Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS
FIGURE I-1
Scenic Routes & Highways
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Environmental Consultants

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Will the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

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

a-e. *No Impact* – The proposed project is located in an area that is sparsely developed (rural residential uses) which is consistent with the camp site use at this site. Neither the project site nor the adjacent and surrounding properties are designated for agricultural or forest/timber uses. No agricultural activities or timber harvesting activities exist in the project area; and there is no potential for impact to any agricultural or forest/timber uses or values as a result of project implementation. No adverse impact to any agricultural resources or forest/timber would occur from implementing the proposed project. No mitigation is required.

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

III. AIR QUALITY

SUBSTANTIATION:

Air Quality Standards
Existing air quality is measured at established Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) air quality monitoring stations. Monitored air quality is evaluated in the context of ambient air quality standards. These standards are the levels of air quality that are considered safe, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public health and welfare. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) currently in effect are shown in Table III-1. Because the State of California had established Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) several years before the federal action and because of unique air quality problems introduced by the restrictive dispersion meteorology, there is considerable difference between state and national clean air standards. Those standards currently in effect in California are shown in Table III-1. Sources and health effects of various pollutants are shown in Table III-2.

Table III-1
AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Pollutant	Average Time	California Standards [1]		National Standards [2]		
		Concentration [3]	Method [4]	Primary [3,5]	Secondary [3,6]	Method [7]
Ozone (O3)[8]	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m^3)	Ultraviolet Photometry	–	Same as Primary Standard	Ultraviolet Photometry
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m^3)		0.070 ppm (137 µg/m^3)		
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)[9]	24 Hour	50 µg/m^3	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	150 µg/m^3	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m^3		–		
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)[9]	24 Hour	–	–	35 µg/m^3	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m^3	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	12.0 µg/m^3	15.0 µg/m^3	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m^3)	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)	35 ppm (40 mg/m^3)	–	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)
	8 Hour	9 ppm (10 mg/m^3)		9 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	–	
	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m^3)		–	–	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)[10]	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m^3)	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence	100 ppb (188 µg/m^3)	–	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m^3)		0.053 ppm (100 µg/m^3)	Same as Primary Standard	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m^3)	Ultraviolet Fluorescence	75 ppb (196 µg/m^3)	–	Ultraviolet Flourescense; Spectrophotometry (Paraosaniline Method)
	3 Hour	–		–	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m^3)	
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m^3)		0.14 ppm (for certain areas)[11]	–	
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	–		0.030 ppm (for certain areas)[11]	–	
Lead 8[12,13]	30-Day Average	1.5 µg/m^3	Atomic Absorption	–	–	–
	Calendar Quarter	–		1.5 µg/m^3 (for certain areas)[12]	Same as Primary Standard	High Volume Sampler and Atomic Absorption
	Rolling 3-Month Avg	–		0.15 µg/m^3		
Visibility Reducing Particles[14]	8 Hour	See footnote 14	Beta Attenuation and Transmittance through Filter Tape	**No Federal Standards**		
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m^3	Ion Chromatography			
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m^3)	Ultraviolet Fluorescence			
Vinyl Chloride[12]	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m^3)	Gas Chromatography			

Source: California Air Resources Board 5/4/16

Footnotes:

1 California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulate matter – PM10, PM2.5, and visibility reducing particles, are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

2 National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual averages or annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest eight-hour concentration in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM10, the 24-hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year, with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 $\mu g/m^3$, is equal to or less than one. For PM2.5, the 24-hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over 3 years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact U.S. EPA for further clarification and current federal policies.

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

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

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

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

7 Reference method as described by the EPA. An “equivalent method” of measurement may be used but must have a “consistent relationship to the reference method” and must be approved by the EPA.

8 On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.

9 On December 14, 2012, the national PM2.5 primary standard was lowered from 15 $\mu g/m^3$ to 12.0 $\mu g/m^3$. The existing national 24-hour PM2.5 standards (primarily and secondary) were retained at 35 $\mu g/m^3$, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 $\mu g/m^3$. The existing 24-hour PM10 standards (primarily and secondary) of 150 $\mu g/m^3$ also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over 3 years.

10 To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.

11 On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO2 standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971 SO2 national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved. Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.

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

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

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

Table III-2
HEALTH EFFECTS OF MAJOR CRITERIA POLLUTANTS

Pollutants	Sources	Primary Effects
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	• Incomplete combustion of fuels and other carbon-containing substances, such as motor exhaust. • Natural events, such as decomposition of organic matter.	• Reduced tolerance for exercise. • Impairment of mental function. • Impairment of fetal development. • Death at high levels of exposure. • Aggravation of some heart diseases (angina).
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	• Motor vehicle exhaust. • High temperature stationary combustion. • Atmospheric reactions.	• Aggravation of respiratory illness. • Reduced visibility. • Reduced plant growth. • Formation of acid rain.
Ozone (O_3)	• Atmospheric reaction of organic gases with nitrogen oxides in sunlight.	• Aggravation of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. • Irritation of eyes. • Impairment of cardiopulmonary function. • Plant leaf injury.
Lead (Pb)	• Contaminated soil.	• Impairment of blood function and nerve construction. • Behavioral and hearing problems in children.
Fine Particulate Matter (PM-10)	• Stationary combustion of solid fuels. • Construction activities. • Industrial processes. • Atmospheric chemical reactions.	• Reduced lung function. • Aggravation of the effects of gaseous pollutants. • Aggravation of respiratory and cardio respiratory diseases. • Increased cough and chest discomfort. • Soiling. • Reduced visibility.
Fine Particulate Matter (PM-2.5)	• Fuel combustion in motor vehicles, equipment, and industrial sources. • Residential and agricultural burning. • Industrial processes. • Also, formed from photochemical reactions of other pollutants, including NOx, sulfur oxides, and organics.	• Increases respiratory disease. • Lung damage. • Cancer and premature death. • Reduces visibility and results in surface soiling.
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	• Combustion of sulfur-containing fossil fuels. • Smelting of sulfur-bearing metal ores. • Industrial processes.	• Aggravation of respiratory diseases (asthma, emphysema). • Reduced lung function. • Irritation of eyes. • Reduced visibility. • Plant injury. • Deterioration of metals, textiles, leather, finishes, coatings, etc.

Source: California Air Resources Board, 2002.

Monitored Air Quality

The air quality at any site is dependent on the regional air quality and local pollutant sources. Regional air quality is determined by the release of pollutants throughout the air basin, or in the case of the Morongo Basin pollution transported into the desert from the South Coast Air Basin. Limited air quality data is available for the Morongo Basin, so ambient air quality data is taken for the Victor Valley. This location is in the Mojave Desert, but is some distance from the Morongo Basin.

Monitoring of air quality in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB) is the responsibility of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) headquartered in Victorville, California. Existing levels of criteria air pollutants in the project area can generally be inferred from measurements conducted at the Victorville Station at 14306 Park Avenue. Although the Victorville Station monitors most of the spectrum of

pollutants, data for CO is no longer monitored in the Mojave Desert. Table III-3 summarizes the last three years of monitoring data from the available data for this Victorville monitoring station. From these data one can infer that baseline air quality levels near the project site are occasionally unhealthful, but that such violations of clean air standards usually affect only those people most sensitive to air pollution exposure.

a. Photochemical smog (ozone) levels occasionally exceed standards. The 8-hour state ozone standard has been exceeded approximately 7 percent of all days in the last three years while the 1-hour state standard has been exceeded less than one percent of all days. The 8-hour federal standard has been exceeded approximately 5 percent of all days in the past three years. Attainment of all clean air standards in the project vicinity is not likely to occur soon, but the severity and frequency of violations is expected to continue to slowly decline during the current decade

b. Respirable dust (PM-10) levels often exceed the state standard of 50 $\mu g/m^3$ but the less stringent federal PM-10 standard of 150 $\mu g/m^3$ is violated with much less frequency. However, given the high Max. 24-Hour concentrations it is clear that PM-10 is still of concern.

c. A substantial fraction of PM-10 is comprised of ultra-small diameter particulates capable of being inhaled into deep lung tissue (PM-2.5). There has only been one measured violation in the last three years.

Although complete attainment of every clean air standard is not yet imminent, extrapolation of the steady improvement trend suggests that such attainment could occur within the reasonably near future.

Standards of Significance

The Mojave Desert AQMD has adopted numerical emissions thresholds as indicators of potential impact even if the actual air quality increment cannot be directly quantified. The MDAQMD thresholds are as follows:

Carbon Monoxide (CO)	548 pounds/day	100 tons/year
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)	137 pounds/day	25 tons/year
Sulfur Oxides (SOx)	137 pounds/day	25 tons/year
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	137 pounds/day	25 tons/year
Particulate Matter (PM-10)	82 pounds/day	15 tons/year
Particulate Matter (PM-2.5)	65 pounds/day	12 tons/year
GHG	548,000 pounds/day	100,000 tons/year

Table III-3
AIR QUALITY MONITORING SUMMARY (2016-2018)
(Number of Days Standards Were Exceeded and Maximum Levels During Such Violations)
(Entries shown as estimated days exceeding standard)

Pollutant/Standard	2016	2017	2018
Ozone			
1-Hour > 0.09 ppm (S)	4	0	5
8-Hour > 0.07 ppm (S)	33	17	55
8- Hour > 0.075 ppm (F)	18	7	27
Max. 1-Hour Conc. (ppm)	0.100	0.088	0.107
Max. 8-Hour Conc. (ppm)	0.086	0.082	0.097
Nitrogen Dioxide			
1-Hour > 0.18 ppm (S)	0	0	0
Max. 1-Hour Conc. (ppm)	0.097	0.057	0.057
Inhalable Particulates (PM-10)			
24-Hour > 50 $\mu g/m^3$ (S)	na	na	Na
24-Hour > 150 $\mu g/m^3$ (F)	1.9	1.0	1.0
Max. 24-Hr. Conc. ($\mu g/m^3$)	226.5	182.5	165.2
Ultra-Fine Particulates (PM-2.5)			
24-Hour > 35 $\mu g/m^3$ (F)	1	0	0
Max. 24-Hr. Conc. ($\mu g/m^3$)	41.5	27.2	32.7

na = not available
S=State Standard
F=Federal Standard

Source:Victorville Station: Ozone, CO, NO_2, PM-10, PM-2.5
data: www.arb.ca.gov/adam/

Impact Analysis

a. *Less Than Significant Impact –*

Compliance with MDAQMD Air Quality Plan
The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the MDAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The CEQA Handbooks provide the following two criteria to determine if a project is consistent with the AQMP:

(1) Whether the project will result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations, or delay timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the AQMP.
(2) Whether the project will exceed the assumptions in the AQMP or increments based on the year of project buildout and phase.

Criterion 1 – Increase in the Frequency or Severity of Violations
The proposed project provides four camp sites that will most likely be utilized by tourists visiting Joshua Tree National Park. For analysis purposes it is assumed that eight vehicles will visit site on average and drive a total of 400 miles per day. The only other two sources of emissions are electricity consumption (electricity emissions are not generated locally) and generation of fugitive dust from graded dirt roads. Based on the minimal amount of activity related to this project, local pollutant concentrations would not be projected to exceed the MDAQMD air quality standards. Therefore, based on the information provided above, the proposed project would be consistent with the first criterion.

Criterion 2 Exceed Assumptions in the AQMP
Consistency with the AQMP assumptions is determined by performing an analysis of the proposed project with the assumptions in the AQMP. The emphasis of this criterion is to ensure that the analyses conducted for the proposed project are based on the same forecasts as the AQMP. The proposed project is consistent with the current land use designation and would not require a General Plan Amendment or zone change. As such, the proposed project is not anticipated to exceed the AQMP assumptions for the project site and is found to be consistent with the AQMP for the second criterion.

Based on the above, the proposed project will not result in an inconsistency with the MDAQMD AQMP. Therefore, a less than significant impact will occur in relation to implementation of the AQMP. However, note that due to violations of ozone and particulate standards (nonattainment) in the MDAB, mitigation is provided to address particulates which are generated locally. Ozone is a secondary pollutant that is transported into the MDAB from the South Coast Air Basin and is not subject to local emission controls.

b. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* - The project site is approximately 2.5 acres in size. Due to the type of camp site structures, there will be no mass grading proposed for this project. The area where the units will be installed will be cleared and fine graded to provide the foundation for the units. Minimal emissions will be associated with site preparation. To control fugitive dust during site preparation, a mix of water or soil stabilizers will be utilized. Recommended measures include:

AQ-1 ***Fugitive Dust Control. The following measures shall be incorporated into Project plans and specifications for implementation:***

- ***Apply soil stabilizers or moisten inactive areas.***
- ***Water exposed surfaces to avoid visible dust leaving the construction site (at least 2-3 times/day).***
- ***Cover any stock piles with tarps at the end of each day and as needed during the construction day.***
- ***Provide water spray during loading and unloading of earthen materials.***
- ***Require the contractor to minimize in-out traffic from construction zone to the extent feasible, and enforce a speed limit of 10 MPH on site to avoid dust migration from the site.***

Similarly, ozone precursor emissions (ROG and NOx) are assumed to be below MDAQMD CEQA thresholds. However, because of the regional non-attainment for photochemical smog, the use of reasonably available control measures for construction equipment exhaust is recommended. Combustion emissions control options include:

AQ-2 ***Exhaust Emissions Control. The following measures shall be incorporated into Project plans and specifications for implementation:***

- ***Utilize off-road construction equipment that has met or exceeded the maker's recommendations for vehicle/equipment maintenance schedule.***
- ***Contactors shall utilize Tier 3 or better heavy equipment.***

- ***Enforce 5-minute idling limits for both on-road trucks and off-road equipment.***

With the above mitigation measures, any impacts related to construction emissions are considered less than significant. No further mitigation is required.

Long-Term Operational Air Quality Impacts

The proposed project would consist of operating a camp site on the property as outlined in the project description. The Proposed Project would generate air emissions from area sources (vehicles accessing the site) and energy usage. The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to minimize operational impacts to the greatest extent feasible:

AQ-3 Utilize only Energy Star heating, cooling, lighting devices, and appliances, where applicable.

Therefore, a less than significant regional air quality impact would occur from operation of the proposed project.

To provide some quantitative air quality information about the proposed project we can use some emission forecast data from the City of Victorville. The project evaluated is a 210-lot single family residential project proposed on a 60-acre project site. Using CalEEMod2020 daily and annual emissions were compiled. The resulting emission are shown in the following table.

Table III-4
ANNUAL EMISSIONS SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

Emissions Source	Total Emissions (tons per year)						
	ROG	NOx	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO_2e
Year 1 Construction Emissions (2023)	0.34	2.83	3.16	0.01	0.54	0.25	719
Year 2 Construction Emissions (2024)	0.30	2.26	3.06	0.01	0.43	0.17	737
Year 3 Construction Emissions (2025)	1.06	0.52	0.80	<0.01	0.09	0.04	165
Total Operational Emissions	1.72	0.96	5.47	0.01	1.13	0.32	1,454
Significant Emissions Threshold	**25**	**25**	**100**	**25**	**15**	**12**	**100,000**

Table III-5
DAILY EMISSIONS SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

Emissions Source	Total Emissions (tons per year)						
	ROG	NOx	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO_2e
Year 1 Construction Emissions (2023)	3.39	34.55	28.62	0.06	9.08	5.14	6,459
Year 2 Construction Emissions (2024)	2.45	17.00	24.25	0.06	3.33	1.34	6,352
Year 3 Construction Emissions (2025)	56.78	15.95	23.64	0.06	3.24	1.26	6,249
Total Operational Emissions	10.42	6.53	37.65	0.08	6.60	1.98	9,533
Significant Emissions Threshold	**137**	**137**	**548**	**137**	**82**	**65**	**548,000**

ROG: Reactive Organic Compounds, used interchangeably with Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC); NOx: oxides of nitrogen; CO: Carbon monoxide; SOx: oxides of sulfur; PM_{10}: particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$: particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter; and CO_2e: Carbon dioxide equivalent

The Joshua Tree Camp Site Project is 2.4 acres in size, it will not be mass graded and all four camping units will not be continuously occupied like a residence. Four units is 2% of the 210 units of the Victorville project. Using this value, the construction and operational emissions would all be

below one ton, of emissions per year, except GHG. Daily emissions for ROG during 2025, would be 0.2 pounds of emissions. It is clear through this relative comparison that emissions from the Camp Site project will be very low.

Conclusion

With the incorporation of MMs **AQ-1** and **AQ-3**, the development of the proposed project would have a less than significant potential to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Due to the limited construction activities and minimal occupancy emissions from this project, no potentially significant source of local emission can occur. Over the long-term criteria emissions will not be increased to a significant level locally. No additional mitigation is required.

Toxic Air Contaminants Impacts from Construction

The greatest potential for toxic air contaminant emissions would be related to diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions associated with heavy equipment operations during construction of the proposed project. According to SCAQMD methodology, health effects from carcinogenic air toxics are usually described in terms of "individual cancer risk". "Individual Cancer Risk" is the likelihood that a person exposed to concentrations of toxic air contaminants over a 70year lifetime will contract cancer, based on the use of standard risk assessment methodology. It should be noted that the most current cancer risk assessment methodology recommends analyzing a 30-year exposure period for the nearby sensitive receptors.

Given the relatively limited number of heavy-duty construction equipment, the varying distances that construction equipment would operate to the nearby sensitive receptors, and the construction schedule, the proposed project would not result in a long-term (i.e., 30 or 70 years) substantial source of toxic air contaminant emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk. As such, construction of the proposed project would result in a less than significant exposure of the nearby sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. Individual responses to odors are highly variable and can result in a variety of effects. Generally, the impact of an odor results from a variety of factors such as frequency, duration, offensiveness, location, and sensory perception. The frequency is a measure of how often an individual is exposed to an odor in the ambient environment. The intensity refers to an individual's or group's perception of the odor strength or concentration. The duration of an odor refers to the elapsed time over which an odor is experienced. The offensiveness of the odor is the subjective rating of the pleasantness or unpleasantness of an odor. The location accounts for the type of area in which a potentially affected person lives, works, or visits; the type of activity in which he or she is engaged; and the sensitivity of the impacted receptor.

Construction-Related Odor Impacts

Potential sources that may emit odors during construction activities include the application of coatings such as asphalt pavement, paints, and solvents and from emissions from diesel equipment. The objectionable odors that may be produced during the construction process would be temporary and would not likely be noticeable for extended periods of time beyond the project site's boundaries. Due to the transitory nature of construction odors, a less than significant odor impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

Operations-Related Odor Impacts

The proposed project would consist of the development of a camp site and occupancy by tourists accessing the National Park and other features of the local desert. The only potential source of odors will be the solid waste generated by the project, and this source of odors will be controlled by requiring periodic collection and disposal of the household solid waste. No significant odor generation for this use is expected and no impact related to odors would occur during the ongoing operations of the proposed project. Therefore, a less than significant odor impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

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

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if project is located in the Biological Overlay or contains habitat for any species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database ☒): The project is located in the County's Biological Overlay for Burrowing Owl and Desert Tortoise: Medium (Figure IV-1). The following information is provided based on a study titled "General Biological Resource Assessment for a 0.96-acre Site (APN 0631-283-07) in the Community of the unincorporated area of Joshua Tree, San Bernardino County, California" (BRA) prepared by Jennings Biological Consultants, Inc. dated October 2022, seen in Appendix 1.

General Site Conditions

The project is generally located in the eastern edge of Section 36, Township 2 North, Range 6 East, and is depicted on the border of the *Joshua Tree North* U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic map. More specifically the project is located at APN 0631-283-07, within the unincorporated area of Joshua Tree, San Bernardino County, California. The Project site is located on the western side of Stonehill Ave., just north of the intersection of Stonehill Ave. and Moonlight Mesa Street. The site is surrounded by a mixture of vacant parcels and rural residential parcels (Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix A). The project site is located on an alluvial fan. The site has a shallow slope to the southeast and a desert wash is located on the southern portion of the property. The site is located on the west side of Stonehill Avenue which is a graded dirt road adjacent to the site. As illustrated on the aerial photo of the project area, there are scattered rural residences in the vicinity of the project site, including on residence just west of the property on the east side

of Stonehill Avenue. Electric power lines are located within the project area. Surface runoff follows the flow line of the desert wash on the southern portion of the property. Surface runoff on most of the site appears to be sheet flow as no incised channel occurs north of the wash. The project site is relatively undisturbed. The background sound level at the project site appears relatively low, with travel on local roadways (particularly Moonlight Mesa Street and Border Avenue) constituting the primary source of noise in the project area.

Habitat
All plant species observed within the Project site were recorded. Vegetation communities within the Project site were identified, qualitatively described, and mapped onto a high-resolution imagery aerial photograph. Plant communities were determined in accordance with the *Manual of California Vegetation*, *Second Edition* (Sawyer et al. 2009). Plant nomenclature follows that of *The Jepson Manual, Second Edition* (Baldwin et al. 2012). A comprehensive list of the plant species observed during the survey is provided in Appendix 1, section D.

All wildlife and wildlife signs observed and detected, including tracks, scat, carcasses, burrows, excavations, and vocalizations, were recorded. Additional survey time was spent in those habitats most likely to be utilized by wildlife (native vegetation, wildlife trails, etc.) or in habitats with the potential to support state- and/or federally listed or otherwise special status species. Notes were made on the general habitat types, species observed, and the conditions of the Project site. A comprehensive list of the wildlife species observed during the survey is provided in Appendix 1, section D.

Wildlife
According to the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, the Project Site, is not mapped within an area for wildlife movement. Additionally, the site is not mapped within a wildlife linkage as mapped by the Mojave Desert Land Trust. The proposed Project is also not within a Habitat Conservation Plan. Therefore, the proposed Project will have no impact on any current wildlife corridors or habitat conservation plans.

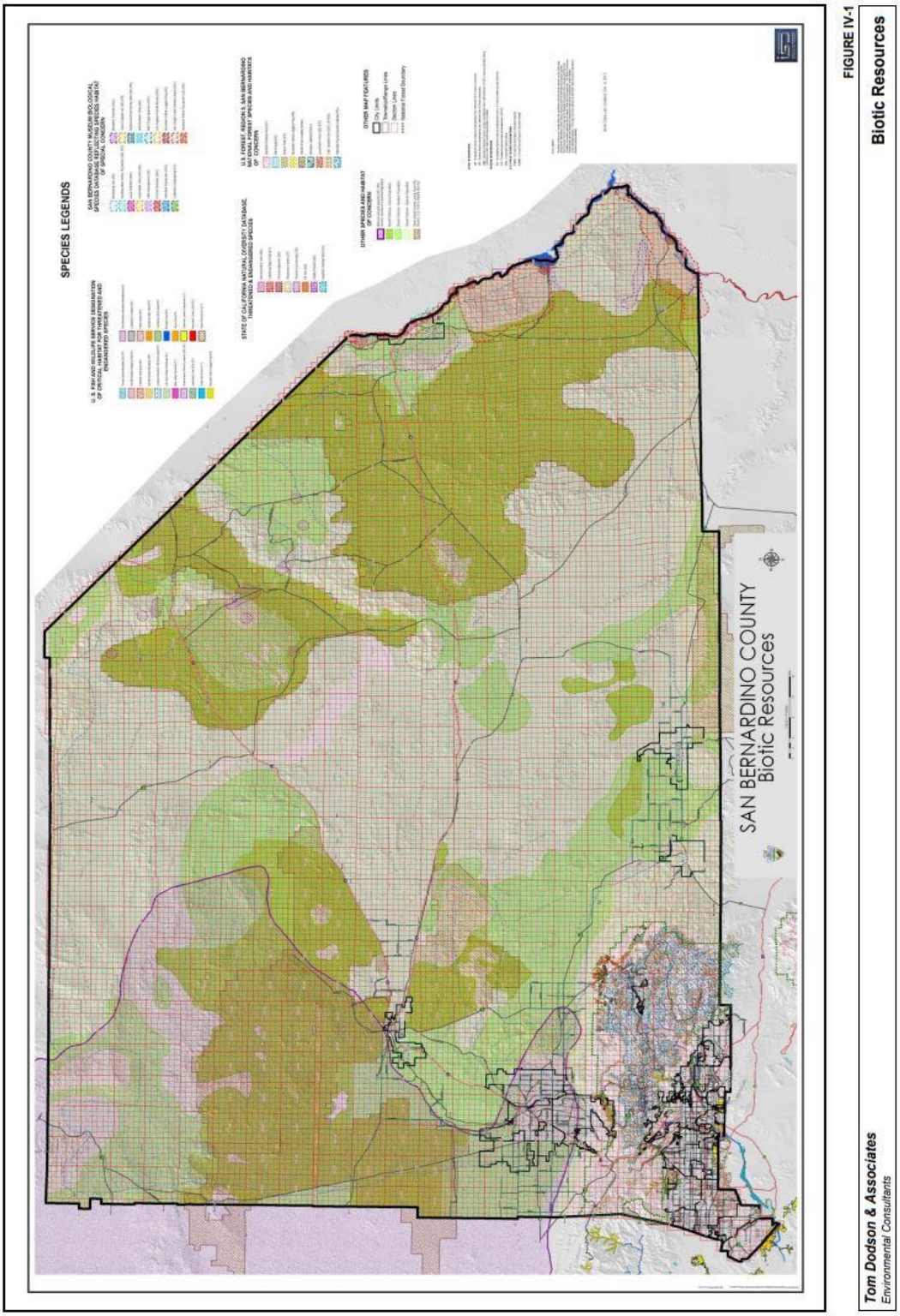
Findings

Sensitive Biological Resources

Mojave Desert Tortoise
The desert tortoise is a State and federally listed threatened species. Throughout its range, it is threatened by habitat loss, domestic grazing, predation, collections, and increased mortality rates. The desert tortoise is typically found in creosote bush scrub. They are most often found on level or sloped ground where the substrate is firm but not too rocky. Tortoise burrows are typically found at the base of shrubs, in the sides of washes and hillsides. Because a single tortoise may have many burrows distributed throughout its home range, it is not possible to predict the exact numbers of individuals on a site based upon burrow numbers.

In 1992 the US Bureau of Land Management issued the *California Statewide Desert Tortoise Management Policy* which included categorizing habitat into three levels of classification. The management goal for Category I areas is to maintain stable, viable populations and to increase the population where possible. The management goal for Category II areas is to maintain stable, viable populations. The management goal for Category III areas is to limit population declines to the extent feasible. In April 1993, the BLM amended the CDCA plan to delineate these three categories of desert tortoise habitat on public lands. Although habitat categories apply only to public lands administered by the BLM, regulatory agencies typically determine habitat compensation ratios based on the nearest BLM habitat categories (Desert Tortoise Compensation Team 1991). With the adoption of the West Mojave Plan (U.S. Bureau of Land Management 2005), all lands that are outside Desert Wildlife Management Areas, including the subject parcel, are characterized as Category 3 Habitat, which is the lowest priority management area for viable populations of the desert tortoise.

Figure IV-1


SPECIES LEGENDS
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
Biotic Resources
FIGURE IV-1
Biotic Resources
Tom Dodson & Associates
Environmental Consultants

The habitat on site is marginally suitable for desert tortoise. Recent occurrences in the vicinity from 2008 are documented in the CNDDB Search. However, no sign of desert tortoise (i.e., burrows, tracks, or pellets) was observed during the survey. Additionally, no desert tortoise individuals were observed. Because the site is marginally suitable, it is recommended that pre-construction surveys be completed for this species. These surveys should be conducted by a qualified biologist and at an appropriate time of day/year to observe signs of desert tortoise.

Burrowing Owl
The burrowing owl (BUOW) is a state and federal SSC. This owl is a mottled, brownish and sand-colored, dove-sized raptor, with large, yellow eyes, a rounded head lacking ear tufts, white eyebrows, and long legs compared to other owl species. It is a ground-dwelling owl typically found in arid prairies, fields, and open areas where vegetation is sparse and low to the ground. The BUOW is heavily dependent upon the presence of mammal burrows, with ground squirrel burrows being a common choice, in its habitat to provide shelter from predators, inclement weather, and to provide a nesting place (Coulombe 1971). They are also known to make use of human-created structures, such as cement culverts and pipes, for burrows.

BUOW spends a great deal of time standing on dirt mounds at the entrance to a burrow or perched on a fence post or other low to the ground perch from which they hunt for prey. BUOW frequently hunt by hovering in place above the ground and dropping on their prey from above. They feed primarily on insects such as grasshoppers, June beetles, and moths, but will also take small rodents, birds, and reptiles. They are active during the day and night but are considered a crepuscular owl; generally observed in the early morning hours or at twilight. The breeding season for BUOW is February 1 through August 31. Up to 11, but typically 7 to 9, eggs are laid in a burrow, abandoned pipe, or other subterranean hollows where incubation is complete in 28-30 days. Young BUOW fledges in 44 days. The BUOW is considered a migratory species in portions of its range, which includes western North America from Canada to Mexico, and east to Texas and Louisiana. BUOW populations in California are considered to be sedentary or locally migratory.

Throughout its range, the BUOW is vulnerable to habitat loss, predation, vehicular collisions, and destruction of burrow sites, and the poisoning of ground squirrels (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Zarn 1974, Remsen 1978). BUOW has disappeared from significant portions of their range in the last 15 years and, overall, nearly 60% of the breeding groups of owls known to have existed in California during the 1980s had disappeared by the early 1990s (Burrowing Owl Consortium 1993). The BUOW is not listed under the state or federal Endangered Species Act but is considered both a federal and state Species of Special Concern. The BUOW is a migratory bird protected by the international treaty under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and by State law under the California Fish and Game Code (CDFG Code #3513 & #3503.5).

Based on the October 2022 field survey, the site does not contain suitable habitat for this species. No burrowing owls were observed during the site visit. No burrows of any kind were located within the Project site. No portion of the Project site showed any evidence of past or present BUOW activity. No feathers, whitewash, or castings were found and no suitable burrow surrogate species are present on-site. No suitable habitat exists on-site; therefore, no focused surveys are required.

Desert Kit Fox
The desert kit fox is not federally- or state-listed, but is considered a species of local concern by the County of Los Angeles. It is an uncommon to rare permanent resident in arid habitats within southern California (CDFW 2017b). Kit foxes are threatened by a number of human activities, including poaching, pesticide and rodenticide use, and direct poisoning, as well as heavy agricultural and urban development (Eder 2005). Desert kit foxes occur in the desert and other arid habitats, including sagebrush flats, creosote scrub, and annual grassland habitats, and other areas with scattered brush, scrub, and shrubs. They are an important predator of small mammals, preying on black-tailed jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*), desert cottontails (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), kangaroo rats, ground squirrels, and other rodents, insects, reptiles, birds, and bird eggs. Limited vegetation may be taken. Desert kit foxes excavate burrows in loose-textured sandy or loamy soils for shelter, pupping, and as an escape from extreme heat and cold (Eder 2005,

CDFW B). Open, level areas are preferred for burrowing. Man-made structures and infrastructure, including culverts and pipes, also may be used for denning where suitable friable soils are not present (CDFW B).

The site is marginally suitable for this species. However, this species was not observed during the survey. No burrows or suitable size or shape were observed, and no evidence of this species was observed either (scat, predation remains, tracks, etc.). As such, this species is considered absent from the project site and no further surveys are required.

American Badger
The American badger is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. Badgers are uncommon, permanent residents throughout California, and occur most commonly in open stages of shrub, woodland, and herbaceous habitats. They are tenacious diggers and occur where friable soils support denning and burrowing activities. They are active year-round, and most often nocturnal, although they may be active during the day. They prey upon fossorial rodents, especially California ground squirrels and pocket gophers; rats and mice, some reptiles, insects, eggs, birds, and carrion also may be taken. Breeding typically occurs in the summer and early fall, with pups being born the following March or April in burrows dug in relatively dry, often sandy soil. American badgers are threatened primarily by indiscriminate trapping, agricultural conversion, and the eradication of ground squirrels and other fossorial rodents that comprise the majority of their prey base (CDFW B).

The site is marginally suitable for this species. However, this species was not observed during the survey. No burrows or suitable size or shape were observed, and no evidence of this species were observed either (scat, predation remains, tracks, etc.). As such, this species is considered absent from the project site and no further surveys are required.

Joshua Tree
Western Joshua trees occur throughout the Mojave Desert in Southern California and are typically found at an elevation of 400 to 1,800 meters (~1,200 to ~5,400 feet). Western Joshua trees within the western portion of the Mojave Desert typically receive more annual precipitation during "normal" years; consequently, cloning occurs more often resulting in numerous trunks sprouting from the same root system. Western Joshua tree habitats provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species including desert woodrats *(Neotoma* sp.) and night lizards *(Xantusia* sp.) both of which utilize the base of the trees. A variety of birds also utilize Western Joshua trees for nesting such as hawks, common ravens, and cactus wrens. CDFW consider Western Joshua tree woodlands as areas that support relatively high species diversity and as such are considered to be a sensitive desert community. Western Joshua trees are also considered a significant resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and are included in the Desert Plant Protection Act, Food and Agricultural Code (80001 - 80006).

Additionally, pursuant to the provisions of Section 2074.2 of the Fish and Game Code, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), at its September 22, 2020, meeting, accepted for consideration the petition submitted to list the western Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia) as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. Based on that finding and the acceptance of the petition, the Commission also provided notice that the western Joshua tree is a candidate species as defined by Section 2068 of the Fish and Game Code. Figure 3 in Appendix A shows the location of the one Joshua tree on-site.

There is currently one western Joshua tree present on-site. The proposed Project is to develop four camping sites within the Parcel. As mentioned above this species is currently a candidate for listing under CESA. As such, any impacts to western Joshua trees will require an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from the CDFW. No impacts to this species are currently proposed. However, the following mitigation measure should be included.

All western Joshua trees should be avoided on-site and the appropriate buffers should be installed.

- 40 feet for western Joshua trees five meters or greater in height.
- 12 feet for western Joshua trees one meter or greater but less than five meters in height.
- 6 feet for western Joshua trees less than one meter in height.

Table IV-1 below shows detailed information on the Joshua tree present on-site.

Table IV-1
WESTERN JOSHUA TREES

ID Number	Height (ft)	DBH (inches)	Latitude/ Longitude	Health	Clonal	Transplant, Destroy, or Protect in Place	Class 1 (<1 meter)	Class 2 (1 - 4 meters)	Class 3 (>4 meters)
001	9	6	34.216924 / -116.301645	Poor	X	Protect In Place		X	

As indicated above, the one Joshua tree on-site is to be avoided. A 12-foot buffer is recommended. The site plan currently has development taking place 35 feet away from the tree. Figure 4 in Appendix A shows the location of the tree in relation to the proposed site plan. Therefore, no impacts are expected. If future development takes place within the subdivided parcels, further studies to determine the exact impacts to Joshua tree will be required at that time.

Native Plant Protection Plan

The site contains one western Joshua tree, which are also covered under San Bernardino County Development Code § 88.01.060 and the California Endangered Species Act. As mentioned above there are no proposed impacts to this individual. If future development encounters this individual, an ITP will be required and compliance with the County Development Code will also be required.

The Proposed Project Site also contains four *Yucca schidigeras,* a protected species San Bernardino County Development Code § 88.01.060. The table below details the health and translatability of each individual.

ID Number	Height (ft)	DBH (inches)	Latitude/Longitude	Health	Transplant, Destroy, or Protect in Place
YS 1	4	N/A	34.216057 / -116.302312	Poor	Protect in Place
YS 2	3	N/A	34.216058 / -116.302118	Good	Protect in Place
YS 3	5	N/A	34.216014 / -116.302381	Poor	Protect in Place
YS 4	4	N/A	34.216059 / -116.302042	Poor	Protect in Place

As noted above only YS 2 is in good health. YS 1,3, and 4 are in poor health and consist of clusters that have sprouted from a dead center stock. Currently, there are no impacts to these individuals as shown on

Figure 4 in Appendix 1. Should future development require the removal of these individuals, YS 2 is the only one in good health and would survive transplanting. As such, it would need to be relocated at that time.

Nesting Birds

There is habitat within the project APE that is suitable to support nesting birds, including both natural and urban environments. Most native bird species are protected from unlawful take by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). In December 2017, the Department of the Interior (DOI) issued a memorandum concluding that the MBTA's prohibitions on take apply "[…] only to affirmative actions that have as their purpose the taking or killing of migratory birds, their nests, or their eggs." Then in April 2018, the USFWS issued a guidance memorandum that further clarified that the take of migratory birds or their active nests (i.e., with eggs or young) that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful activity does not constitute a violation of the MBTA.

However, the State of California provides additional protection for native bird species and their nests in the Fish and Game Code (FGC). Bird nesting protections in the FGC include the following (Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, 3513 and 3800):

- Section 3503 prohibits the take, possession, or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird.
- Section 3503.5 prohibits the take, possession, or needless destruction of any nests, eggs, or birds in the orders Falconiformes (new world vultures, hawks, eagles, ospreys, and falcons, among others), and Strigiformes (owls).
- Section 3511 prohibits the take or possession of Fully Protected birds.
- Section 3513 prohibits the take or possession of any migratory nongame bird or part thereof, as designated in the MBTA. To avoid violation of the take provisions, it is generally required that Project-related disturbance at active nesting territories be reduced or eliminated during the nesting cycle.
- Section 3800 prohibits the take of any non-game bird (i.e., bird that is naturally occurring in California that is not a gamebird, migratory game bird, or fully protected bird).

In general, impacts to all nesting bird species (common and special status) can be avoided by conducting work outside of the nesting season, which is generally March 15th through September 1st. However, if all work cannot be conducted outside of nesting season, mitigation is recommended.

Jurisdictional Waters

Waters of the United States and Waters of the State

The USACE has the authority to permit the discharge of dredged or fill material in Waters of the U.S. (WOUS) under Section 404 CWA. While the Regional Water Quality Board has authority over the discharge of dredged or fill material in Waters of the State under Section 401 CWA as well as the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The Project area was surveyed with 100 percent visual coverage and no drainage features were present on site that met the definition for WOUS. As such, the subject parcel does not contain any wetlands, Waters of the U.S., or Waters of the State.

Fish and Game Code Section 1602 - State Lake and/or Streambed

The CDFW asserts jurisdiction over any drainage feature that contains a definable bed and bank or associated riparian vegetation. The Project area was surveyed with 100 percent visual coverage and there is one features present on-site that are considered jurisdictional under CDFW. Table VI-2 below details the extent of CDFW jurisdiction within the Parcel Boundary (Figure 5 in Appendix A).

Table VI-2
CDFW JURISDICTION WITHIN PARCEL BOUNDARY

Feature	Bank-Full width (feet)	Length (feet)	Max Channel Depth (inches)	WoUS Corps jurisdiction (acres)	FGC 1600 CDFW jurisdiction (acres)	Impacts to Jurisdictional Features
Drainage A	11	127.6	4	N/A	0.02	0.00
Drainage B	4.3	140.6	6	N/A	0.02	0.02
				Total	0.04	0.02

The Proposed Project will avoid impacts to Drainage A as shown in Figure 5. Drainage B will be impacted by the installation of one of the buildings, its' parking lot, and the driveway entrance. As such, a 1602 permit from CDFW will be required before any ground disturbance activities occur. The Project Site also contains some topographical features. These are features where water may flow during rain events, but do not meet the definition of a stream under Fish and Game Code and do not contain any associated Riparian Vegetation. As such, these are not Jurisdictional under Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code and do not require regulatory permitting.

There are no streams, channels, washes, or swales that meet the definitions of Section 401 ("Waters of the State") of the Clean Water Act (CWA) under the jurisdiction of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) or "Waters of the United States" (WoUS) as defined by Section 404 of the CWA under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) within the subject parcel. Therefore, no permit, or certification is required from the Army Corps or RWQCB, respectively.

The project site does contain two Drainages that meet the jurisdictional definition under Section 1600 of the California Department of Fish and Game Code (CDFG). As such, any disturbance within the Drainage Features on-site is subject to a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) under Section 1602 of the CDFG code, as detailed above.

Impact Analysis

a. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – It is not anticipated that the proposed project would result in a significant adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS. The project site is vacant, though as stated above, it has been used as an illegal trash dump site. The Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) provided as Appendix 1 to this Initial Study determined that, of the nine State and/or federally listed or Candidate species identified by the database queries as potentially occurring within the region, only the following two State and/or federally listed species have been documented in the Project vicinity (within approximately 3 miles): Mojave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*). Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is a CDFW species of special concern (SSC) and is considered particularly sensitive species within the region; as such potential for this species to occur within the project site was analyzed.

As stated above under Findings, there is still a potential for Mojave desert tortoise to occur in the project area and the following precautionary avoidance measures are recommended to ensure the project does not result in any impacts to Mojave desert tortoise:

BIO-1 ***A qualified biologist shall develop a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) that shall include information on general and special status species, including but not limited to western Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia), burrowing owl (Athene cunicularia), and desert tortoise (Gohperus agassizii)***

within the project area, identification of these species and their habitats, current conservation status, techniques and mitigation measures that shall be being implemented during construction to avoid impacts to species, such as western Joshua tree, burrowing owl, desert tortoise, consequences of killing or injuring an individual of a listed species, and reporting procedures when encountering listed or sensitive species.

Mitigation for western Joshua tree shall proceed as follows:

1. ***The limits of disturbance or construction envelope shall be carried out at least 40 feet from the nearest for western Joshua tree (WJT) canopy, and shall not encroach upon any WJT or WJT seedlings. The biological monitor who shall be present for all project activities, as required by MM BIO-6, shall ensure that the 40-foot buffer is maintained for the duration of construction.***
2. ***If the limits of disturbance or construction envelope cannot be carried out at least 40 feet from the nearest for WJT canopy, the County shall retain the services of a Desert Native Plant Specialist to attest to and confirm avoidance of the WJT. The specialist's report may specify protective measures to ensure that the proposed grading/construction will avoid any impact constituting a take of any WJT. The biological monitor who shall be present for all project activities, as required by MM BIO-6, shall ensure that the protective measures identified in the specialist's report are adhered to for the duration of construction.***
3. ***If the provisions of items 1 and 2 cannot be met, the project may be redesigned to avoid impact to the WJT, only where the design falls within the of construction limits and area described or depicted in the March 2022 IS/MND, or the County must obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife before the project can proceed.***
    - ***Permanent protection and perpetual management of compensatory habitat is necessary and required pursuant to CESA to fully mitigate Project-related impacts of the taking of CESA-listed species. The ITP shall specify the mitigation necessary to protect WJT and compensate for loss of or impacts to this species.***

MMs BIO-2 through BIO-7 address potential impacts to burrowing owl, desert tortoise, and nesting birds.

Construction crews, foremen, and other personnel potentially working on site will attend this education program and place their name on a sign-in sheet. This briefing shall include provisions of any requirements required for the project. The contractor shall implement Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training on the first day of work and periodically throughout construction as needed.

The Project, site facilities, equipment staging areas, and excavated soil stockpiles shall be placed outside of Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources, including stream channels and associated floodplain areas. Buffer areas shall be identified, and exclusion fencing shall be used to protect Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources and to prevent unauthorized vehicles or equipment from entering or otherwise disturbing Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources. Equipment shall use existing roadways or new roads, outside of Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources.

BIO-2 ***Preconstruction surveys for Desert Tortoise shall be conducted no more than 48 hours prior to initiation of Project activities and after any pause in Project activities lasting 30 days or more. Desert tortoise pre-construction surveys***

shall be conducted in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2019 desert tortoise survey methodology; if the biologist detects a desert tortoise, the biologist or applicant will contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife immediately. If the survey confirms presence of desert tortoise, the biologist will make a determination regarding tortoise mitigation: (1) if a biological monitor should be present at the site during all clearing and grubbing activities above grade; (2) if desert tortoise fencing needs to be installed around the perimeter of the construction work zone; or (3) if no further action is required. The biologist/monitor should remain on-call during construction activities to respond to a circumstance where a desert tortoise wanders into the construction area. If complete avoidance cannot be achieved, the County shall obtain an ITP first from the USFWS and also a CESA ITP from the CDFW under Fish and Game Code section 2081.

Based on the habitat conditions and existing disturbances within the project site and surrounding area, as well as the proximity of the project area relative to the current known population distributions of Mohave ground squirrel, this species is not likely to occur within the project area and the Project is not likely to adversely affect this species. No additional avoidance, minimization or mitigation measures beyond those to those already recommended for Mojave Desert tortoise (above) are warranted or recommended.

As stated above, although the project is not likely to adversely affect BUOW, there is still a low potential for this species to occur in the project area and the following precautionary avoidance measures are recommended to ensure the project does not result in any impacts to BUOW:

BIO-3 ***Preconstruction presence/absence surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted no less than 14 days prior to initiation of any onsite ground disturbing activity by a qualified biologist. The burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted pursuant to the recommendations and guidelines established by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the "California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation." In the event this species and sign thereof is not identified within the Project limits, no further mitigation is required, and a letter shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the survey. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW prior to commencement of Project activities. If during the preconstruction survey, the burrowing owl and sign thereof is found onsite, Mitigation Measure BIO-5 shall be required.***

BIO-4 ***If burrowing owls are identified during the pre-construction presence/absence survey period detailed in MM BIO-4, CDFW shall be notified immediately and the applicant shall take the following actions to offset impacts prior to ground disturbance:***

Active nests within the areas scheduled for disturbance or degradation shall be avoided by establishing and flagging avoidance buffers according to the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG 2012) until fledging has occurred and/or juvenile owls are no longer dependent on the burrows, as confirmed by a qualified biologist. Following fledging and confirmation that juvenile owls are no longer dependent on the burrows, owls may be passively relocated by a qualified biologist, as described below.
If impacts on occupied burrows are unavoidable, onsite passive relocation techniques may be used if approved by the CDFW to encourage owls to move to alternative burrows provided by the Applicant outside of the impact area. Passive relocation shall only be implemented if a qualified biologist has

determined that there are no nesting owls and/or juvenile owls are no longer dependent on the burrows.

If relocation of the owls is approved for the site by CDFW, CDFW shall require the Applicant to hire a qualified biologist to prepare a plan for relocating the owls to a suitable site and conduct an impact assessment. A qualified biologist shall prepare and submit a passive relocation program in accordance with Appendix E (i.e., Example Components for Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow and Exclusion Plans) of the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG 2012) to the CDFW for review/approval prior to the commencement of disturbance activities onsite.

The relocation plan must include all of the following and as indicated in Appendix E:

- ***The location of the nest and owls proposed for relocation.***
- ***The location of the proposed relocation site.***
- ***Land owner approval to relocate owls to the relocation site.***
- ***The number of owls involved and the time of year when the relocation is proposed to take place.***
- ***The name and credentials of the biologist who will be retained to supervise the relocation.***
- ***The proposed method of capture and transport for the owls to the new site.***
- ***A description of site preparation at the relocation site (e.g., enhancement of existing burrows, creation of artificial burrows, one-time or long-term vegetation control).***

The applicant shall conduct an impact assessment, in accordance with the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation prior to commencing Project activities to determine appropriate mitigation, including the acquisition and conservation of occupied replacement habitat at no less than a 2:1 ratio.

Prior to passive relocation, suitable replacement burrows site(s) shall be provided at a ratio of 2:1 and permanent conservation and management of burrowing owl habitat such that the habitat acreage, number of burrows and burrowing owl impacts are replaced consistent with the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation including its Appendix A within designated adjacent conserved lands identified through coordination with CDFW and the Applicant. A qualified biologist shall confirm the natural or artificial burrows on the conservation lands are suitable for use by the owls. Monitoring and management of the replacement burrow site(s) shall be conducted and a reporting plan shall be prepared. The objective shall be to manage the replacement burrow sites for the benefit of burrowing owls (e.g., minimizing weed cover), with the specific goal of maintaining the functionality of the burrows for a minimum of 2 years.

A final letter report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the passive relocation. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW.

BIO-5 Burrowing owl, along with desert tortoise, western Joshua tree, and other sensitive species that may occur on the Project site shall be covered in the WEAP that all construction crews, foremen, and other project personnel potentially working on site shall attend prior to the first day of work.

No other species have been identified as having a potential to exist within or be impacted by the proposed project. With implementation of the above mitigation, there is a less than significant potential for implementation of this project to have a significant adverse effect, on species identified

as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Implementation of the proposed project will not have an adverse effect on any riparian habitat or sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS. Refer to the discussion under General Site Conditions above, no sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat is located within the project sites that would be impacted by the proposed well development project. Based on the field survey conducted by Jennings and the information contained in Appendix 1, no significant impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive communities are anticipated to occur as a result of implementation of the proposed project. Impacts are less than significant under this issue.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – According to the data gathered by Jennings in Appendix 1, the two ephemeral streams within the Project site are subject to regulation by the CDFW under Section 1602 of the FGC and by the RWQCB under the Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act. However, the proposed Project shall be designed to completely avoid impacting these features, and the project design shall incorporate a 25-foot set-back from all jurisdictional features. Therefore, through avoidance of any wetland and riparian habitat in the project vicinity, implementation of the proposed project will have no potential to impact any federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. As such, the proposed project would have a less than significant potential to have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. If avoidance cannot be attained, the applicant shall obtain and comply with the requirements of a Streambed Alteration Permit for any disturbance of the onsite stream channels.

d. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – Based on the field survey of the project site, the project will not substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory species or with established native or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native nursery sites. However, the State does protect all migratory and nesting native birds. No impacts to nesting or migratory birds have been identified in Appendix 1, with the exception being evidence of suitable BUOW habitat for which mitigation measure **BIO-4** through **BIO-6** have been identified to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Thus, the project area may include locations that function as nesting locations for native birds. To prevent interfering with native bird nesting, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

BIO-6 ***All Project activities on-site shall be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (generally, raptor nesting season is January 1 through September 15; and passerine bird nesting season is February 1 through September 1) to the maximum extent feasible. If Project activities begin outside of nesting season, a pre-construction survey shall be performed by a qualified biologist to verify the absence of nesting birds. A qualified biologist shall conduct the pre-activity survey within the Project footprint (including access routes) and a 300-foot buffer surrounding the Project area, no more than two hours prior to initiating Project activities.***

If Project activities begin during the nesting bird season (generally, raptor nesting season is January 1 through September 15; and passerine bird nesting season is February 1 through September 1), nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified avian biologist no more than three (3) days prior to Project initiation. Preconstruction surveys shall focus on both direct and indirect evidence of nesting, including nest locations and nesting behavior. The qualified avian biologist will make every effort to avoid potential nest predation as a result of survey and monitoring efforts. If active nests containing eggs or young are found during the preconstruction nesting bird surveys, a qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate nest buffer to be

marked on the ground and discussed in the WEAP. Nest buffers are species-specific and shall be at least 100 feet for passerines and 300 feet for raptors. A smaller or larger buffer may be determined by the qualified biologist familiar with the nesting phenology of the nesting species and based on nest and buffer monitoring results. Established buffers shall remain on site until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active. Active nests and adequacy of the established buffer distance shall be monitored daily by the qualified biologist until the qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged or the Project has been completed. The qualified biologist has the authority to stop work if nesting pairs exhibit signs of disturbance.

Thus, with implementation of the above measure, any effects on wildlife movement or the use of wildlife nursery sites can be reduced to a less than significant impact.

e. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Development of the proposed project would have a less than significant potential to conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Impacts to biological resources have been addressed above under issues IV(a-d). Therefore, the potential for the project to conflict with local policies or ordinances pertaining to biological resources would be considered less than significant.

f. *No Impact* – Please refer to the discussion under response IV(a) above. The project has not been identified as being located within an area within a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan, and implementation of the project will therefore not result in a significant impact to any such plans. No further mitigation is necessary.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES: Will the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if project is located in the Agricultural ☐ or Paleontological ☐ Resources overlays or cite results of cultural resource review) The following information is provided based on a Historical / Archaeological resources Survey Report of the project site. The report was conducted by CRM TECH dated February 8, 2023 is titled "*Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report: Joshua Tree Campsite Project, Assessor's Parcel No. 0631-283-07, Joshua Tree Area, San Bernardino County, California*" (Appendix 2). The following information is abstracted from this report. It provides an overview and findings regarding the cultural resources found within the project area.

Summary of the Finding

The purpose of the cultural report is to provide the County and other responsible agencies with the necessary information and analysis to determine whether the project would have an effect on any "historic properties," as defined by 36 CFR 800.16(l), or "historical resources," as defined by PRC §5020.1(j), that may exist in or near the APE. In order to identify such resources, CRM TECH reviewed the results of a recent historical/archaeological resources records search on a nearby property, pursued historical background research, initiated a Sacred Lands File search, and carried out an intensive-level field survey.

The field survey produced completely negative results for cultural resources of either prehistoric or historical origin, and no buildings, structures, objects, sites, features, or artifacts more than 50 years of age were encountered in the project area. The ground surface on the property was extensively disturbed in the recent past and retains very little of its native character, although scattered vegetation growth has begun to reclaim the landscape since 2009. Modern refuse was observed over much of the property, including domestic trash and construction debris, but none of the items is of any historical or archaeological interest.

Based on these findings, CRM TECH recommends to the County of San Bernardino a finding of No Impact regarding "historical resources." No further cultural resources investigation is recommended for the project unless development plans undergo such changes as to include areas not covered by this study. However, if buried cultural materials are encountered during any earth-moving operations associated with the project, all work within 50 feet of the discovery should be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the finds.

Impact Analysis

a&b. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – CEQA establishes that "a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (PRC §21084.1). "Substantial adverse change," according to PRC §5020.1(q), "means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of a historical resource would be impaired."

Per the above discussion and definition, no archaeological sites or isolates were recorded within the project boundaries; thus, none require further consideration during this study. In light of this information and pursuant to PRC §21084.1, the following conclusions have been reached for the project:

- No historical resources within or adjacent to the project area have any potential to be disturbed as they are not within the proposed area in which the facilities will be constructed and developed, and thus, the project as it is currently proposed will not cause a substantial adverse change to any known historical resources.
- No further cultural resources investigation is necessary for the proposed project unless construction plans undergo such changes as to include areas not covered by this study.

However, if any earth moving activities are required, the following mitigation measure will ensure that impacts to any buried cultural materials that may be discovered during earth moving activities is carried are less than significant:

CUL-1 Should any cultural resources be encountered during construction of these facilities, earthmoving or grading activities in the immediate area of the finds shall be halted and an onsite inspection shall be performed immediately by a qualified archaeologist. Responsibility for making this determination shall be with the County. The archaeological professional shall assess the find, determine its significance, notify any Tribes of interest, and make recommendations for appropriate management measures within the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act.

With the above mitigation measure, the potential for impacts to cultural resources will be reduced to a less than significant level. No additional mitigation is required.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – As noted in the discussion above, no available information suggests that human remains may occur within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the potential for such an occurrence is considered low. Human remains discovered during the project will need to be treated in accordance with the provisions of HSC §7050.5 and PRC §5097.98, which is mandatory. State law (Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code) as well as local laws requires that the Police Department, County Sheriff and Coroner's Office receive notification if human remains are encountered. Compliance with these laws is considered adequate mitigation for potential impacts and no further mitigation is required.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
VI. ENERGY: Would the project:				
a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

VI. ENERGY

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – During construction, the proposed project will utilize minimal heavy-duty construction equipment because the site will not be mass graded and is less than 2.5 acres in size. Once the site is cleared, the small geo-dome structures will sit on top of the native soil or on a wooden deck that will be raised above the ground. Energy consumption during construction will be minimal as described. During operation energy consumption will be from vehicles consuming fuel to access the site and drive to recreation areas, and electricity used for lighting, heating/cooling, and delivery of water to the site. The amount of energy used to support this project will again be very minor as each of the four geo-domes (refer to Figures 4 and 5) is only 400 to 500 square feet in size. Thus, the proposed project during construction and operation will not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

Compliance with standard regulatory requirements for operational energy use and construction energy use would not be wasteful or unnecessary use of energy. Further, SCE is presently in compliance with State renewable energy supply requirements and SCE will supply electricity to the project. Under the operational scenario for the proposed project, it will not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption that could result in a significant adverse impact to energy issues based on compliance with the existing laws, regulations and guidelines. No mitigation beyond those identified above are required.

b. Less Than Significant Impact – Based on the analysis of the proposed project in the preceding discussion, it will not conflict with current State energy efficiency or electricity supply requirements or any local plans or programs for renewable energy or energy efficiency requirements. The Geo-Domes support a destination recreation area with a unique, small abode during their visit. The type of units minimize energy demand for this type of activity; thus, the proposed project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a stated or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS: Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
(i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
(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-site or offsite land-slide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located in the Geologic Hazards Overlay District) The following information is provided based on a Geotechnical Investigation of the project site.

a. Ground Rupture

Less Than Significant Impact – The project site is located in the County of San Bernardino within the Mojave desert region north of the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, which is located in a highly seismically active area as the Landers Fault traverses the area. The project is located Northwest of the Landers Fault Zone system, which is classified as Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. The Pinto Mountain Fault Zone is located to the south of the project site. Figure VII-1 shows where these faults are located as indicated by the San Bernardino Countywide Plan Earthquake Fault Zones Map. The closest known active fault zones are more than two and a half miles from the proposed project site. As such, and as

illustrated on Figure VII-1, the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone. Based on this information, the risk for ground rupture at the site location is considered low; therefore, it is not likely that future visitors and employees of the project will be subject to rupture from a known earthquake fault. Therefore, any impacts under this issue are considered less than significant; no mitigation is required.

Strong Seismic Ground Shaking

Less Than Significant Impact – As stated in the discussion above, several faults run through this region of the County, and as with much of southern California, the proposed structures will be subject to strong seismic ground shaking impacts should any major earthquakes occur in the future, as shown on Figure VII-1. Any future developments at the subject site should anticipate that moderate to large seismic events could occur near the site. The earthquake shaking potential at the site (shown on the Department of Conservation Data Viewer Earthquake Shaking Potential for California Map provided as Figure VII-2) indicates that the project has a moderate earthquake shaking potential. As a result, and like all other development projects in the County and throughout the Southern California Region, the proposed project will be developed in accordance with the applicable development code for temporary structures such as those proposed by the Joshua Tree Campsite Project. This will ensure that structural integrity will be maintained in the event of an earthquake, and as such, impacts associated with seismic ground shaking will be less than significant.

Seismic-Related Ground Failure Including Liquefaction

No Impact – According to the map prepared for the County of San Bernardino Countywide Plan Liquefaction & Landslides Map (Figure VII-3), the project site is not located in an area that is considered susceptible to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed project would be susceptible to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. Furthermore, no structures are proposed as part of the campsite facility upgrades. No impacts are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

Landslides

No Impact – The project site is located in a flat area, and is therefore not located in an area in which landslides are anticipated to occur. According to the map prepared for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan Liquefaction & Landslides Map (Figure VII-3), the project site is not mapped within an area that is considered susceptible to landslides. Therefore, the project will not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse landslide effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides. No impacts under this issue are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Project construction will not include any mass grading at the site, as the proposed project looks to keep the landscape in its natural state as much as possible. The only minor grading that will occur will be for the campground and driveway. This will result in only minor losses of topsoil or erosion. Furthermore, the San Bernardino County Development Code Chapter 85.11.030 requires standard erosion control practices to be implemented for all construction. Therefore, any impacts under this issue are considered less than significant.

c. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – As previously stated, according to the Liquefaction & Landslides Map prepared for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan (Figure VII-3), the potential for liquefaction to occur within the project site is low. Additionally, the potential for landslide at the project site has been determined to be minimal. The San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR indicates that subsidence due to groundwater extraction affects the Desert Regions, particularly near dry lakebeds in the Mojave and Morongo basins. Areas at high risk of future subsidence include the El Mirage Valley, Lower Mojave, Harper Valley, and Lucerne Valley. Areas at medium-high risk include the Upper Mojave River, Irwin Subbasin, Fremont Valley, and Twentynine Palms. The proposed project has been mapped as being located in an area with low to medium subsidence potential by the San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR (Figure VII-4). Thus, as the proposed project

would (a) be located outside of the areas at high risk for subsidence within the Desert Region of the County, and (b) would only include the development of temporary structures, the project would have a less than significant potential to be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite subsidence. According to the San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR, Desert Regions have the highest potential for collapsible soils due to their aridity, the prevalence of both alluvial and wind-deposited soils, and soils with salts. As previously stated, project construction will not include any mass grading at the site, as the proposed project looks to keep the landscape in its natural state as much as possible. Thus, as only minor grading would be required for the campground and driveway, and as structures would be temporary in nature, the potential for a significant impact to occur as a result of collapse at the project site would be less than significant. Based on the above discussion, it is not anticipated that the project will be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse. No further mitigation is required.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – In section 5 of the San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR, much of the Desert Region has low to moderately expansive soils. In select areas, such as Lucerne Valley and dry lakebeds, the soils can be highly expansive. This proposed project site is not located in a dry lakebed or within Lucerne Valley. Thus, it is anticipated that the expansion potential is low. Furthermore, no clay type soils exist at the project site, and as such, the development of the project will not create a substantial risk to life or property by being placed on expansive soils because none exist on the site. Thus, impacts under this issue are considered less than significant. No further mitigation is required.

e. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The project would develop a septic tank for wastewater management as there is no municipal wastewater collection available at the project site. As previously stated the proposed project is supported by stable soils and furthermore would be subject to the design recommendations as required by the Geotechnical investigation. As such, the soils are capable of adequately supporting the use of septic. Furthermore, the project will be required to comply with the 2019 California Plumbing Code (Part 5, Title 24, California Code of Regulations), which sets parameters for private sewage disposal, and with the San Bernardino County Development Code, Article 6. Thus, with compliance of applicable County and State Codes, any impacts under this issue are considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

f. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The San Bernardino Countywide Plan indicates that the proposed project area is located in a highly sensitive area for paleontological resources (refer to Figure VII-4). Previously unknown and unrecorded paleontological resources may be unearthed during excavation and grading activities of the proposed project. However, based on the project design, no mass grading will occur at the project. The only proposed excavation will be in association with the septic system installation. If previously unknown potentially unique paleontological resources are uncovered during excavation or construction, significant impacts could occur. According to the San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR, the County requires that projects located within areas that have been delineated as high sensitivity for paleontological resources by the County General Plan (Figure VII-5) meet the requirements of its MM **CUL-5**, which states:

All projects involving ground disturbances in previously undisturbed areas sediments mapped as having high paleontological sensitivity will be monitored by a qualified paleontological monitor (BLM, 2009; SVP, 2010) on a full-time basis under the supervision of the Qualified Paleontologist. Undisturbed sediments may be present at the surface, or present in the subsurface, beneath earlier developments. This monitoring will include inspection of exposed sedimentary units during active excavations within sensitive geologic sediments. The monitor will have authority to temporarily divert activity away from exposed fossils to evaluate the significance of the find and, should the fossils be determined to be significant, professionally and efficiently recover the fossil specimens and collect associated data. Paleontological monitors will use field data forms to record pertinent location and geologic data, will measure stratigraphic sections (if applicable), and collect appropriate sediment samples from any fossil localities.

The proposed project shall implement the following measure to meet the County's requirements pertaining to paleontological resources:

GEO-1 ***The Applicant shall retain the services of a Qualified Paleontologist meeting the standards of SVP (2010). The Qualified Paleontologist shall monitor ground disturbing activities for the duration of ground disturbing activities. The monitor shall have authority to temporarily divert construction activity away from exposed fossils to evaluate the significance of the find and, should the fossils be determined to be significant, professionally and efficiently recover the fossil specimens and collect associated data. Paleontological monitors shall use field data forms to record pertinent location and geologic data, measure stratigraphic sections (if applicable), and collect appropriate sediment samples from any fossil localities. In the event of fossil discovery, the provision of County's General Plan EIR mitigation measure GEO-1 shall be implemented and adhered to.***

The MM **CUL-6** (sourced from the 2019 San Bernardino Countywide Plan EIR), which addresses the potential for discovery of fossils, shall also be required as part of this project as follows:

In the event of any fossil discovery, regardless of depth or geologic formation, construction work will halt within a 50-ft. radius of the find until its significance can be determined by a Qualified Paleontologist. Significant fossils will be recovered, prepared to the point of curation, identified by qualified experts, listed in a database to facilitate analysis, and deposited in a designated paleontological curation facility in accordance with the standards of the SVP (2010) and BLM (2009). A repository will be identified and a curatorial arrangement will be signed prior to collection of the fossils. Although the San Bernardino County Museum is specified as the repository for fossils found in the county in the current General Plan (San Bernardino County, 2007), the museum may not always be available as a repository. Therefore, any accredited institution may serve as a repository.

With incorporation of the above project specific and County imposed mitigation measures, the potential for impact to paleontological resources will be reduces to a less than significant level. No additional mitigation is required.

Figure VII-1

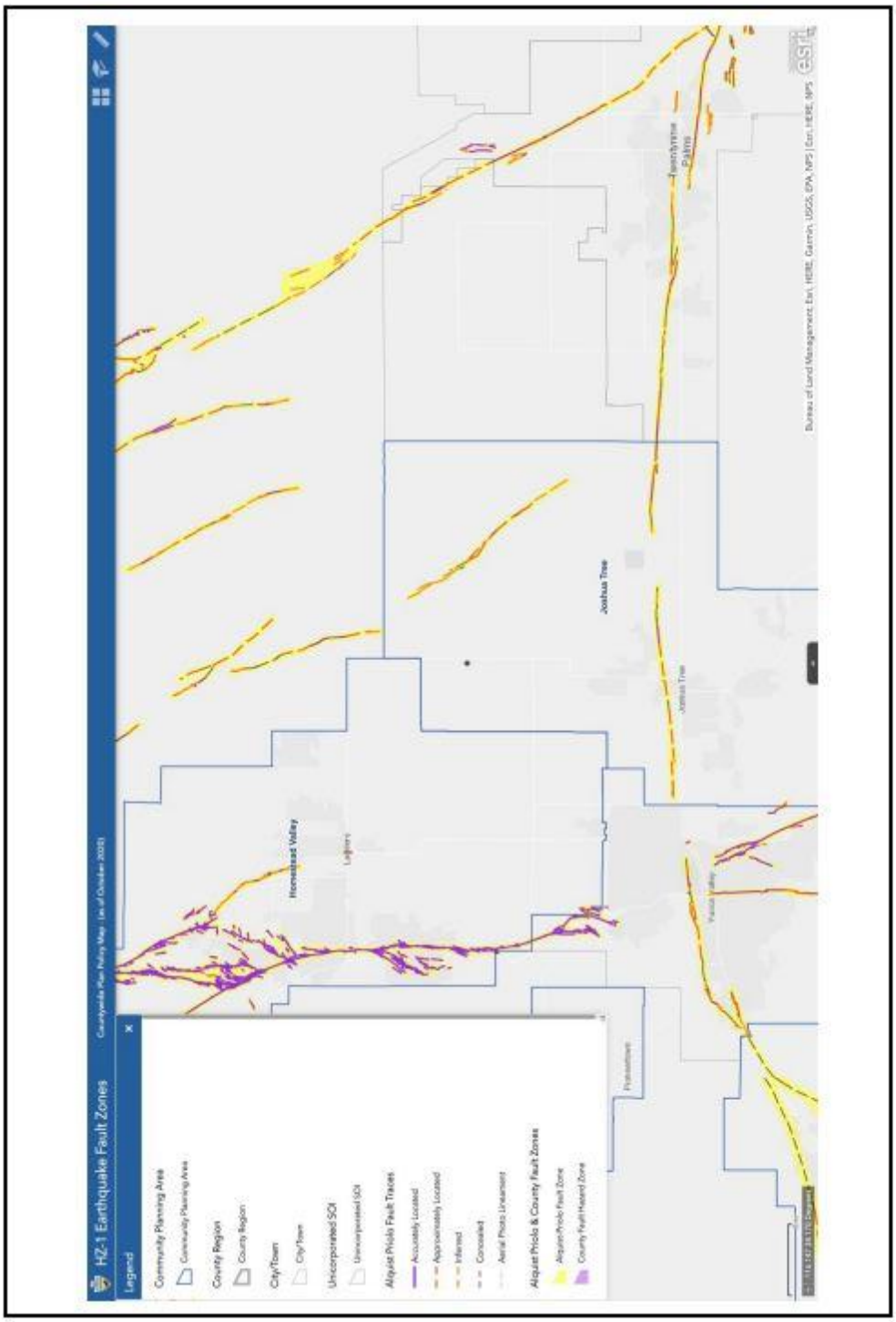


FIGURE VII-1

Earthquake Fault Zones

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Figure VII-2

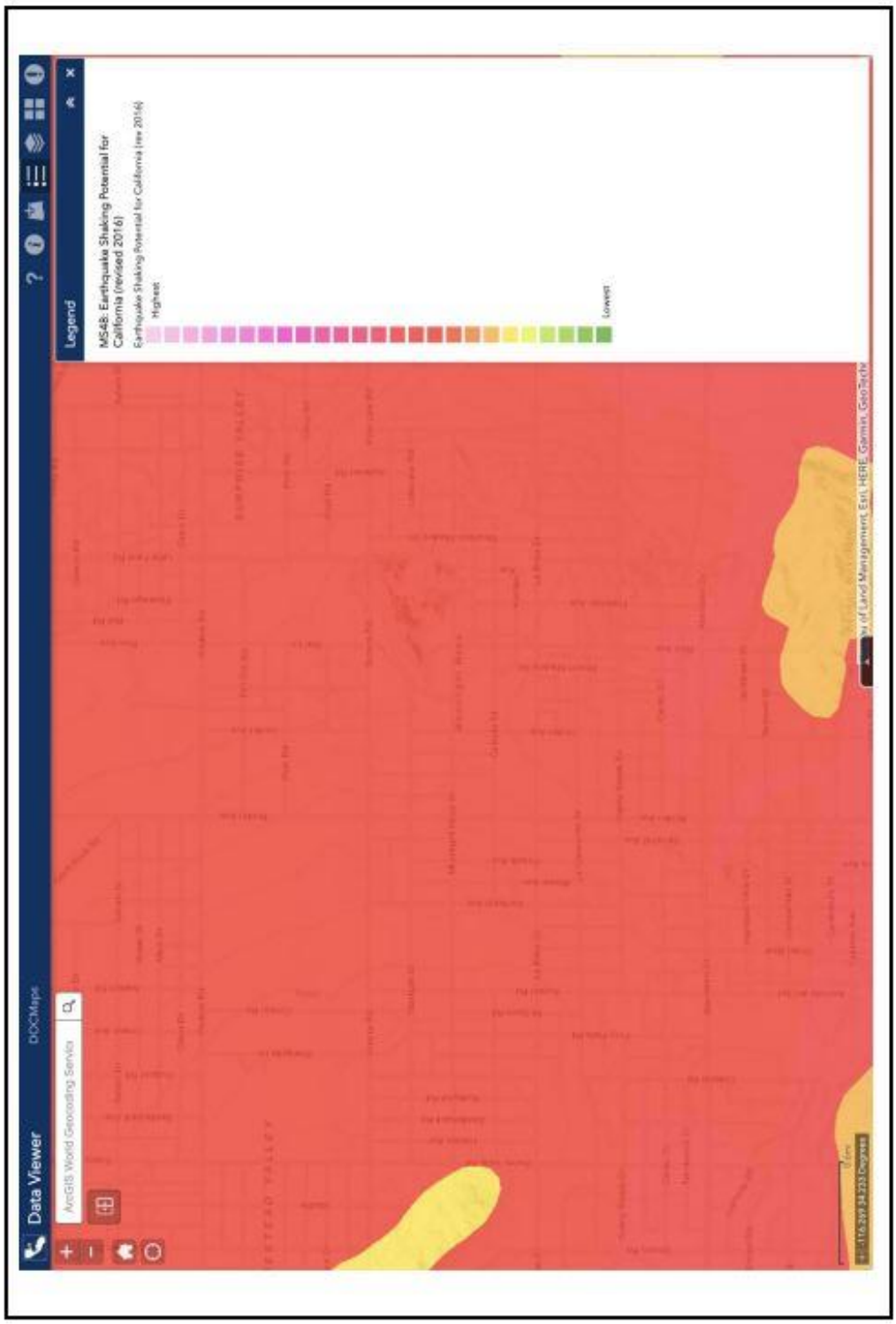

FIGURE VII-2

Earthquake Shaking Potential

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Figure VII-3

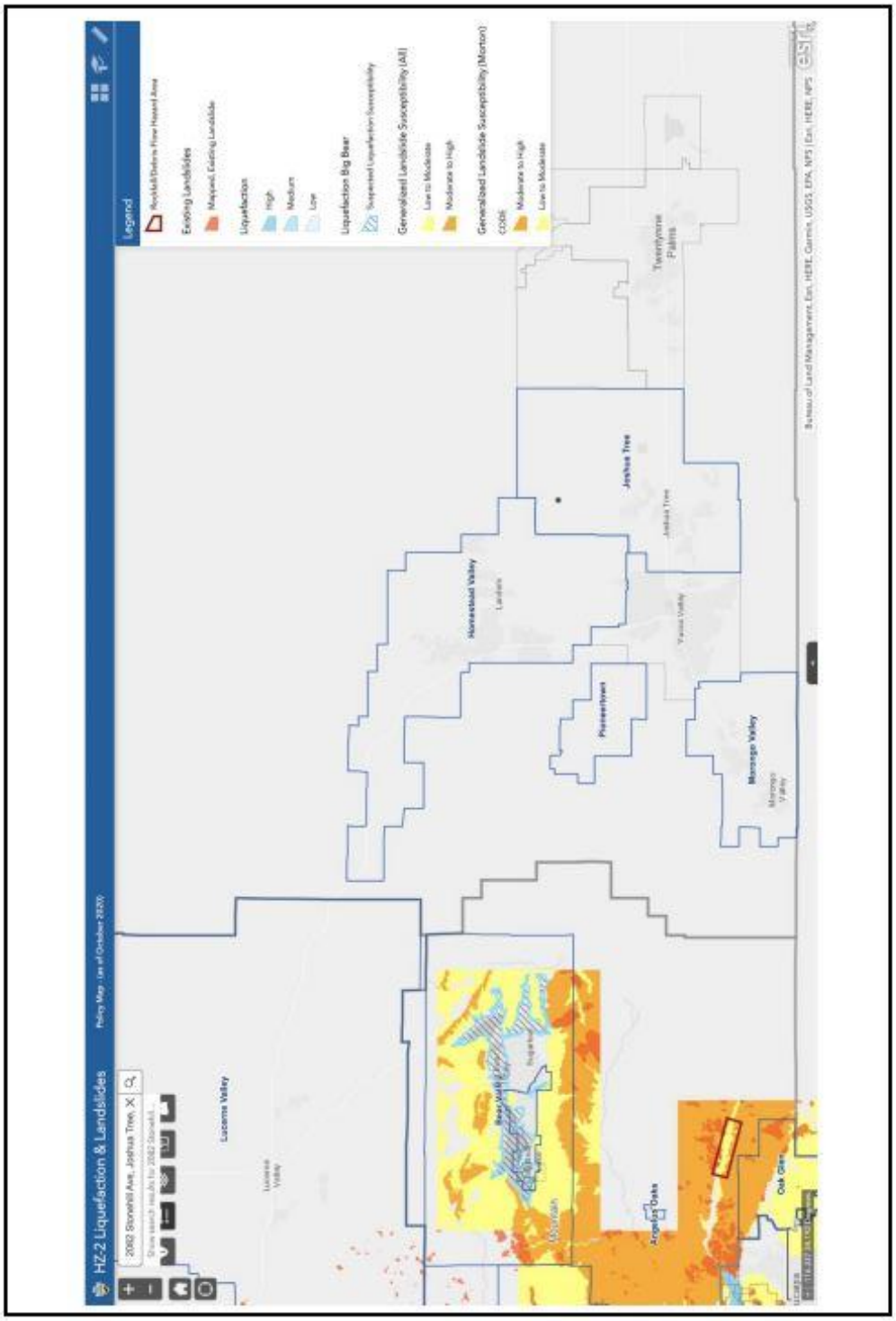

FIGURE VII-3

Liquefaction & Landslides

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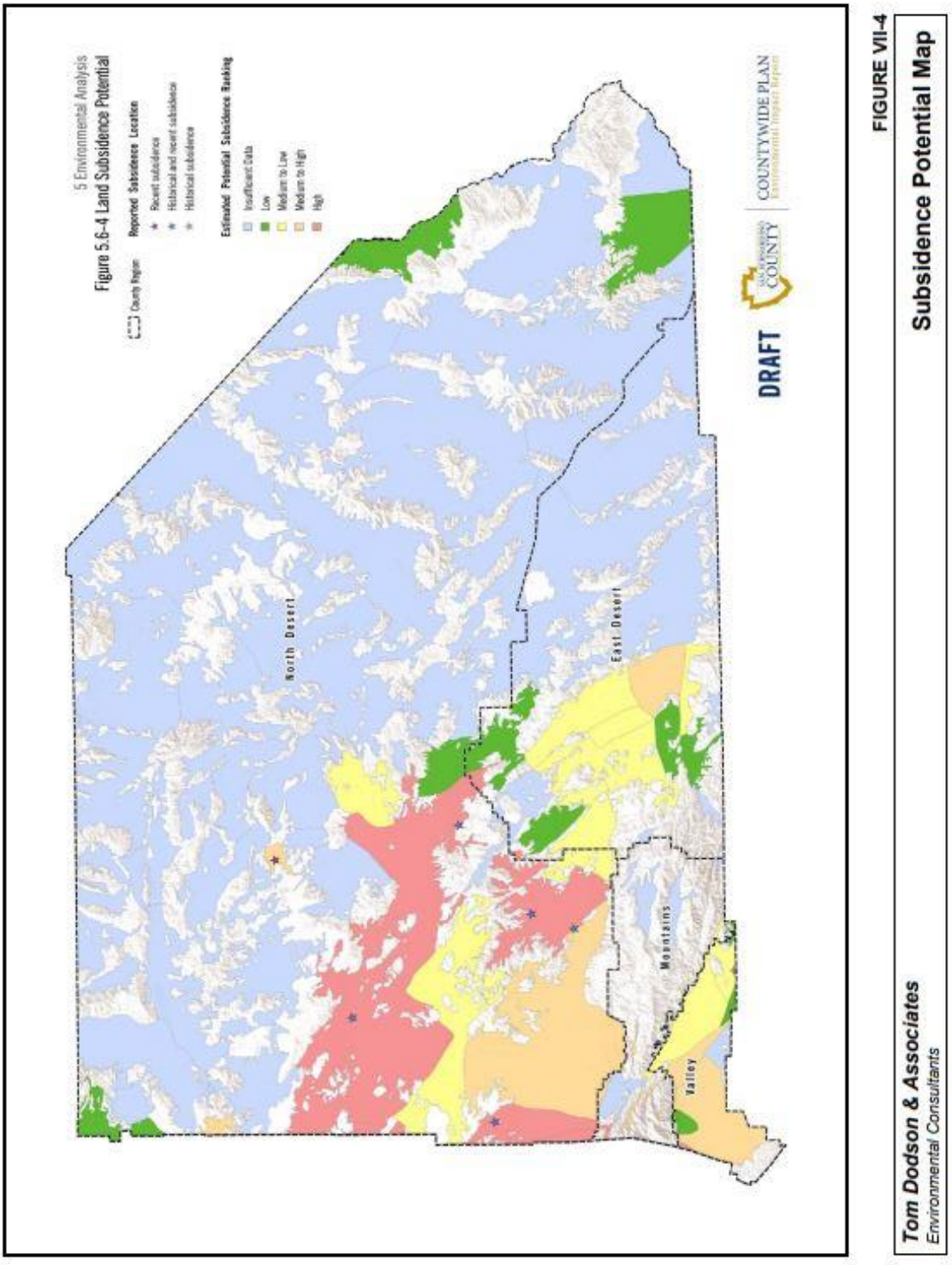
Figure VII-4


5 Environmental Analysis
Figure 5.6-4 Land Subsidence Potential
County Region
Reported Subsidence Location
Recent subsidence
Historical and recent subsidence
Historical subsidence
Estimated Potential Subsidence Ranking
Insufficient Data
Low
Medium to Low
Medium to High
High
DRAFT
COUNTYWIDE PLAN
North Desert
East Desert
Mountains
Valley
FIGURE VII-4
Subsidence Potential Map
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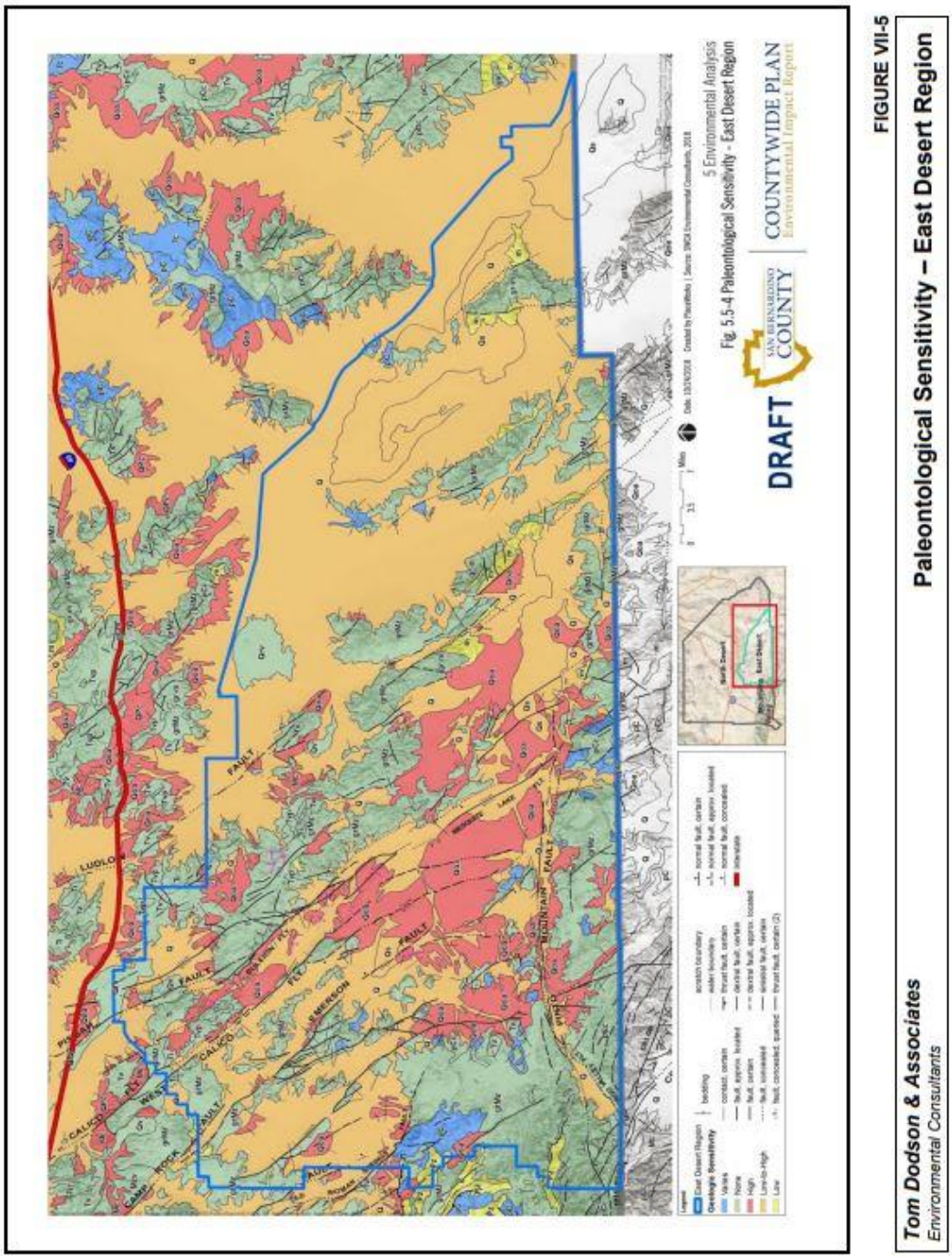
Environmental Consultants

Figure VII-5


DRAFT
COUNTYWIDE PLAN
Environmental Impact Report
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
5 Environmental Analysis
Fig. 5.5-4 Paleontological Sensitivity - East Desert Region
FIGURE VII-5
Paleontological Sensitivity – East Desert Region
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Environmental Consultants

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact or Does Not Apply
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS: Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

SUBSTANTION:

Background

Global Climate Change (GCC) is defined as the change in average meteorological conditions on the earth with respect to temperature, precipitation, and storms. Many scientists believe that the climate shift taking place since the industrial revolution (1900) is occurring at a quicker rate and magnitude than in the past. Scientific evidence suggests that GCC is the result of increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. Many scientists believe that this increased rate of climate change is the result of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity and industrialization over the past 200 years.

An individual project like the project evaluated in this GHGA cannot generate enough greenhouse gas emissions to effect a discernible change in global climate because of the size of the project, as well as the intermittent housing within the project.

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. Major components of the AB 32 include:

- Require the monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions beginning with sources or categories of sources that contribute the most to statewide emissions.
- Requires immediate "early action" control programs on the most readily controlled GHG sources.
- Mandates that by 2020, California's GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels.
- Forces an overall reduction of GHG gases in California by 25-40%, from business as usual, to be achieved by 2020.
- Must complement efforts to achieve and maintain federal and state ambient air quality standards and to reduce toxic air contaminants.

Statewide, the framework for developing the implementing regulations for AB 32 is under way. Maximum GHG reductions are expected to derive from increased vehicle fuel efficiency, from greater use of renewable energy and from increased structural energy efficiency. Additionally, through the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR now called the Climate Action Reserve), general and industry-specific protocols for assessing and reporting GHG emissions have been developed. GHG sources are categorized into direct sources (i.e., company owned) and indirect sources (i.e., not company owned). Direct sources include combustion emissions from on-and off-road mobile sources, and fugitive emissions. Indirect sources include off-site electricity generation and non-company owned mobile sources.

Thresholds of Significance

According to the MDAQMD's *CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines*, a project is significant if it triggers or exceeds the most appropriate evaluation criteria. The MDAQMD states that in general, for GHG emissions, the significance emission threshold of 100,000 tons CO2e (90,718.5 MT CO2e) per year is sufficient (42). A significant project must incorporate mitigation sufficient to reduce its impact to a level that is not significant. A project that cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant must incorporate all feasible mitigation.

Impact Analysis

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Project construction activities would generate an insignificant amount of CO2 and CH4 emissions due to the lack of grading, limited clearing and grubbing needed, the small size of the site, and the lack of building and ground-disturbing construction activities needed on the site. The Geodomes are delivered fully constructed, and the only construction needed is connecting the wood foundations and the Geodomes, and installation of the septic system(s).

Construction Emissions Summary

Because of the limited size of this project, a construction related GHG emissions report has not been prepared.

Operational and Total Emissions Summary

Operational activities associated with the proposed project will result in emissions of CO2, CH4, and N2O from the following primary sources: structure energy use; water supply, distribution, solid waste and mobile source emissions. Appendix 3 contains a detailed greenhouse gas evaluation for a 210 single-family residential division in Victorville. This document is presented to allow a comparison with the emissions of the proposed Joshua Tree Project. Assuming that the four camping units are each equivalent to a single-family residence, the four units would represent 0.019, or about 0.02% of the emissions shown on Table VIII-1. Based on findings in Table VIII-1, the project would result in two percent of the emissions reported, due to the size of the four recreational yurts included in this project, resulting in about 59.33 MTCO2e/year. When compared to the MDAQMD GHG threshold of 90,718 MTCO2e/year, these GHG emissions are not considered to be a significant adverse impact.

Table VIII-1
GHG EMISSION FORECAST

Emission Source	Emissions (MT/yr)			
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	Total CO_2e
Annual construction-related emissions amortized over 30 years	35.79	0.01	0.00	36.10
Area Source	151.41	0.01	0.00	152.36
Energy Source	613.62	0.03	0.01	617.03
Mobile Source	1,945.53	0.12	0.11	1,979.97
Waste	50.02	2.96	0.00	123.92
Water Usage	45.74	0.36	0.01	57.39
Total CO_2e (All Sources)	**2,966.77**			
MDAQMD Threshold	**90,718.5**			
Significant?	**No**			

Source: CalEEMod, Appendix 3.1
-- = Emission factor only provided in MT CO_2e

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Based on the data presented in Appendix 3, the proposed project will not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

SUBSTANTIATION:

a&b. *Less Than Significant* – The Project should not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Because the project is small in size and has a limited amount of construction activity, a hazardous spill is unlikely and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment either through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. With a lack of reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment because of the small project size and limited use of hazardous materials, impacts are considered less than significant and no further mitigation is required.

c. *No Impact* – The proposed project site is not located within one quarter mile of a school, and the closest proposed school is more than two miles east of the proposed project. Based on this information, implementation of the project will not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No adverse impacts are anticipated. No additional mitigation is required.

d. *No Impact* – The proposed project would develop a Joshua Tree Campsite outside of Joshua Tree National Park and the town of Joshua Tree; the project site is vacant, consisting of vegetation that is best described as degraded desert creosote bush scrub. The project will not be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites that are currently under remediation. According to the California State Water Board's GeoTracker website (consistent with Government Code Section 65962.5), which provides information regarding Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) and Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) cleanup sites, there are no open or closed LUST, DTSC, or other clean-up sites within 2,500 feet of the project site (Figure IX-1). Therefore, there is no potential for the project to be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 which could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Project construction and operation of the site as the Joshua Tree Campsite will have a less than significant potential to create a significant hazard to the population or to the environment from their implementation. No mitigation is required.

e. *No Impact* – The project site is located at a great distance from any nearby airport. As shown on the Airport Safety & Planning Areas map prepared for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan (Figure IX-2), the proposed project is not located within an Airport Safety Review Area at any of the area airports (Yucca Valley Airport and Twentynine Palms, etc.). There is no potential safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area as a result of proximity to a public airport or private airstrip. No mitigation is required.

f. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project is not anticipated to interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. As shown on the Evacuation Route Map prepared for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan (Figure IX-3), the adopted evacuation route is Highway 62 to the south of the project site. Development at this location would not interfere with access to any emergency evacuation routes, as the proposed project will be constructed entirely within the boundaries of the project site. The proposed project will not experience substantial conflicts with surrounding traffic. There is a less than significant potential for the development of the project to physically interfere with any adopted emergency response plans, or evacuation plans.

g. *No Impact* – The proposed project would not 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. The proposed Project is located on land that has low density desert vegetation around the site. According to the CAL Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer Map, the proposed project is not within any high severity zones within the State Responsibility Area (SRA)(Figure IX-4). The proposed Project does not include the use of flammable or explosive materials. The proposed Project has no other identifiable potential to expose people or property to wildland fires. Additionally, it should be noted that the proposed Project will increase the area's water distribution capabilities, which is viewed as a benefit to fire protection. Furthermore, the proposed project would conform to Countywide Plan Policy HZ-1.2, below.

Policy HZ-1.2 *New development in environmental hazard areas. We require all new development to be located outside of the environmental hazard areas listed below. For any lot or parcel that does not have sufficient buildable area outside of such hazard areas, we require adequate mitigation, including designs that allow occupants to shelter in place and to have sufficient time to evacuate during times of extreme weather and natural disasters.*

- *Flood: 100-year flood zone, dam/basin inundation area*
- *Geologic: Alquist Priolo earthquake fault zone; county identified fault zone; rockfall/ debris-flow hazard area, medium or high liquefaction area (low to high and localized), existing and county identified landslide area, moderate to high landslide susceptibility area)*
- *Fire: Moderate fire hazard severity zones*

Ultimately, the proposed project will not experience substantial conflicts with surrounding traffic. Given the above, there is a less than significant potential for the development of the project to physically interfere with any adopted emergency response plans, or evacuation plans.

Figure IX-1

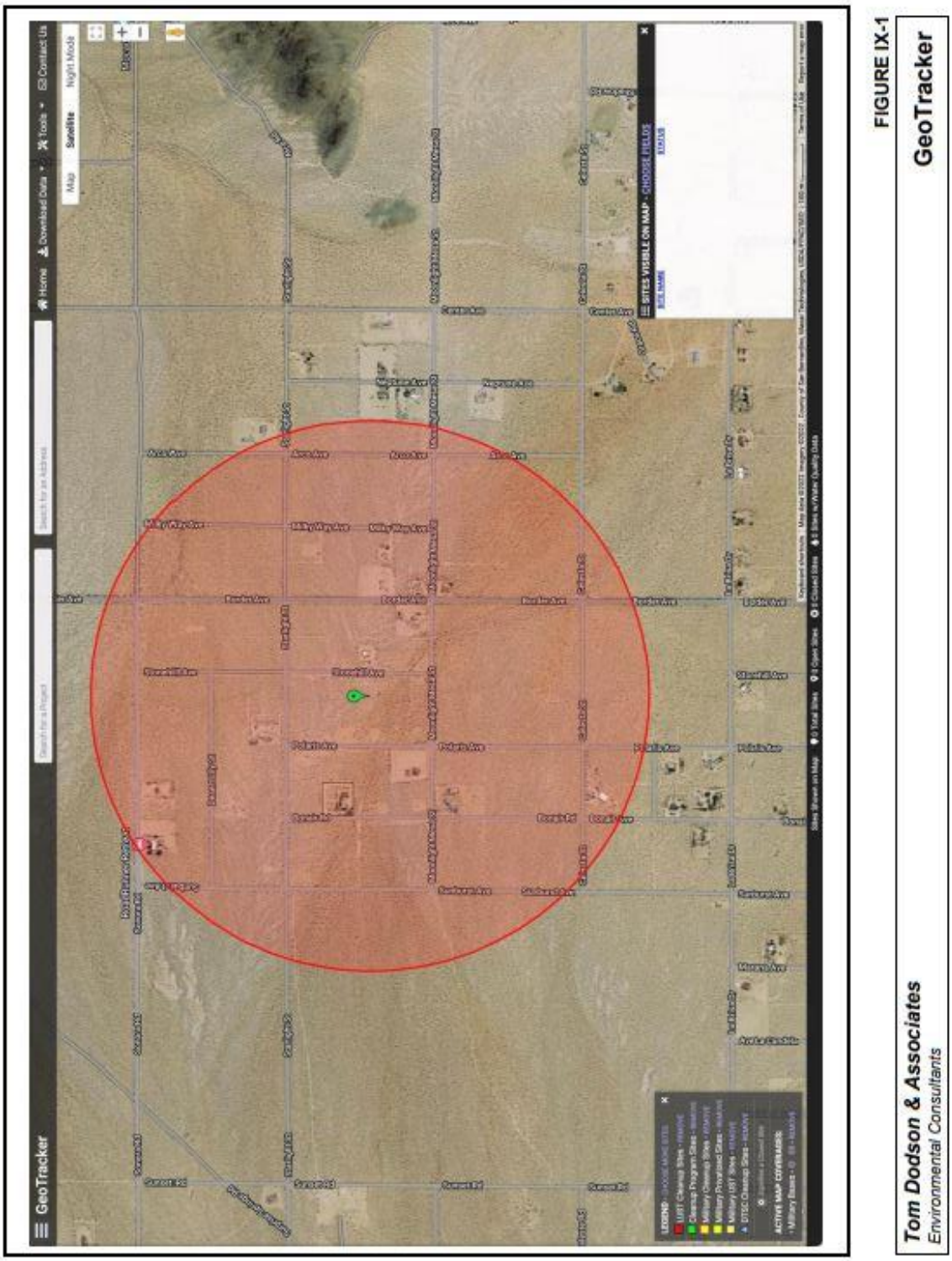
GeoTracker
Home
Download Data
Tools
Contact Us
Map
Satellite
Night Mode
SITES VISIBLE ON MAP - CHOOSE EXCLUDE
LEGEND
ACTIVE MAP COVERAGES
Military Bases
FIGURE IX-1
GeoTracker
Tom Dodson & Associates
Environmental Consultants

Figure IX-2

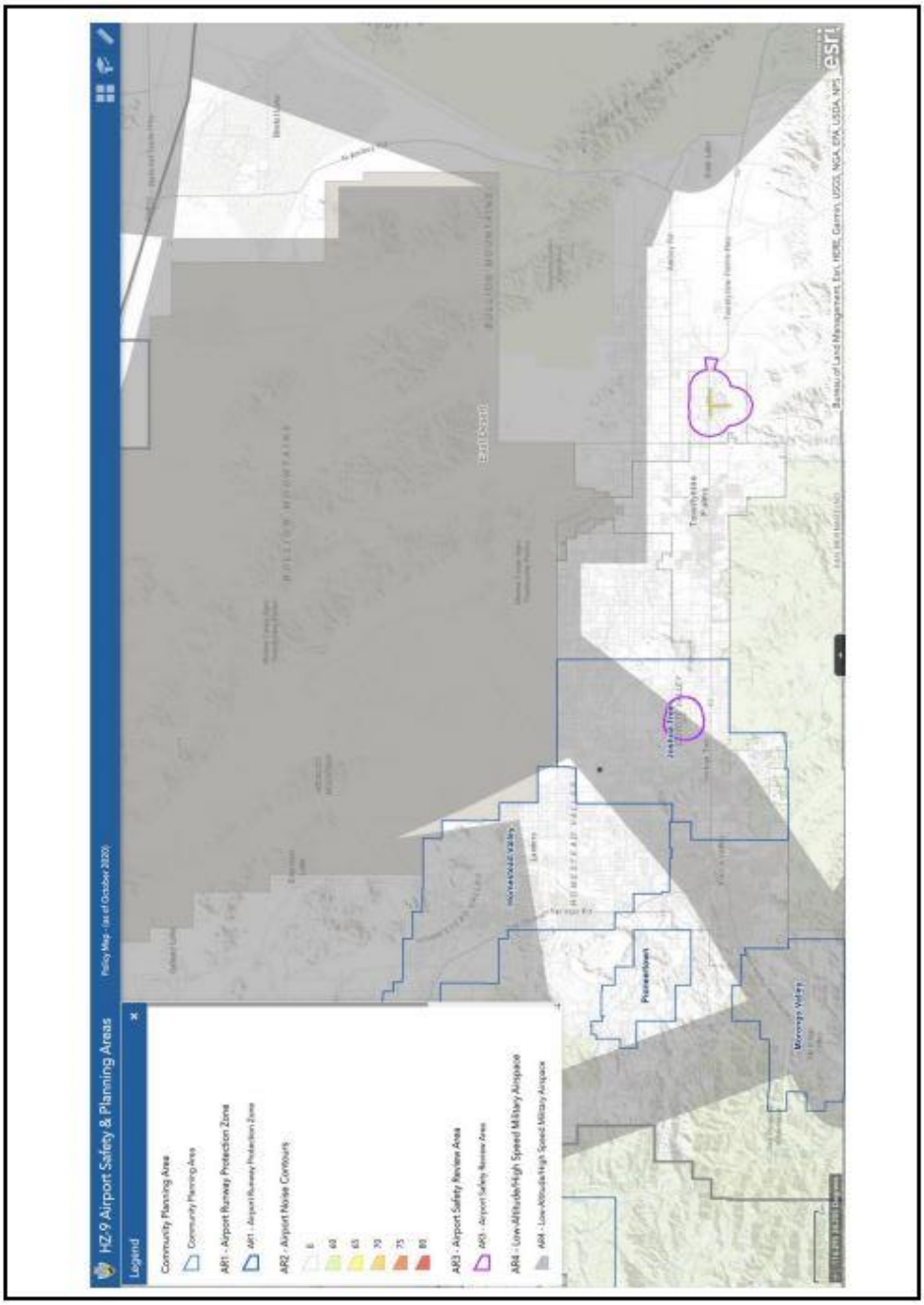

FIGURE IX-2
Airport Safety & Planning Areas
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Figure IX-3

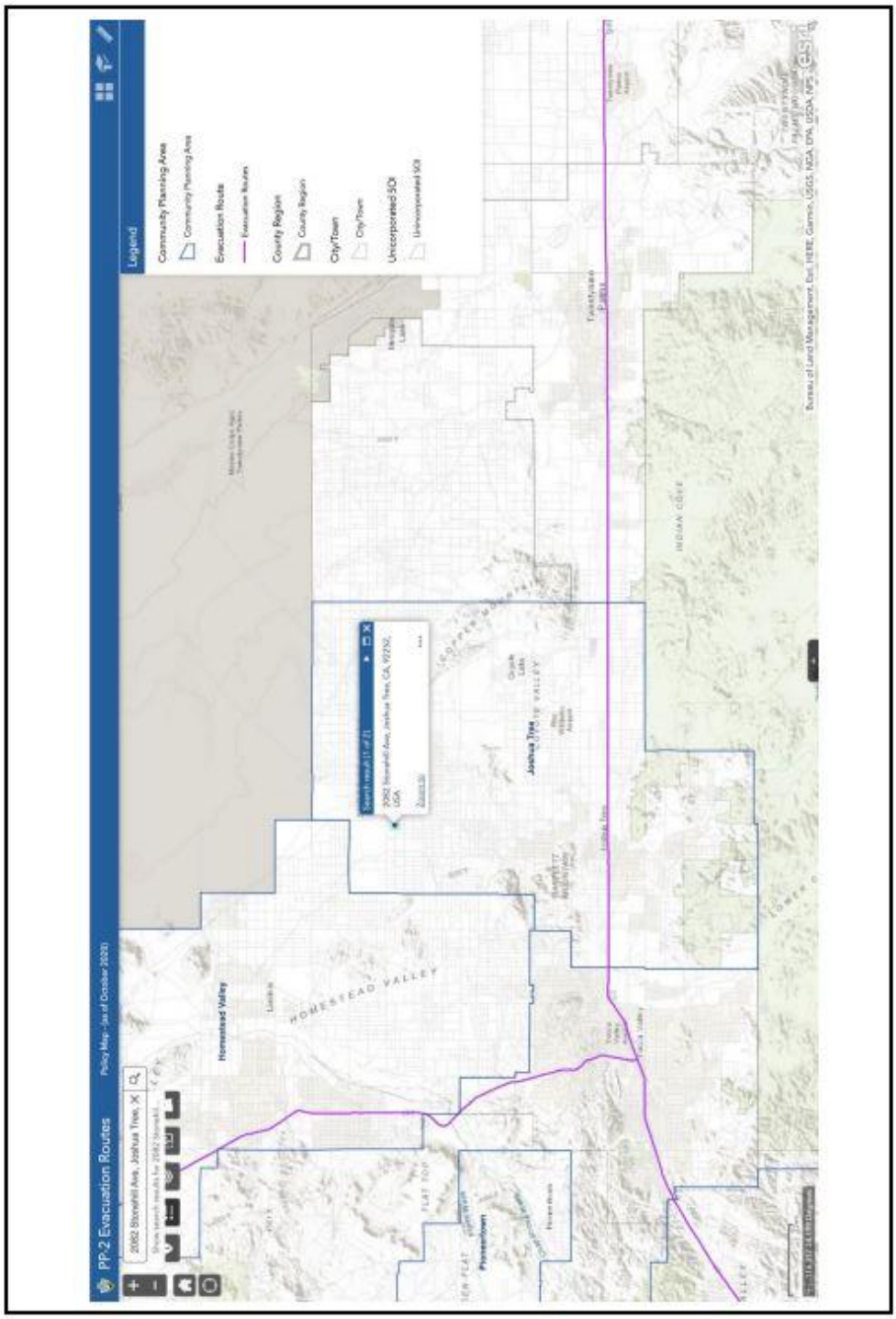

FIGURE IX-3
Evacuation Routes

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Figure IX-4

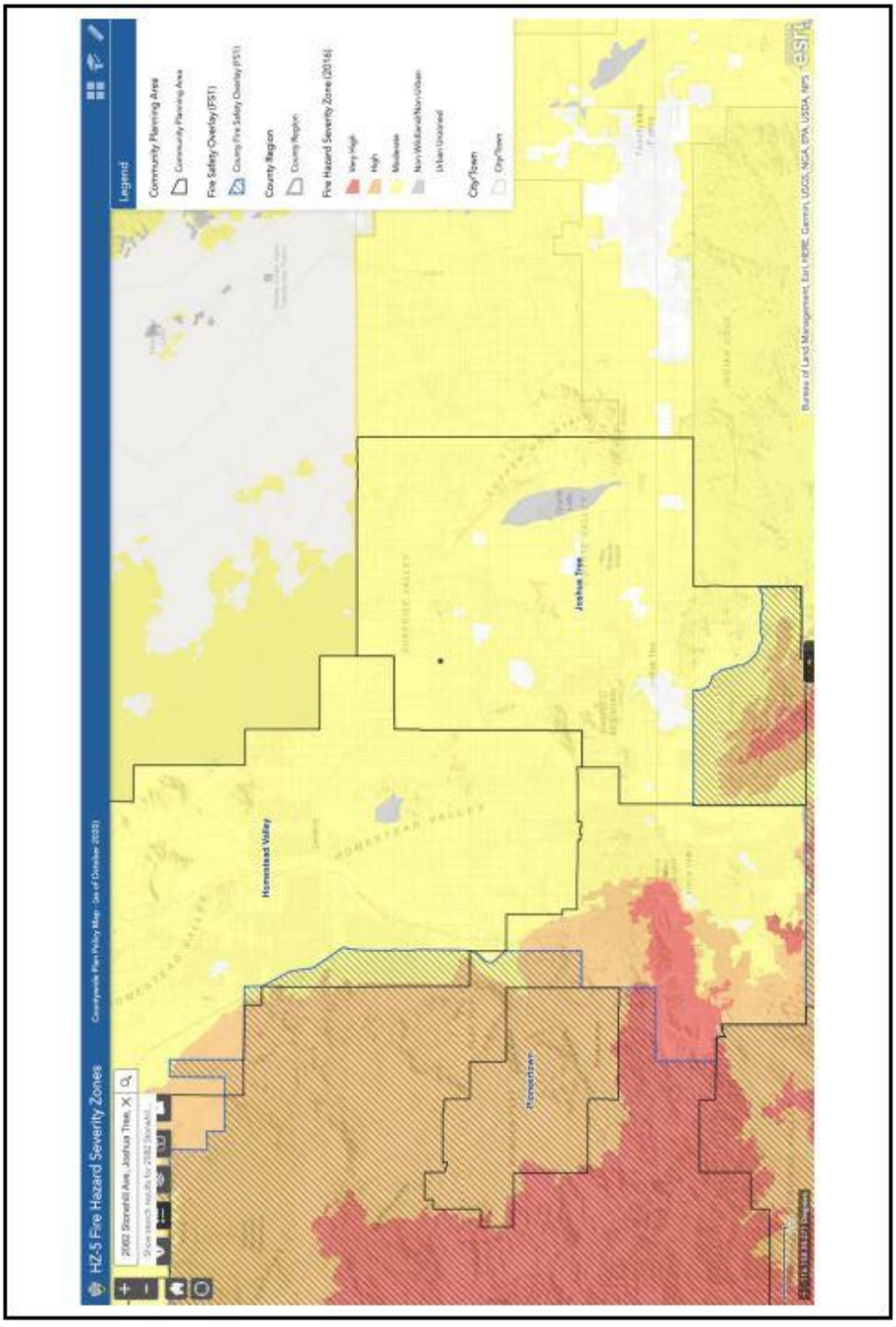

FIGURE IX-4

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

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Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY: Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?; or,	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

SUBSTANTIATION: The following information is provided based on a drainage study prepared for the project site. The report was prepared by JLC Engineering & Consulting, Inc. and is titled "*Hydrology and Hydraulic Drainage Report PROJ-2022-00040 CUP*" (Appendix 4). Some of the information presented below is abstracted from this report. It provides an overview and findings regarding the drainage issues that occur within the project area.

Impact Analysis

a. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project is located within the planning area of the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The project would be supplied with water by connection to the Community of Joshua Tree's potable water system with a pipeline in the adjacent roadway and would dispose of wastewater through an onsite septic system.

To address stormwater and accidental spills within this environment, the County has determined that the applicant must ensure that site development implements a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

(SWPPP) to control potential sources of water pollution that could violate any standards or discharge requirements during construction, and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that project-related after development surface runoff meets discharge requirements over the short- and long-term.

The BMPs will establish requirements for capturing, retaining, and treating onsite stormwater once the project has been developed. Per Regulatory Requirement (RR) HYD-3 identified in the Countywide Plan, the BMPs provide the following: control contaminant discharges downstream of the project site; and provide education materials to future customers the public about stormwater impacts.

Because the project site consists of pervious surfaces, the project has identified onsite drainage that will generally be directed to infiltration basins, and other BMP measures that will be developed as part of the project. The SWPPP would specify the BMPs that the project would be required to implement during construction activities to ensure that all potential water pollutants of concern are prevented from discharge, minimized, and/or otherwise appropriately treated prior to being discharged from the subject property. Furthermore, the proposed project must comply with the San Bernardino Countywide Plan requirement that provides requirements to ensure compliance with projects subject to water quality management plans. With implementation of these mandatory plans and BMPs, regulatory requirements identified by the Countywide Plan and Development Code, the development of the project will not cause a violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a substantial lowering of the local groundwater table level. The proposed Campsite Project is not anticipated to significantly reduce the amount of groundwater recharge because most of the site will remain pervious after development. The site minimizes use of potable water by minimizing landscaping, use of drought resistant plant, and installation of onsite septic tank system. The proposed development of the project will therefore not substantially interrupt the existing percolation of the site, or any flow of groundwater under the project site. No significant adverse impacts to groundwater resources are forecasted to occur from implementing the proposed Project. No mitigation is required.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* –

Background: The project proposes a campsite consisting of four geo-dome structures across 2.29 acres of land. The project is located within a larger watershed area as offsite flows accumulate in the west and travel eastward through the project site. Accordingly, a flood plain exists within a portion of the project site. Refer to Figure X-1 which shows the flood plain on the site relative to the existing site development proposal. The flood plain limits for the site were established according to a peak 100-year flow rate of 622.75 cubic feet per second (CFS) over 369.84 acres of overall watershed area along with the topographic data from the United States Geological Survey topographic map. The following conclusions were presented in the Drainage Report (Appendix 4):

1. The project site is impacted by a watershed area that is approximately 370 acres and has a peak 100-year flow rate of approximately 620 cfs; and
2. The project must implement a design that perpetuates the existing flood plain. This can be accomplished using either of the following design concepts:
    a. Design a footing/crawl space design as shown on Figure 3A of Appendix 4.
    b. Install the geo-dome units outside the floodplain as shown on Figure 3B of Appendix 4.

i. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project will make minor modifications to the project site and is not forecast to include substantial impervious areas onsite. Any surface runoff in the future is not forecast to generate concentrated flows that could result in substantial erosion or siltation, either onsite or downstream (off-site). Mitigation measure HYD-1

(below) will ensure that the changes to the site will not interrupt major onsite storm flows that could generate substantial erosion or siltation.

ii. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project will make minor modifications to the project site and is not forecast to include substantial impervious areas onsite. The proposed project will not substantially increase the amount or rate of future site runoff in a manner that would result in flooding onsite and offsite. Mitigation measure HYD-1 (below) will ensure that the changes to the site will not cause major alteration in future onsite storm flows that could generate such flooding.

iii. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – There are no drainage systems in the project area. The proposed project will make minor modifications to the project site and is not forecast to increase storm water runoff substantially on the site or downstream. The proposed project will not substantially increase the amount or rate of future site runoff in a manner that would result in an increase in the existing flows identified for the site. Mitigation measure HYD-1 (below) will ensure that the changes to the site will not cause major alteration in future onsite storm flows that could generate such flooding or result I additional sources of polluted runoff.

HYD-1 The project must implement a design that perpetuates the existing flood plain. This can be accomplished using either of the following design concepts:

- ***Design a footing/crawl space design as shown on Figure 3A of Appendix 4.***
- ***Install the geo-dome units outside the floodplain as shown on Figure 3B of Appendix 4.***

iv. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project will make minor modifications to the project site and is not forecast to include substantial impervious areas onsite. The proposed project will not substantially increase the amount or rate of future site runoff in a manner that would result in flooding onsite and offsite. Mitigation measure HYD-1 (below) will ensure that the changes to the site will not impede the identified storm flows across the site and will not redirect such flows.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Implementation of the project will not expose people or structures to a significant risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or other flood hazards. According to the Countywide Plan Dam & Basin Hazards Map (Figure X-2), the project is not located within the limit of flooded area related to a nearby dam. The project is located more than 50 miles from the Pacific Ocean, which eliminates the potential for a tsunami to impact the project area. Additionally, a seiche would not occur within the vicinity of the project because no lakes or enclosed bodies of water exist near the site that could generate such an event. Therefore, the potential to expose people or structures to a significant risk of pollutants due to inundation would be minimal. No mitigation is required.

e. *Less Than Significant Impact* – This project has a minimal potential to generate pollutants that could degrade surface water and/or groundwater or alter percolation at the project site. Therefore, it has a negligible potential to obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan (in this case the applicable plan is that of the Colorado River Basin Region). Since the site will have minimal impermeable surface, it will not substantially alter groundwater percolation on site or any sustainable groundwater management plan in the project area.

Figure X-1

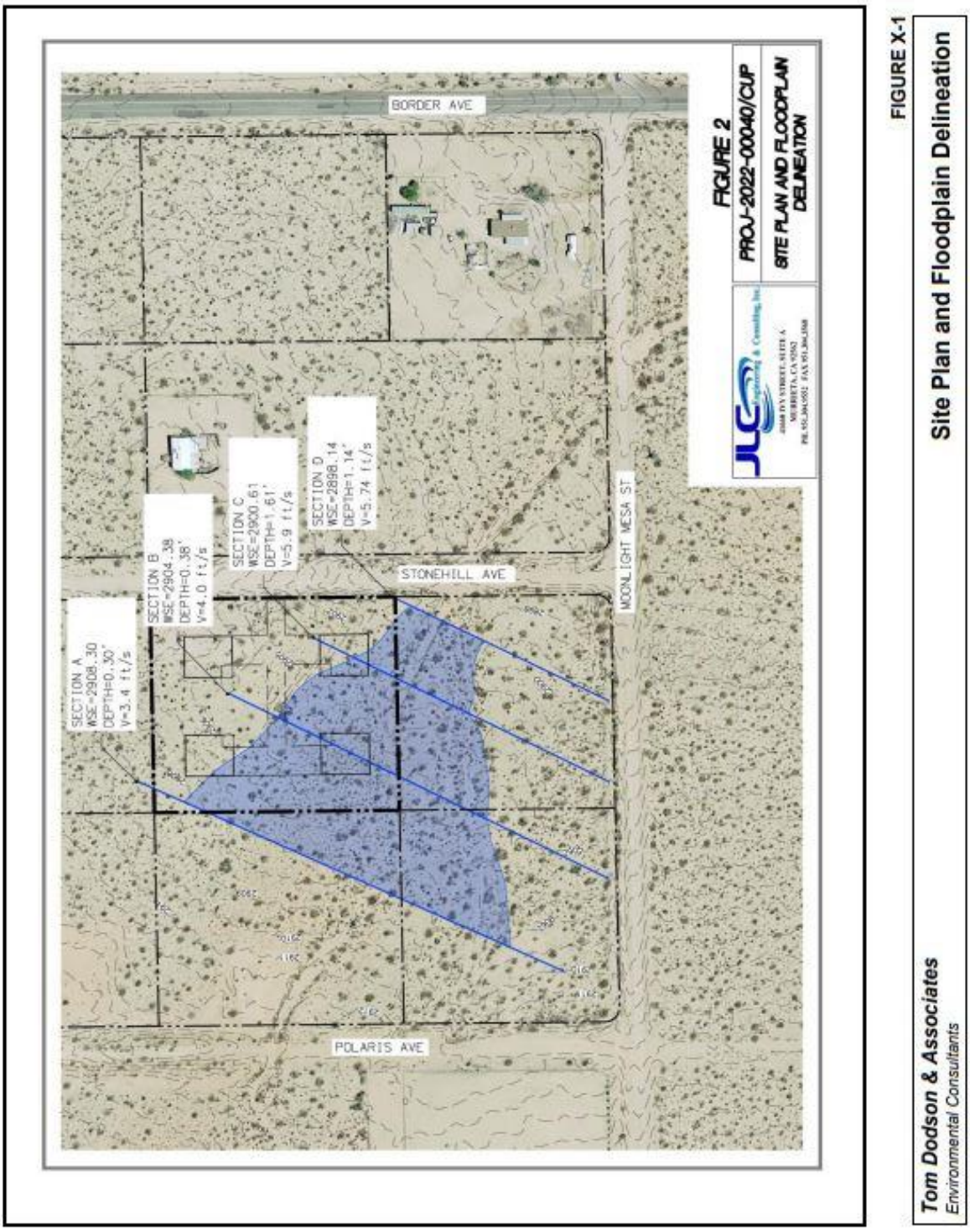
BORDER AVE
STONEHILL AVE
MOONLIGHT MESA ST
POLARIS AVE
SECTION A
WSE=2908.30
DEPTH=0.30'
V=3.4 ft/s
SECTION B
WSE=2904.38
DEPTH=0.38'
V=4.0 ft/s
SECTION C
WSE=2900.61
DEPTH=1.61'
V=5.9 ft/s
SECTION D
WSE=2898.14
DEPTH=1.14'
V=5.74 ft/s
FIGURE 2
PROJ-2022-00040/CUP
SITE PLAN AND FLOODPLAIN DELINEATION
FIGURE X-1
Site Plan and Floodplain Delineation
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Figure X-2

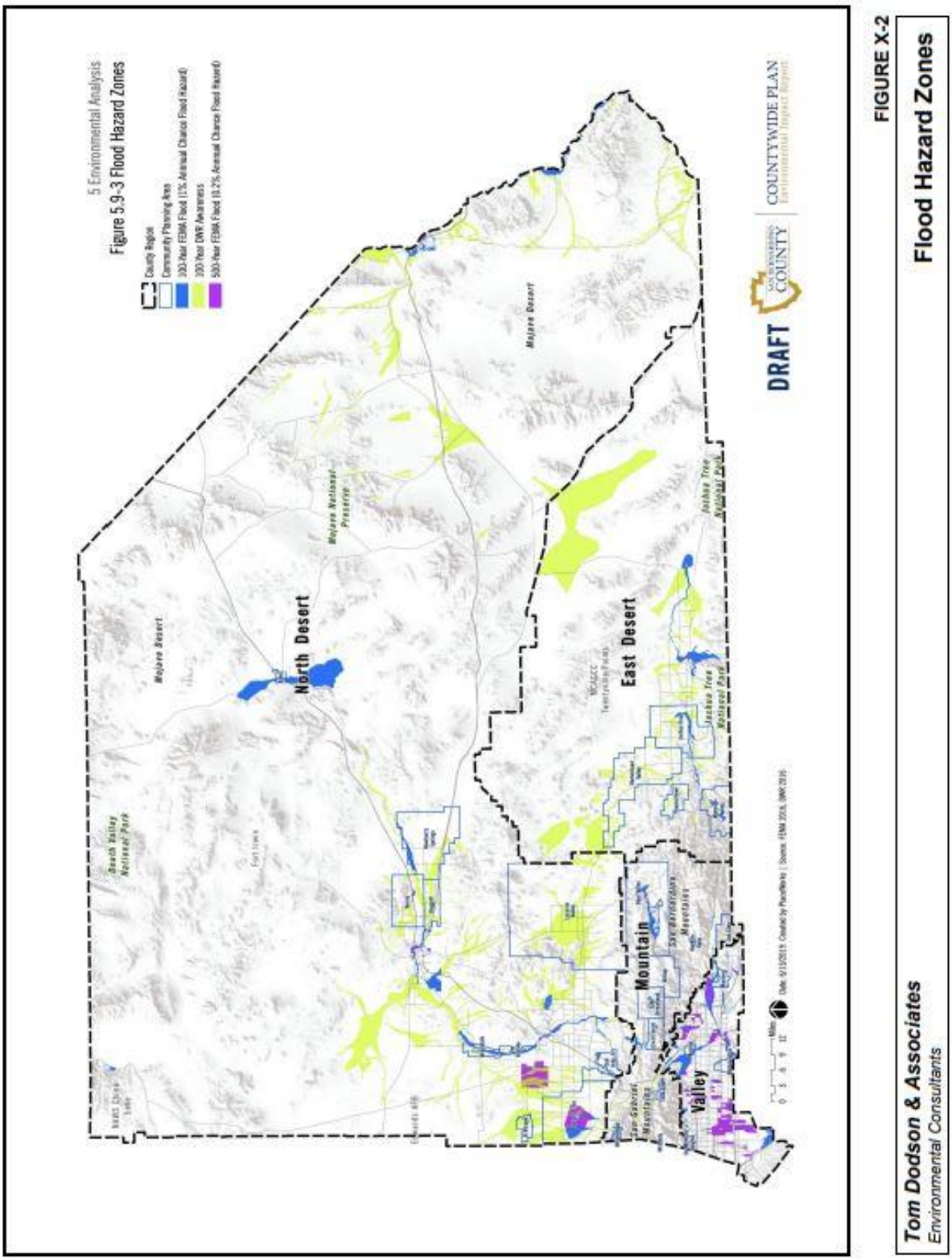

FIGURE X-2
Flood Hazard Zones

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

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *No Impact* – The proposed project is located on an approximate 2.4-acre site in the northern portion of the unincorporated Community of Joshua Tree. There are scattered residences located in the project area, but the proposed project will be located on a single, existing parcel of land that will not create any divisions within this established community. Refer to the Figures 1 and 2, which depict the project's regional and site-specific location. The project site is zoned for Rural Living use and the Countywide Plan land use designation is Rural Living. The proposed Yurts would be developed within an area consistent with the Rural Living land use designation in that, sparse single-family residences are located in the vicinity of the project. Consequently, the development of the project site with the proposed use will not divide any established community in any manner. Therefore, no significant impacts under this issue are anticipated and no mitigation is necessary

b *Less Than Significant Impact* – The project site is zoned for Rural Living use and the San Bernardino Countywide Plan land use designation is Rural Living. The County's recently approved Countywide Plan lists the following Goals and Policies under the Land Use Element:

- Goal LU-1: Growth and development that builds thriving communities, contributes to our Complete County, and is fiscally sustainable.
  - Applicable policies:
    - Policy LU-1.2 Infill Development
    - Policy LU-1.5 Development Impact Fees
- Goal LU-2 Land Use Mix and Compatibility: An arrangement of land uses that balances the lifestyle of existing residents, the needs of future generations, opportunities for commercial and industrial development, and the value of the natural environment.
  - Applicable policies:
    - Policy LU-2.1: Compatibility with existing uses
    - Policy LU-2.2: Compatibility with planned uses
    - Policy LU-2.3: Compatibility with natural environment
    - Policy LU-2.4: Land Use Map consistency
    - Policy LU-2.6: Coordination with adjacent entities
- Goal LU-4 Community Design: Preservation and enhancement of unique community identities and their relationship with the natural environment.
  - Applicable policies:
    - Policy LU-4.1: Context-sensitive design in the Mountain/Desert regions
    - Policy LU-4.3: Native or drought-tolerant landscaping
    - Policy LU-4.5: Community identity
    - Policy LU-4.7: Dark skies

The proposed project would be consistent with the above goals and policies. A review of all other General Plan Goals (Housing Element, Infrastructure & Utilities Element, Transportation & Mobility Element, Natural Resources Element, Renewable Energy & Conservation Element, Cultural

Resources Element, Hazards Element, Personal & Property Protection Element, Economic Development Element, and Health & Wellness Element) indicates that the proposed project is consistent with all applicable Goals, often with mitigation, as demonstrated by the findings in the pertinent sections of this Initial Study. The proposed project can be implemented without significant effects on the circulation system; infrastructure (water and electricity) either exists at or can be installed (septic tank) to support the proposed project; it can meet the requirements set forth in the Economic Development Element pertaining to new revenue generating development; it will not generate significant air emissions or GHG emissions; it will meet noise design requirements; it can meet all Safety Element requirements; and it implements the land use compatibility requirements of the Health and Wellness Element. Therefore, the implementation of this project at this site will be consistent with surrounding land uses, and current use of the site. The project would therefore have a less than significant potential to conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. No mitigation is required to minimize impacts under this issue.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XII. 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, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

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

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project is located on an undeveloped site containing vegetation that is best described as sparse desert shrubland, and as such, does not contain any known important minerals resources. The San Bernardino Countywide Plan Mineral Resource Zones map indicates that the proposed project is not located within any delineated mineral resource zone (Figure XII-1). The proposed project is furthermore not located within an area designated by the State Mining and Geology Board in 1987 or 2013 as containing mineral resources. Given that the proposed project is not located on a delineated state or regionally significant site, and that no mineral extraction currently occurs or is known to have ever occurred on the property or project vicinity, it is anticipated that the development of the site would have a less than significant potential to 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. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed campsite Project would not result in a significant impact under any of the Initial Study Checklist Topics, provided mitigation measures are implemented. As stated above, the San Bernardino Countywide Plan Mineral Resource Zones map indicates that the proposed project not located within any delineated mineral resource zone (Figure XII-1). Given that the site does not currently support mineral resources and has not supported any mineral resources extraction in the past, it is not anticipated that the proposed project would interfere with a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Furthermore, given the small size of the site and the lack of any mining operations in the immediate vicinity of the project, such a use at this site would be infeasible; additionally, development of the site would not preclude future extraction of resources in the general project area. As such, the development of the proposed campsite project at the proposed site would have a less than significant potential to result in the loss of any available locally important resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

Figure XII-1

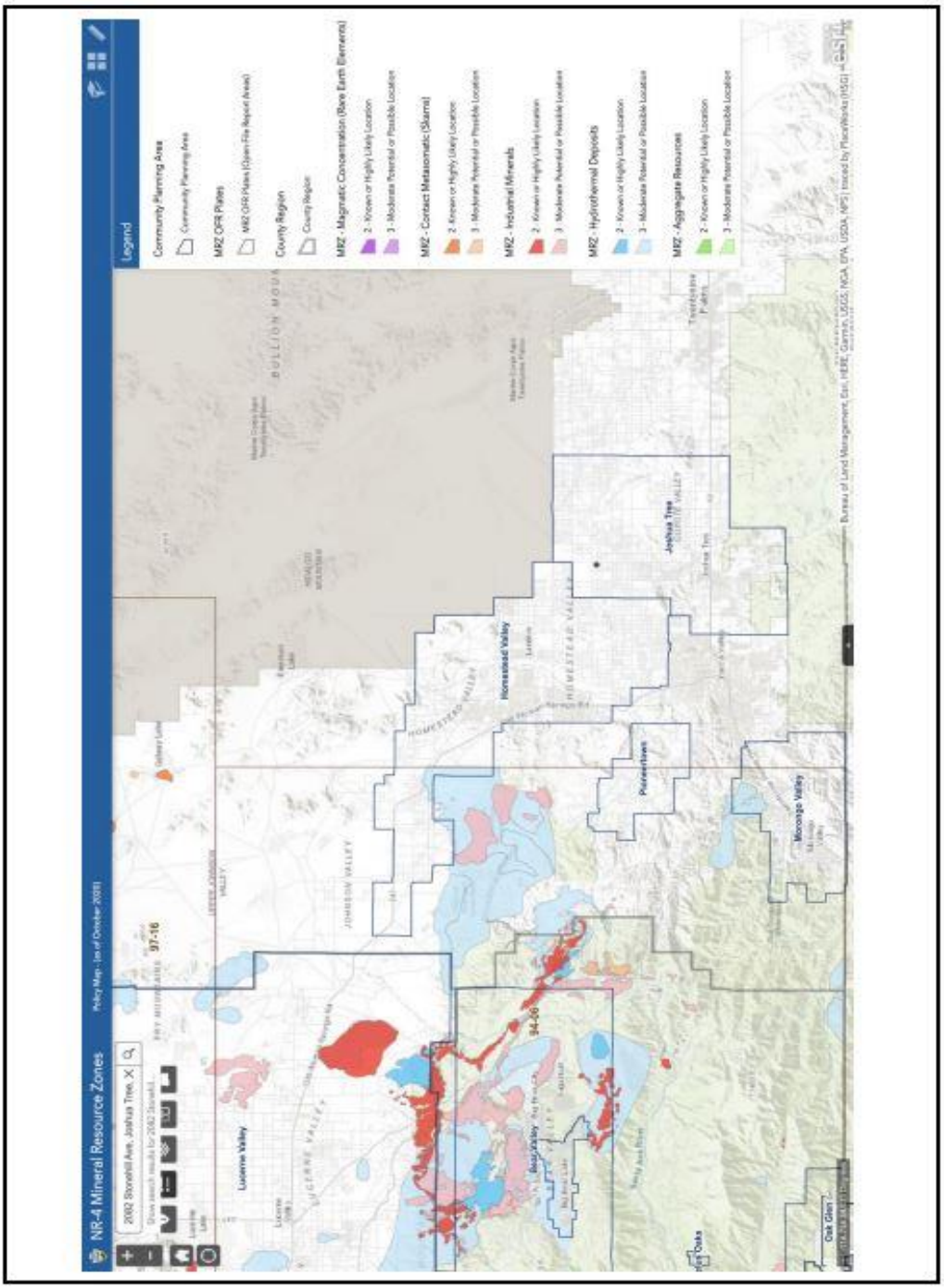

FIGURE XII-1

Mineral Resources

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Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XIII. NOISE: Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of a project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

XIII. NOISE

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if project is located in the Noise Hazard Overlay District ☐ or is subject to severe noise levels according to the General Plan Noise Element ☐) The following information is provided based on a noise study prepared for the project site. The report was prepared by Urban Crossroads and is titled: *Stonehill Avenue Camp Site Noise Impact Analysis"*. This report is provided as Appendix 5 of this documents and some of the information presented below is abstracted from this report. It provides an overview and findings regarding the drainage issues that occur within the project area.

Introduction to Noise Regulations

Noise is generally described as unwanted sound. The proposed project would install a raise platform structure in support of a Yurt-based Campsite. The building would be a platform 3.5 feet off the ground, and the platform would hold the Camping Dome, outdoor jacuzzi, hot tub, fire pit, concrete step seating adjacent to the fire pit, sand base walkway, planter areas (using Desert plant species), stairs to access the Campsite, and perimeter wall and steel fencing around each unit. Each unit will have a four-space vehicle parking area adjacent. A total of four units will be installed on the approximate 2.4-acre site. Access will be provided to the developed Campsite off Stonehill Lane. The applicant intends to open the Campground in Spring of 2023. The facility will be open daily and activities will be reduced for quite time at 10 pm. A maximum of 16 people will be allowed at the Campground. A property manager will handle daily operations and units will be visited daily for cleaning and maintenance.

The unit of sound pressure ratio to the faintest sound detectable to a person with normal hearing is called a decibel (dB). Sound or noise can vary in intensity by over one million times within the range of human hearing. A logarithmic loudness scale, similar to the Richter scale for earthquake magnitude, is therefore used to keep sound intensity numbers at a convenient and manageable level. The human ear is not equally sensitive to all sound frequencies within the entire spectrum. Noise levels at maximum human sensitivity from around 500 to 2,000 cycles per second are factored more heavily into sound descriptions in a process called "A-weighting," written as "dBA."

Leq is a time-averaged sound level; a single-number value that expresses the time-varying sound level for the specified period as though it were a constant sound level with the same total sound energy as the time-varying level. It's unit of measure is also the decibel (dB). The most common averaging period for Leq is hourly.
Because community receptors are more sensitive to unwanted noise intrusion during more sensitive evening and nighttime hours, state law requires that an artificial dBA (A-weighted decibel) increment be

added to quiet time noise levels. The State of California has established guidelines for acceptable community noise levels that are based on the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) rating scale (a 24-hour integrated noise measurement scale). The guidelines rank noise land use compatibility in terms of "normally acceptable," "conditionally acceptable," and "clearly unacceptable" noise levels for various land use types. The State Guidelines, Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure, single-family homes are "normally acceptable" in exterior noise environments up to 60 dB CNEL and "conditionally acceptable" up to 70 dB CNEL based on this scale. Multiple family residential uses are "normally acceptable" up to 65 dB CNEL and "conditionally acceptable" up to 70 CNEL. Schools, libraries, and churches are "normally acceptable" up to 70 dB CNEL, as are office buildings and business, commercial and professional uses with some structural noise attenuation.

Noise Compatibility
Standards for noise exposure for sources that are pre-empted from local control are articulated in the Noise Element of the County Development Code shown in Table XIII-1. These standards apply to transportation noise such as roadways or railways. Industrial uses are not considered noise-sensitive. Guidelines consider most non-residential uses to be “compatible with noise environments up to 65 dB(A) CNEL. Sensitive receptors such as residential uses are recommended to achieve a 57 dB CNEL or lower thresholds.

Table XIII-1
NOISE STANDARDS FOR ADJACENT MOBILE NOISE SOURCES

Land Use		Ldn (or CNEL) dB(A)	
Categories	Uses	Interior (1)	Exterior (2)
Residential	Single and multi-family, duplex, mobile homes	45	60 (3)
Commercial	Hotel, motel, transient housing	45	60 (3)
	Commercial retail, bank, restaurant	50	N/A
	Office building, research and development, professional offices	45	65
	Amphitheater, concert hall, auditorium, movie theater	45	N/A
Institutional/Public	Hospital, nursing home, school classroom, religious institution, library	45	65
Open Space	Park	N/A	65

Notes:
(1) The indoor environment shall exclude bathrooms, kitchens, toilets, closets and corridors.
(2) The outdoor environment shall be limited to:
- Hospital/office building patios
- Hotel and motel recreation areas
- Mobile home parks
- Multi-family private patios or balconies
- Park picnic areas
- Private yard of single-family dwellings
- School playgrounds

(3) An exterior noise level of up to 65 dB(A) (or CNEL) shall be allowed provided exterior noise levels have been substantially mitigated through a reasonable application of the best available noise reduction technology, and interior noise exposure does not exceed 45 dB(A) (or CNEL) with windows and doors closed. Requiring that windows and doors remain closed to achieve an acceptable interior noise level shall necessitate the use of air conditioning or mechanical ventilation.

CNEL = (Community Noise Equivalent Level). The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of approximately five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and 10 decibels to sound levels in the night from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

San Bernardino County, in Section 83.01.080 of the County Code, has developed noise performance standards for a variety of land uses that are designed to achieve acceptable interior and/or exterior noise exposures for the affected use. These guidelines for exposure from stationary sources are designed to regulate the level of sound that one use may broadcast across the property line of an adjacent use. Source regulations most commonly use the energy-weighted noisiest single hour called "Leq". The applicable one-hour allowable maximum property line exposures in San Bernardino County for stationary sources are shown below. If the background already exceeds any of the specified levels in the table below, the allowable thresholds are adjusted upward to equal the background. The industrial property line standard is 70 dB(A) Leq. These standards are shown in Table XIII-2.

Table XIII-2
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO NOISE ORDINANCE LIMITS – PRIVATE PROPERTY AND STATIONARY SOURCES

Affected Land Uses (Receiving Noise)	7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Leq[1] dB(A)[2]	10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Leq[1] dB(A)[2]
Residential	55	45
Professional Services	55	55
Other Commercial	60	60
Industrial	70	70

[1]Leq=(Equivalent Energy Level): The sound level corresponding to a steady-state sound level containing the same total energy as a time-varying signal over a given sample period, typically 1.8 or 24 hours.
[2]dB(A)=(A-weighted Sound Pressure Level): The sound pressure level, in decibels, as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting filter network. The A-weighting filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound, placing greater emphasis on those frequencies within the sensitivity range of the human ear.
Source: County of San Bernardino General Design Standards, Section 87.0905.

These standards shall apply for a cumulative period of 30 minutes in any hour, as well as plus 5 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 15 minutes in any hour, or the standard plus 10 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 5 minutes in any hour, or the standard plus 15 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 1 minute in any hour, or the standard plus 20 dBA for any period of time.

Noise from temporary construction activities is exempt from the above ordinance levels if the construction activities are between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with no activity on Sundays or Federal Holidays.

Noise Report Summary

Off Site Traffic Noise

Traffic generated by the operation of the proposed project is not expected to substantially influence the traffic noise levels at local or regional off-site areas. Based on the trip generation rate for a camp site, the project is anticipated to generate a maximum of two (2) P.M. and 1 a.m. peak hour trips. This small volume of traffic represents an incremental increase to the existing roadway volumes and is not expected to generate perceptible noise level increase (i.e., less than 3 dBA CNEL) at nearby sensitive land uses adjacent to study area roadways. Thus, due to the low traffic volumes generated by the project, the off-site noise levels are considered less than significant and no further analysis is required.

Operational Noise

Using reference noise levels to represent the expected noise sources from the project, this analysis estimates the project related stationary-source operational noise levels at nearby receiver locations. The noise sources associated with the Project are anticipated to include jacuzzi pumps and outdoor gatherings. Based on modeling, project operational noise levels are expected to range from 31.8 to 37.89 dBA Leq during the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. and 27.8 to 33.8 dBA Leq during the nighttime hours of 10.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. Thus, the operational noise analysis shows that project activities will satisfy the County of San Bernardino daytime and nighttime exterior noise level thresholds at all receiver locations. Thus, this analysis demonstrates that the project operational noise levels will not contribute a long-term operational noise level impact to existing ambient noise environment at any of the sensitive receiver locations.

Construction Noise

Using sample reference noise levels to represent the planned construction activities at the project site, the project-related construction noise levels at nearby sensitive receiver locations. The project-related short-term construction noise levels are expected to range from 48.7 to 61.5 dBA Leq and will satisfy the 80 dBA Leq construction noise level threshold at all receiver locations. Additionally, construction activities are planned to typically occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., except on Sundays and Federal holidays and would comply with the County of San Bernardino limitation on allowable hours of construction per Section 83.01.080(g)(3) of the County's Development Code. Therefore, based on the results of this analysis, all nearby sensitive receiver locations will experience leas than significant impacts due to project construction noise levels.

Construction Vibration Analysis

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment and methods used, distance to the affected structures, and soil type. It is expected that groundborne vibration from project construction activities would cause intermittent, localized intrusion. Ground-borne vibration levels resulting from typical construction activities occurring within the project site were estimated by data published by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). At the nearest receivers, project construction vibration levels are expected to range from 0.00 to 0.01 in/sec PPV. Based on maximum acceptable vibration threshold of 0.20 PPP (in/sec), the typical project construction vibration levels will comply with County of San Bernardino thresholds at all receiver locations and construction vibration impacts would be less than significant.

Impact Analysis

a. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project is located in a rural living region, and has very little cross traffic around the project. The San Bernardino Countywide Plan Existing & Future Noise Contours maps (Figure XIII-1: Existing and Figure XIII-2: Future) indicate that under existing and future circumstances, the proposed project is and will continue to be located within the 65 CNEL noise contour. As such, background noise is anticipated to be generally at or lower than the San Bernardino Development Code noise standard for Rural Living uses (70 dBA 24-hours a day).

   Short Term Construction Noise

   Short-term construction noise impacts associated with the proposed project will occur as the project site is developed. Project construction will begin with limited clearing the sites for the individual geo domes. There will be no mass grading and a small grader and an estimated three employees will complete this phase of site preparation. In addition to clearing each geo dome campsite, this phase of site development will include the installation of one or more septic tank/leach line wastewater management systems.

The project will require some fine grading for the driveway and the individual camp sites. It is anticipated that this effort will require a week with two employees. Some footings may be required to support the wooden decks. The geo dome will be supported on the wooden deck and it is estimated that all four decks can be installed over a month by three or four employees. The geo domes will then be transported to the project site where they will be assembled for occupancy. No asphalt or paving is proposed, and access roads and parking areas will be covered with gravel or chemicals to minimize generation of fugitive dust. The earth-moving sources are the noisiest type of equipment typically ranging from 82 to 85 dB at 50 feet from the source. Temporary construction noise is exempt from the County Noise Performance Standards between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., except Sundays and Federal holidays. Furthermore, the San Bernardino County Development Code Section 83.01.080 establishes standards for mobile noise sources by limiting construction to the daytime hours between 7 AM to 7 PM on Monday through Friday and 9 AM to 6PM on Saturday, with construction mobile noise sources prohibited on Sundays.

The noise analysis (Appendix 5) concluded that construction noise would be less than significant based on the envisioned construction scenario. Regardless, the following measures will minimize noise at the nearest residences:

NOI-1 ***All construction vehicles and fixed or mobile equipment shall be equipped with operating and maintained mufflers.***

NOI-2 ***All employees that will be exposed to noise levels greater than 75 dB over an 8-hour period shall be provided adequate hearing protection devices to ensure no hearing damage will result from construction activities.***

NOI-3 ***No construction activities shall occur during the hours of 7 PM through 7 AM, Monday through Friday and 9 AM to 6 PM on Saturday; at no time shall construction activities occur on Sundays or holidays, unless a declared emergency exists.***

NOI-4 ***Equipment not in use for five minutes shall be shut off.***

NOI-5 ***Equipment shall be maintained and operated such that loads are secured from rattling or banging.***

NOI-6 ***Construction employees shall be trained in the proper operation and use of equipment consistent with these mitigation measures, including no unnecessary revving of equipment.***

Long-Term Operational Noise

During operation of the proposed project, noise generated from the proposed Joshua Tree Campsite Project will be greater than that which exists at the vacant site at present. Proposed hours of operation would be from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and it is anticipated that the proposed project will not exceed the Residential Noise Standards, particularly given the great distance at which the nearest sensitive receptor is located. Noise attenuates at a rate of approximately 6 to 7 decibels per doubling of distance, and much like construction noise, but is anticipated to attenuate at the nearest sensitive receptor given the 0.25-mile distance between the proposed project site and the nearest sensitive receptor. As such, the noise environment at the nearest resident will be well within the levels deemed acceptable by the County of San Bernardino. According to the County of San Bernardino Development Code, the maximum acceptable stationary noise level at Residential land uses between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. is 55 dBA, and 45 dBA between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. Additionally, the San Bernardino County Development Code has standards for adjacent mobile noise sources: Interior 45 (day-night average sound level (Ldn) dBA and Exterior 60 Ldn dBA.

Based on the noise analysis summarized above, operation of the proposed project would violate noise standards outlined in the San Bernardino County Development Code. Impacts under this issue are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Conclusion

Construction activities are mitigated by required compliance with grading/construction permits, as well as through the implementation of MMs **NOI-1** through **NOI-6**, while operational activities are less than significant without the need for implementation of mitigation**.** Therefore, through the implementation of the mitigation measures identified above, as well as through compliance with the San Bernardino County Development Code, neither operation or construction of the proposed project would violate the County's noise standards. Impacts under this issue are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Vibration is the periodic oscillation of a medium or object. The rumbling sound caused by vibration of room surfaces is called structure borne noises. Sources of groundborne vibrations include natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) or human-made causes (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous or transient. Vibration is often described in units of velocity (inches per second), and discussed in decibel (VdB) units in order to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. Vibration impacts related to human development are generally associated with activities such as train operations, construction, and heavy truck movements.

Vibration is most commonly expressed in terms of the root mean square (RMS) velocity of a vibrating object. RMS velocities are expressed in units of vibration decibels. The range of vibration decibels (VdB) is as follows:

65 VdB	-	threshold of human perception
72 VdB	-	annoyance due to frequent events
80 VdB	-	annoyance due to infrequent events
94-98 VdB	-	minor cosmetic damage

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of groundborne vibration, but is generally associated with pile driving and rock blasting. Other construction equipment—such as air compressors, light trucks, hydraulic loaders, etc.—generates little or no ground vibration. The San Bernardino County Development Code offers guidance on Vibration. San Bernardino County Development Code 83.01.090 provides guidance regarding how vibration should be measured and offers the following Standard:

(a) Vibration standard. No ground vibration shall be allowed that can be felt without the aid of instruments at or beyond the lot line, nor shall any vibration be allowed which produces a particle velocity greater than or equal to two-tenths (0.2) inches per second measured at or beyond the lot line.

Additionally, according to the San Bernardino County Development Code, construction is exempt from vibration regulations during the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and the proposed project would be developed within the hours in which vibration during construction is exempt.

As the proposed project does not propose any activities during construction or operation that would generate significant vibration, adjacent structures would have no potential to be impacted by vibration from the project. Therefore, construction vibration will be well below any structural damage threshold and less than the threshold of human perception based on the analysis in the Noise Study. Therefore, any vibration generated within the site is not anticipated to be felt beyond the lot line. Any impacts under this issue are considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

c. *No Impact* – The project site is located at a great distance from any nearby airport. As shown on the Airport Safety & Planning Areas map prepared for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan (Figure IX-2), the proposed project is not located within a designated Airport Safety Review Area at any of the area airports in the area, and therefore is not located within the noise contours for the Airport. Therefore, there is no potential for the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels as a result of proximity to a public airport or private airstrip. No mitigation is required.

Figure XIII-1

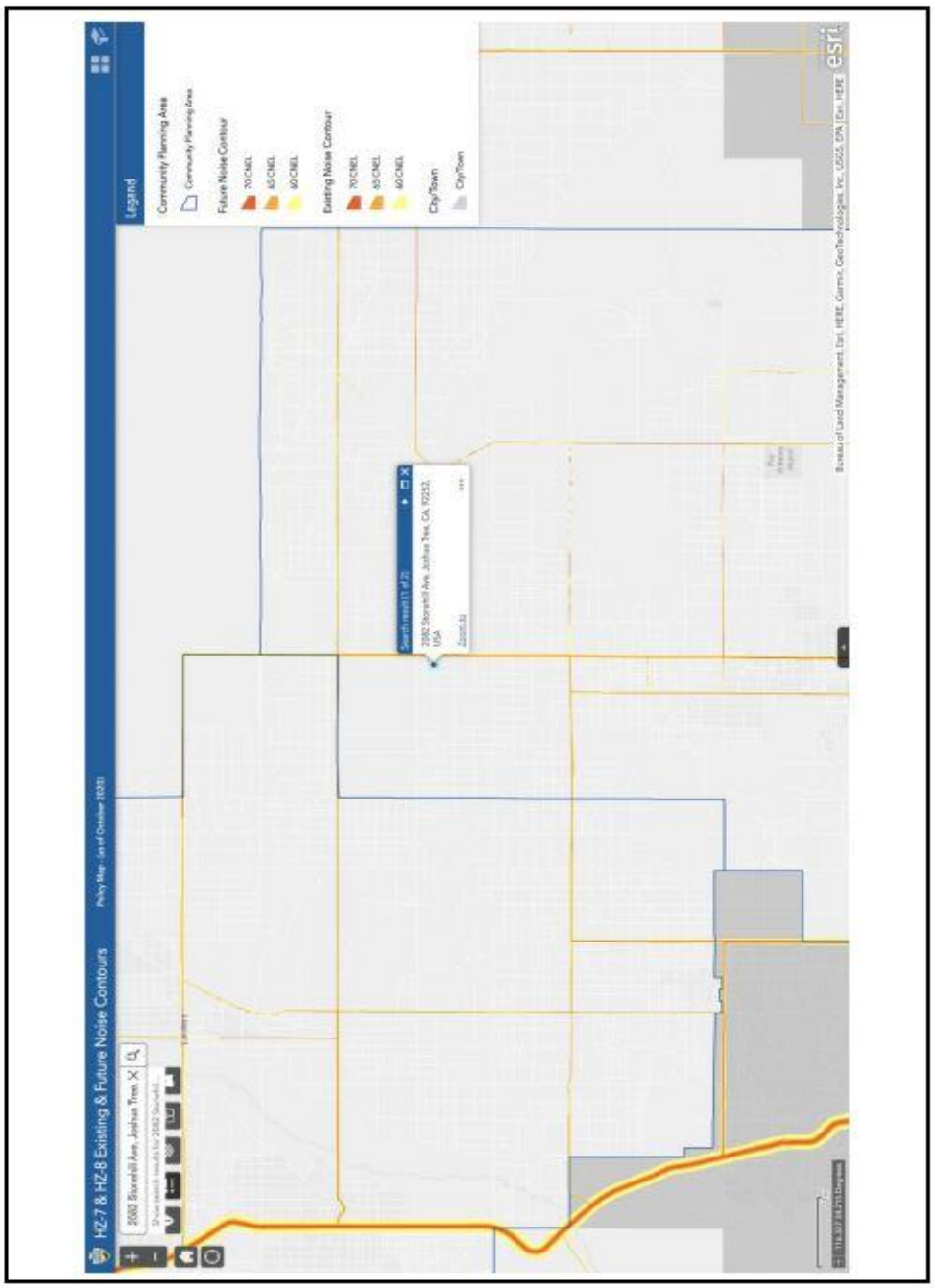

FIGURE XIII-1

Existing Noise Contours

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Figure XII-2

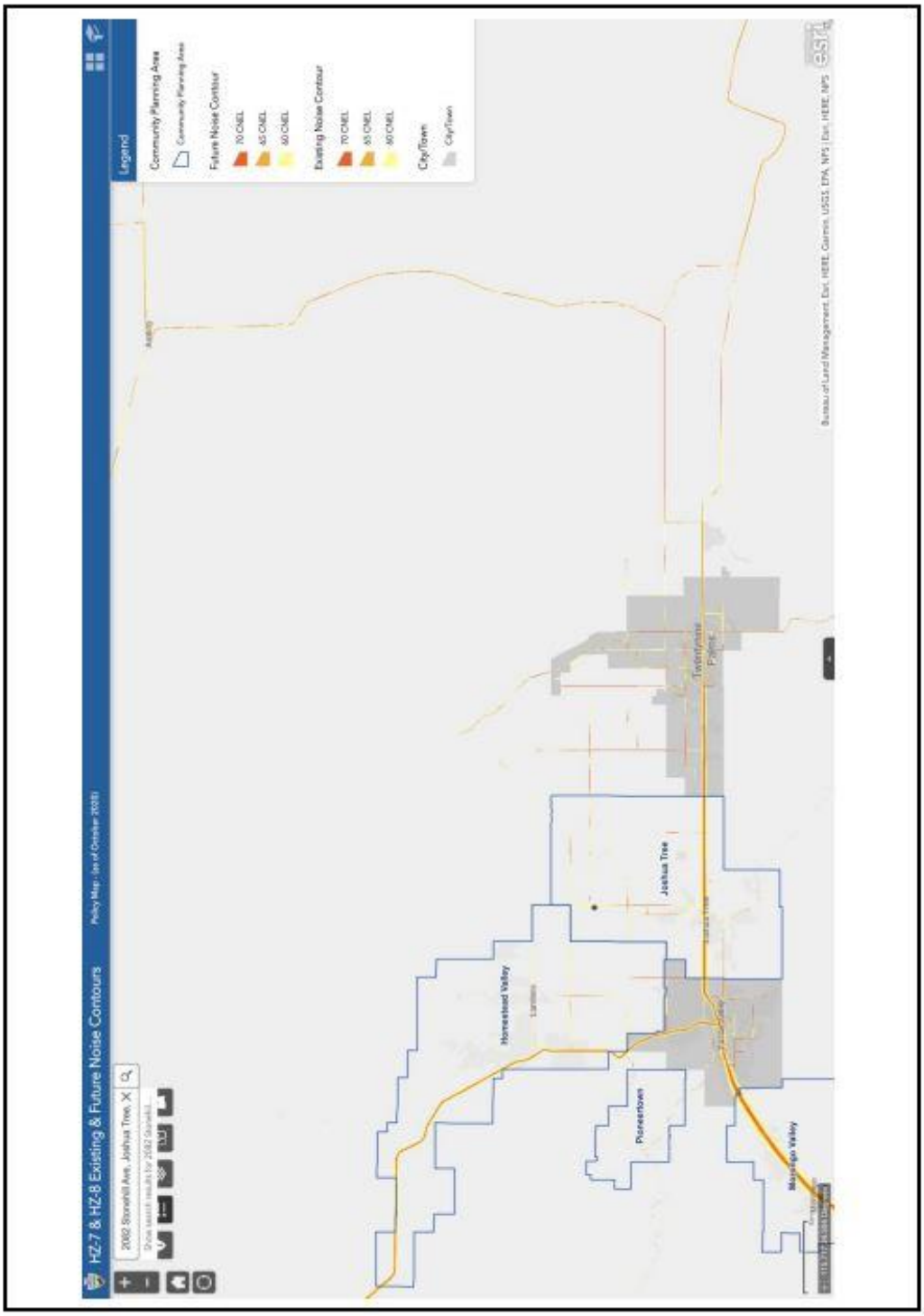

FIGURE XIII-2

Future Noise Contours

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

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Implementation of the project will not induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). This project proposes to develop a Joshua Tree Campsite within a 2.4 -acre site. The provision of a small-scale campsite is not typically considered to be growth inducing. The proposed project would not require a significant number of employees to operate (anticipated to create no more than 3 permanent positions of employment). No permanent housing is proposed as part of the Project. There is likely to be a maximum of about 3 employees onsite during construction, and this demand would not induce population growth. Additionally, the number of employees needed to operate the campsite would include employees that would visit the Site on an as needed or planned maintenance basis, which may involve one or two employees per visit. Therefore, impacts under this issue are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

b. *No Impact* – There are no residences within the project site, as the project site is vacant containing non-native and native vegetation and weeds. No persons currently reside on the site and therefore, implementation of the proposed project will not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, or persons necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Thus, no impacts will occur and no mitigation is required.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XV. PUBLIC SERVICES: Will 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 govern-mental 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:				
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project site is served by the San Bernardino County Fire Department, and the nearest Fire Stations to the proposed project site are the North Yucca Valley Station and the Joshua Tree Station, both located about 7 miles to the west-east of the project site. The San Bernardino County Fire Department provides fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency medical services to the project area. The proposed Joshua Tree Campsite Project would result in minimal potential for random emergency events during operations, because the majority of the activities at the site would be related to recreation and there will be minimal structures at the site. Based on the above information, the proposed project does not pose a significant fire or emergency response hazard, nor is the proposed project forecast to cause a significant demand for fire protection services. The County will require standard conditions to ensure adequate fire flow at the proposed Campsite, and the project will be required to adhere to the California Fire Code, which ensures that new structures are designed to minimize fire risks related to human safety (including that of emergency responders), loss of property, and other impacts to the environment. Furthermore, the proposed project would not induce substantial population within the County such that a significantly greater demand on fire protection services would be required. These requirements are considered adequate measures to prevent any significant impacts under this issue, thus no mitigation is required.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project receives police services through the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. The Department enforces local, state, and federal laws; performs investigations and makes arrests; administers emergency medical treatment; and responds to County emergencies. The project site is served by the Morongo Basin Station as shown on Figure XV-1, which depicts the service area of Sheriff Operations from the San Bernardino Countywide Plan. The Central Sheriff's Station is located at 6527 White Feather Road, Joshua Tree, California 92252, which is approximately 8 miles to the south of the project site. The proposed project will not include the kind of uses or activities that would likely attract criminal activity, except for random trespass and/or theft; however, any random trespass is unlikely given that the type of activities proposed would not typically attract criminal activities. Furthermore, the proposed project would not induce substantial population within the County such that a significantly greater demand on police services would be required. Therefore, due to the proposed use of the project site, implementation of

the proposed project would not substantially increase the demand for law enforcement services beyond that already existing at the project site.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project is anticipated to temporarily employ a maximum of 3 persons during construction and a maximum of 2-3 people during operational hours of the proposed project. The project is not anticipated to generate any new direct demand for the area schools. The Joshua Tree Campsite would be developed within a site that would be served by Morongo Unified School District (MUSD). As addressed above under issue Population and Housing, XV(a) above, the proposed project does not include any land uses that would substantially induce population growth, and will not require a substantial temporary or permanent labor force. The development of a campsite at this site is not anticipated to adversely impact schools in any manner. The proposed project will not generate a substantial increase in elementary, middle, or high school population, and since payment of school impact fees is a mandatory requirement, no further mitigation measures are required to reduce school impacts caused by the proposed project to a less than significant level.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project will not directly add to the existing demand on public recreational facilities. The project will develop a campsite which will result in the creation of about 3 new jobs. The project is not anticipated to generate any new direct demand for parks within the County, as this project would have a minimal potential to induce local population growth within the County. No nearby parks would be impacted by the proposed project, as there are none in close proximity to the project site. As such, this would offset the minimal potential for increased demand for park and recreation services within the County that may result from implementation of the proposed project and therefore, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact to parks and recreation facilities.

e. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Other public facilities include library and general municipal services. According to the Countywide Plan, County library services are funded mostly through taxes—mainly property taxes and sales taxes. State, federal, and other government assistance, in addition to library fees, also fund the library. Since the project will not directly induce substantial population growth, it is not forecast that the demand for such facilities will increase substantially as a result of the proposed project. Thus, any impacts under this issue are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Figure XV-1

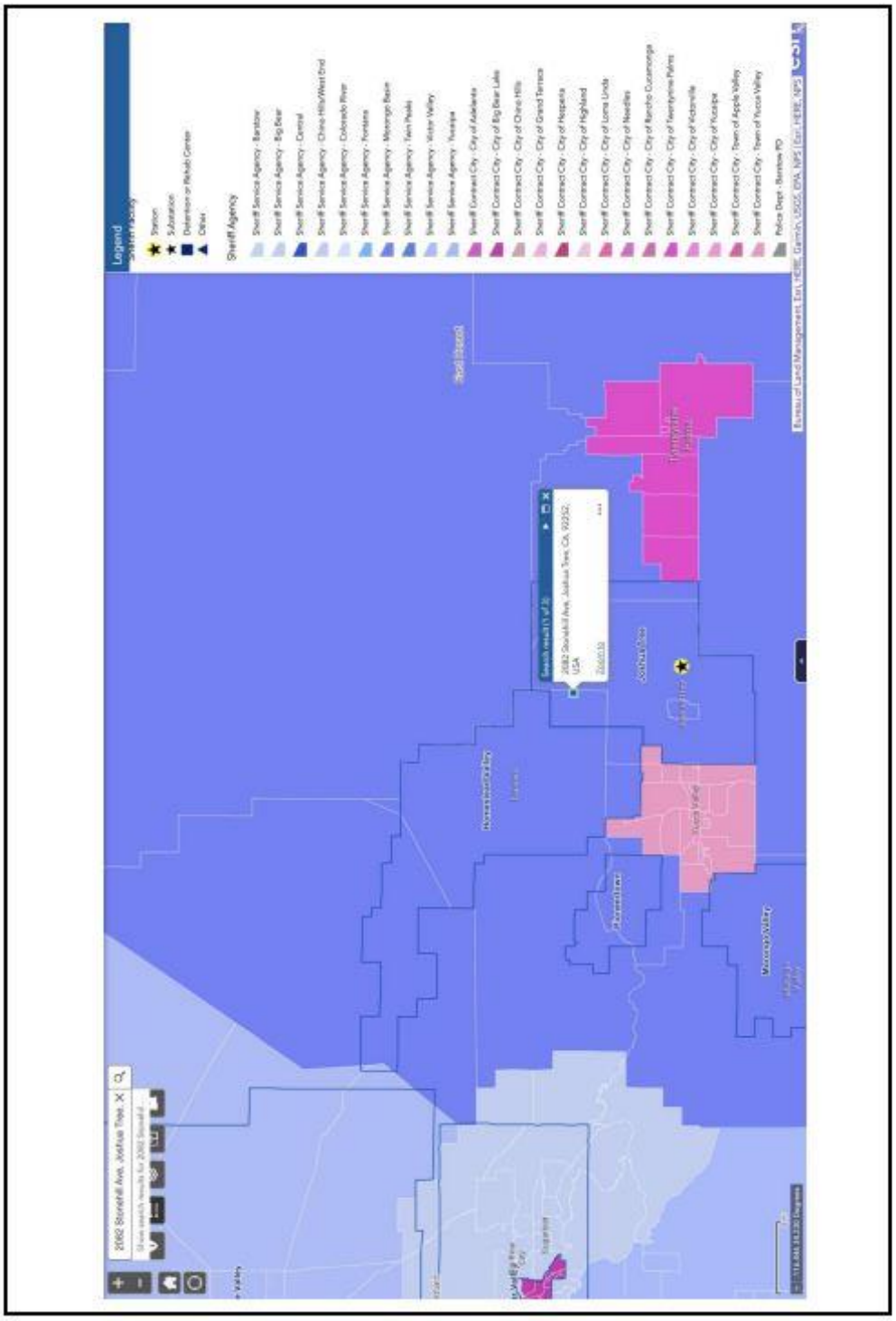
FIGURE XV-1
Sheriff Operations
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	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact or Does Not Apply
XVI. RECREATION:				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

SUBSTANTIATION

a. *No Impact* – As previously discussed in Section XIV, Population and Housing and Section XV, Public Services, this project will not contribute to an increase in the population beyond that already allowed or planned for by local and regional planning documents. Also, there are no parks in the immediate area. The proposed project will not increase the use of recreational facilities that would result in the physical deterioration of other surrounding facilities. No impact is forecast and no mitigation is required.

b. *No Impact* – The proposed project will develop a campsite that will include an outdoor jacuzzi, hot tub and fire pit. The project does not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. The proposed project will occur within a vacant site, that has not been designated for recreational use nor does it contain recreational uses at present. Furthermore, the proposed project is not forecast to induce population growth as maintenance workers will only visit on an as needed basis, and visitors will only stay at the campsite sporadically and temporarily. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated to occur under this issue, and no mitigation is required.

The proposed project, through the hosting of guests as part of the proposed Campsite Project, will continue to contribute to and increase demand for recreational facilities, in the sense that the Joshua Tree National Park is the main attraction for guests of the Joshua Tree Campsite Project. Thus, the up to 10 guests of the proposed Campsite would contribute to support of the forecast increased demand for recreation and park visitation of the Joshua Tree National Park. Joshua Tree National Park includes 792,510 acres, of which 120,757 are in the County. The portion in the County is south of Joshua Tree and east of the community of Morongo Valley. The park allows rock climbing, backpacking, camping, hiking, horseback riding, geologic sight- seeing, birding, wildlife viewing, and stargazing. will not directly add to the existing demand on public park or recreational facilities. The proposed project is not anticipated to generate any new direct demand for other parks within the County, as this project would have no potential to induce local population growth. No other nearby parks would be impacted by the proposed project, as there are no other parks in close proximity to the project site. As such, existing federal and state, and local regulations pertaining to parkland dedication and maintenance assessed by the above governmental entities would mitigate potential adverse impacts to the environment that may result from the increased demand for park and recreation services within the County as a result of implementation of the proposed project. The proposed project will have a less than significant impact on parks and recreation facilities.

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

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The project site is currently accessible by car, with no accessible sidewalks or paved roads. Thus, pedestrian or bicycle transportation modes are poor at this project site. The proposed project will install a walkway and driveway as shown on the site plan provided as Figure 3 per San Bernardino County Development Standards 129B and 130. Additionally, the surrounding areas around the site do not currently provide for a bike lane, and the Countywide Future Bicycle Facilities Map does not appear to denote this roadway for the creation of a bike lane in future. The site will continue to be accessible by existing means of transport, with enhanced access to the site through the proposed driveways and walkways.

The project site is not located within a service route for any area transit providers, and as such will not impact the transit circulation system.

Based on a review of the circulation in the vicinity of the Campsite, the minimal peak hour traffic that would be generated over the short- and long-term by the proposed project, this project would have a less than significant potential (maximum 16 vehicle trips during any peak hour from the four geo-domes) to conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. No mitigation is required.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Senate Bill 743 mandates that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines be amended to provide an alternative to Level of Service for evaluating transportation impacts. The amended CEQA guidelines, specifically Section 15064.3, recommend the use of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for transportation impact evaluation.

The County of San Bernardino City Council adopted analytical procedures, screening tools and impact thresholds for VMT, which are documented in the San Bernardino County Transportation Impact Study Guidelines (July 2019) (County Guidelines). The County Guidelines provides details on appropriate criteria that can be used to identify when a proposed land use project is anticipated to result in a less than significant impact without conducting a more detailed analysis. Screening thresholds are broken into the following types:

- Project Type Screening
- Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening
- Low VMT Area

A land use project need only to meet one of the above screening thresholds to result in a less than significant impact.

The proposed project appears to meet the Project Type Screening for the following reasons:

The County Guidelines identifies that local serving retail of less than 50,000 square feet (SF) or other local serving essential services (e.g., local parks, day care centers, public schools, medical/dental office buildings, etc.) are presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. Additionally, the County Guidelines notes smaller projects that generate fewer than 110 trips per day are assumed to cause a less than significant VMT impact. The proposed. Project estimates a maximum of 4 trips per unit per day per each unit, or less than 16 trips a day, making the VMT impacts less than significant.

c. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project would occur entirely within the project site boundaries. Construction activities would not occur within the adjacent roadways to the project site. There are no uses that would be impacted by construction equipment or construction trips on the adjacent roadways. Large trucks delivering equipment, fill material, or removing small quantities of excavated dirt or debris can enter the site without major conflicts with the flow of traffic on the roadways used to access the site. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction and access to the site. Emergency response and evacuation procedures would be coordinated with the County, as well as the local police and fire departments. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant potential to substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. No mitigation is required.

d. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project area is located in an area moderately susceptible to wildland fires, and is located within a delineated Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) in an SRA as shown on Figure IX-4, the Countywide Plan Policy Map of Fire Hazard Severity Zones. As stated under Section XVII of the San Bernardino Countywide Plan, Transportation under issue (d), there is an emergency evacuation route located in the vicinity of the project site, which enable travel south of the project site. This route is Highway 62 and has been delineated as such on the Evacuation Route map provided as Figure IX-3. The proposed project is not located along this emergency route, nor would implementation of the project impede emergency response from accessing the site or surrounding area. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction and access to the site. Because the project is located within a moderate fire hazard severity zone, impacts to emergency response and/or emergency evacuation plans are considered less than significant, especially given the low density of vegetation on and adjacent to the project site. Thus, because of the lack of adverse impact on local circulation no potential for significant impacts on emergency access are forecast to occur during construction or operation. No further mitigation is required.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES: Will the project:				
a) Would the project cause a substantial change in the significance of tribal cultural resources, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to the California Native American Tribe, and that is?				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or?	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	☐	☒	☐	☐

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

a.i-ii *Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated* – In May 2022 the County distributed Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR) consultation letters to nine (9) tribes. Only one Tribe provided any response, the Yuhaaviatam of the San Manuel Nation (YSMN). The response indicated that "no additional consultation pursuant to CEQA is required unless there is an unanticipated discovery of cultural resources during project implementation." A mitigation measure, **CUL-1**, addresses the potential accidental exposure of subsurface cultural resources and actions that must be taken by a qualified cultural resources professional to manage such resources. With this measure in place, no further mitigation is required under this TCR topic. Potential TCR impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. Water

Less Than Significant Impact – Access to water service will be provided by the Joshua Basin Water District, as there is service availability to the proposed project site in adjacent streets. There is currently a water main installed and ready to service the site. One water meter would need to be installed, and it is not anticipated that more than two staff members are needed to complete that task. It is predicted to take 3 months to coordinate and execute said meter. Therefore, given that the proposed project would not result in significant impacts under any issue, as demonstrated throughout this Initial Study, development of the Joshua Tree Campsite Project would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities. Impacts are less than significant.

Wastewater

Less Than Significant Impact – The proposed project will require the installation of an onsite septic tank system that would collect the wastewater generated by onsite water uses, including wastewater disposal. Other than installing the internal wastewater collection lines, the proposed project is not anticipated to require relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater collection (sewer) lines that would be required to serve the proposed project, such that a significant impact would occur. No connections to the municipal wastewater collection system or a wastewater treatment plant are required. Therefore, given that the proposed project would not result in significant impacts under any issue, as demonstrated throughout this Initial Study, development of the Joshua Tree Campsite would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater facilities. Impacts are less than significant.

Stormwater
Less Than Significant Impact – There is no stormwater management system required because it is not anticipated to be water run-off from the site, as all the stormwater will percolate through pervious surfaces of the natural desert sand. Therefore, stormwater will be adequately managed on site and as such, development of the project would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded stormwater facilities. Impacts are less than significant.

Electric Power
Less Than Significant Impact – Southern California Edison (SCE) will provide electricity to the site and the power distribution system located adjacent to the site will be able to supply sufficient electricity. There are existing electrical power lines that traverse the property, to which the project will be connected. No construction or relocation of electric facilities will be required to serve the project. Therefore, development of the project would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power facilities. Impacts are less than significant.

Natural Gas
No Impact – Development of the proposed Joshua Tree Campsite Project would not create a demand for natural gas and would not be connected to any natural gas distribution system. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded natural gas facilities. No impacts are anticipated.

Telecommunications
No Impact – Development of the proposed Joshua Tree Campsite Project would require installation of wireless internet service or phone service, but such services are available for connection at the project site, with no expanded services required to meet demand. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant environmental effect related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded telecommunication facilities. No impacts are anticipated.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The project site is located in the Joshua Tree Basin (shown on Figure XIX-1, the Countywide Plan Groundwater Basins Map). The main water utilizing sources on site would be potable water for domestic uses. The project will install minimal onsite landscaping that is required to abide by the County Code, Chapter 83.10, which pertains to water efficiency standards. It is anticipated that the proposed project will utilize less than 50 GPD or less than 0.06 AFY. No mitigation needed.

c. *No Impact* – The project would not 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, because no municipal wastewater providers exist in the area, so none serve the project site. The project will be served by a new onsite septic system. No impacts are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

d-e. *Less Than Significant Impact* – Other than the small amount of construction wastes (concrete, wood, etc.) and waste associated with the daily occupancy of the campsite, the Project will not generate a substantial amount of solid wastes and will not adversely affect the existing solid waste disposal system. Burrtec Waste Company currently provides residential and commercial waste collection and recycling programs under a franchise agreement with the Eastern Desert Region of Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, and Yucca Valley. According to the San Bernardino Countywide General Plan EIR, after waste is collected, it is delivered to the Landers Sanitary Landfill. The Landers Sanitary Landfill has adequate capacity to handle the waste generated at the Joshua Tree Campsite. According to the CalRecycle, the maximum permitted capacity of Landers Sanitary Landfill is 13,983,500 Cubic Yards (CY), while its remaining capacity is 11,148,100 CY; the Landers Sanitary Landfill can accept 1,200 tons per day. The proposed project is forecast to generate about 50 lbs of waste per day, with 50% being recycled. Thus, there is adequate solid waste disposal capacity for

solid waste generated as a result of implementation of the proposed Project both in the short term and long term, estimated to be about 4.5 tons per year. Thus, the Project will not conflict with any state, federal, or local regulations regarding solid waste. These impacts are considered less than significant. No additional mitigation is required.

Figure XIX-1

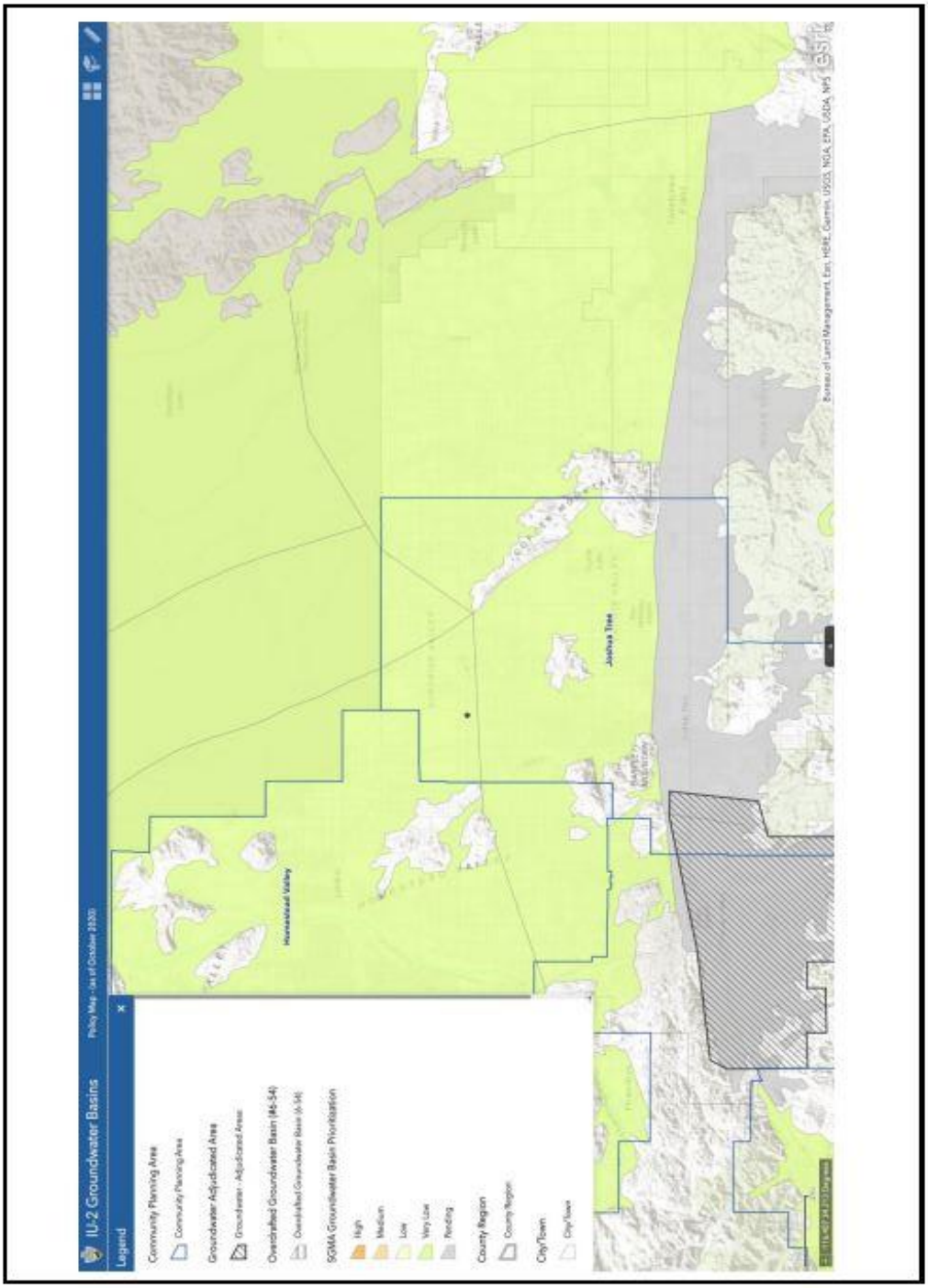


FIGURE XIX-1

Groundwater Basins

Tom Dodson & Associates
Environmental Consultants

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XX. WILDFIRE: If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

XX. WILDFIRE

SUBSTANTIATION:

a. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project area is located in an area moderately susceptible to wildland fires, and is located within a delineated Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) in an SRA as shown on Figure IX-4, the Countywide Plan Policy Map of Fire Hazard Severity Zones. As stated under Section XVII, Transportation under issue (d), there is an emergency evacuation route located in the vicinity of the project site, which enable travel south of the project site. This route is Highway 62 and has been delineated as such on the Evacuation Route map provided as Figure IX-3. The proposed project is not located along this emergency route, nor would implementation of the project impede emergency response from accessing the site or surrounding area. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction and access to the site. The project is located within a moderate fire hazard severity zone and impacts to emergency response and/or emergency evacuation plans are considered less than significant, especially given the low density of vegetation on and adjacent to the project site. No mitigation needed.

b. *Less Than Significant Impact* – The proposed project is located within a flat, vacant site north of the Community of Joshua Tree, and there are nearby areas that remain undeveloped or contain native vegetation to the North, South, East, and West of the project site. Once in operation, the proposed project will consist of a 4-unit geodome campsite. The proposed project will remove some desert vegetation, thereby minimizing the already small potential fire risks within this site. There is a less than significant potential for the proposed project to expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. This finding is based on the limited free land on site and in the surrounding area. Therefore, impacts under this issue are considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

c. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The project will not require associated infrastructure in support of the Campsite other than a septic tank to serve as the wastewater collection and treatment system for the proposed use and a connection to the area water system for stable water and fire flow to the site. The project will also require a connection to SoCal Edison's electrical

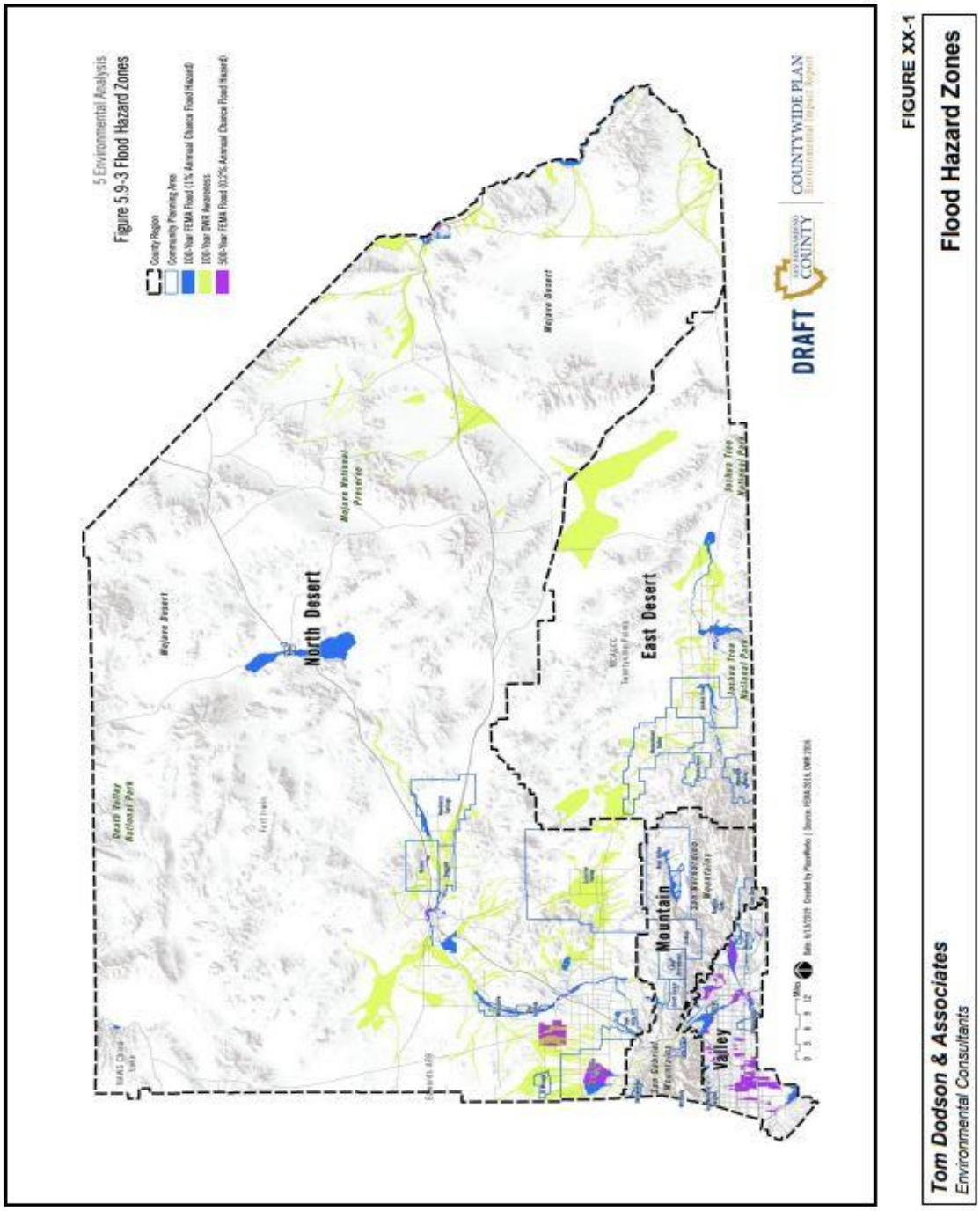
system through a connection to the adjacent powerlines. As stated above, the project will require light removal of vegetation located within the project site. However, the project will be required to implement the following mitigation measure, which would minimize fire risk during activities that would utilize electric equipment by requiring construction crews to carry fire prevention equipment during activities involving electrical equipment.

WF-1 ***During site clearing within the project site when any electrical construction equipment is in use, the construction crew shall have fire prevention equipment (such as fire extinguishers, emergency sand bags, etc.) to put out any accidental fires that could occur from the use of electrical construction/maintenance equipment.***

The proposed project would not result in any ongoing impacts to the environment that would exacerbate fire risk as the proposed project is a Campsite that will be designed in accordance with fire department recommendations and to County design standards. Therefore, with the implementation of MM **WF-1** above, the project would not have a significant potential to exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Impacts under this issue are considered less than significant.

d. *No Impact* – The proposed project is located within a site that has no slope and is not located in an area that would be susceptible to landslides or flooding, as seen in Figure XX-1. Therefore, there is no impact on the proposed Project.

Figure XX-1


5 Environmental Analysis
Figure 5.9-3 Flood Hazard Zones
County Region
Community Planning Area
100-Year FEMA Flood (1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard)
100-Year DWR Awareness
500-Year FEMA Flood (0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard)
DRAFT
COUNTYWIDE PLAN
North Desert
East Desert
Mountain
Valley
Mojave Desert
Mojave National Preserve
Joshua Tree National Park
Death Valley National Park
FIGURE XX-1
Flood Hazard Zones
Tom Dodson & Associates
Environmental Consultants

Issues	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact or Does Not Apply*
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUBSTANTIATION: The analysis in this Initial Study and the findings reached indicate that the proposed project can be implemented without causing any new project specific or cumulatively considerable unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts. Mitigation is required to control potential environmental impacts of the proposed project to a less than significant impact level. The following findings are based on the detailed analysis of the Initial Study of all environmental topics and the implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the previous text and summarized in this section.

a. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The project has no potential to cause a significant impact to any biological or cultural resources. The project has been identified as having no potential to substantially degrade the quality of the natural environment, substantially reduce 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, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. The project requires mitigation to prevent significant biology impacts from occurring as a result of implementation of the project. Based on the project area, and the site cultural survey for the project site, the potential for impacting cultural resources is low. The Cultural Resources Report determined that no cultural resources of importance were found on the ground surface at the project site, so it is not anticipated that any cultural resources could be affected by the project because no known cultural resources exist. However, because it is not known what could be unearthed upon any excavation activities, contingency mitigation is provided to ensure that, in the unlikely event that any buried resources are found, they are protected from any potential significant impacts. Please see biological and cultural sections of this Initial Study.

b. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The project has 13 potential impact categories that are individually limited, but may be cumulatively considerable. These are: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology & Soils, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, Hydrology & Water Quality, Noise, Public Services, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire. The project is not considered growth-inducing, as defined by *State CEQA Guidelines*. These referenced issues require the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less than significant level and ensure that cumulative effects are not cumulatively considerable. All other

environmental issues were found to have no potential significant impacts without implementation of mitigation. The potential cumulative environmental effects of implementing the proposed project have been determined to be less than considerable and thus, less than significant impacts.

c. *Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated* – The proposed project includes activities that have a potential to cause direct substantial adverse effects on humans. The issues of Air Quality, Geology and Soils, and Noise require the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce human impacts to a less than significant level. Wildfire does not require mitigation at the project location. All other environmental issues were found to have no significant impacts on humans without implementation of mitigation. The potential for direct human effects from implementing the proposed project have been determined to be less than significant.

Conclusion

This document evaluated all CEQA issues contained in the latest Initial Study Checklist form. The evaluation determined that either no impact or less than significant impacts would be associated with the issues of Aesthetics, Agriculture, Energy, Greenhouse Gases, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Wildfire. The issues of Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology & Soils, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, Hydrology & Water Quality, and Noise require the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce project specific and cumulative impacts to a less than significant level. The required mitigation has been proposed in this Initial Study to reduce impacts for these issues to a less than significant impact level.

Based on the evidence and findings in this Initial Study, San Bernardino County proposes to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Joshua Tree Camp Site Project. A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigation Negative Declaration (NOI) will be issued for this project by the County. The Initial Study and NOI will be circulated for 30 days of public comment. At the end of the 30-day review period, a final MND package will be prepared and it will be reviewed by the County for possible adoption at a future County Planning Commission meeting, the date for which has yet to be determined. If you or your agency comments on the MND/NOI for this project, you will be notified about the meeting date in accordance with the requirements in Section 21092.5 of CEQA (statute).

MITIGATION MEASURES

Any mitigation measures that are not "self-monitoring" shall have a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared and adopted at time of project approval. Condition compliance will be verified by existing procedure.

Air Quality

AQ-1 Fugitive Dust Control. The following measures shall be incorporated into Project plans and specifications for implementation:

- Apply soil stabilizers or moisten inactive areas.
- Water exposed surfaces to avoid visible dust leaving the construction site (at least 2-3 times/day).
- Cover any stock piles with tarps at the end of each day and as needed during the construction day.
- Provide water spray during loading and unloading of earthen materials.
- Require the contractor to minimize in-out traffic from construction zone to the extent feasible, and enforce a speed limit of 10 MPH on site to avoid dust migration from the site.

AQ-2 Exhaust Emissions Control. The following measures shall be incorporated into Project plans and specifications for implementation:

- Utilize off-road construction equipment that has met or exceeded the maker's recommendations for vehicle/equipment maintenance schedule.
- Contactors shall utilize Tier 3 or better heavy equipment.
- Enforce 5-minute idling limits for both on-road trucks and off-road equipment.

AQ-3 Utilize only Energy Star heating, cooling, lighting devices, and appliances, where applicable.

Biological Resources

BIO-1 A qualified biologist shall develop a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) that shall include information on general and special status species, including but not limited to western Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia), burrowing owl (Athene cunicularia), and desert tortoise (Gohperus agassizii) within the project area, identification of these species and their habitats, current conservation status, techniques and mitigation measures that shall be being implemented during construction to avoid impacts to species, such as western Joshua tree, burrowing owl, desert tortoise, consequences of killing or injuring an individual of a listed species, and reporting procedures when encountering listed or sensitive species.

Mitigation for western Joshua tree shall proceed as follows:

1. The limits of disturbance or construction envelope shall be carried out at least 40 feet from the nearest for western Joshua tree (WJT) canopy, and shall not encroach upon any WJT or WJT seedlings. The biological monitor who shall be present for all project activities, as required by MM BIO-6, shall ensure that the 40-foot buffer is maintained for the duration of construction.
2. If the limits of disturbance or construction envelope cannot be carried out at least 40 feet from the nearest for WJT canopy, the County shall retain the services of a Desert Native Plant Specialist to attest to and confirm avoidance of the WJT. The specialist's report may specify protective measures to ensure that the proposed grading/construction will avoid any impact constituting a take of any WJT. The biological monitor who shall be present for all project activities, as required by MM BIO-6, shall ensure that the protective measures identified in the specialist's report are adhered to for the duration of construction.
3. If the provisions of items 1 and 2 cannot be met, the project may be redesigned to avoid impact to the WJT, only where the design falls within the of construction limits and area described or depicted in the March 2022 IS/MND, or the County must obtain an Incidental

Take Permit (ITP) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife before the project can proceed.

- Permanent protection and perpetual management of compensatory habitat is necessary and required pursuant to CESA to fully mitigate Project-related impacts of the taking of CESA-listed species. The ITP shall specify the mitigation necessary to protect WJT and compensate for loss of or impacts to this species.

MMs BIO-2 through BIO-7 address potential impacts to burrowing owl, desert tortoise, and nesting birds.

Construction crews, foremen, and other personnel potentially working on site will attend this education program and place their name on a sign-in sheet. This briefing shall include provisions of any requirements required for the project. The contractor shall implement Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training on the first day of work and periodically throughout construction as needed.

The Project, site facilities, equipment staging areas, and excavated soil stockpiles shall be placed outside of Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources, including–stream channels and associated floodplain areas. Buffer areas shall be identified, and exclusion fencing shall be used to protect Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources and to prevent unauthorized vehicles or equipment from entering or otherwise disturbing Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources. Equipment shall use existing roadways or new roads, outside of Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources.

BIO-2 Preconstruction surveys for Desert Tortoise shall be conducted no more than 48 hours prior to initiation of Project activities and after any pause in Project activities lasting 30 days or more. Desert tortoise pre-construction surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2019 desert tortoise survey methodology; if the biologist detects a desert tortoise, the biologist or applicant will contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife immediately. If the survey confirms presence of desert tortoise, the biologist will make a determination regarding tortoise mitigation: (1) if a biological monitor should be present at the site during all clearing and grubbing activities above grade; (2) if desert tortoise fencing needs to be installed around the perimeter of the construction work zone; or (3) if no further action is required. The biologist/monitor should remain on-call during construction activities to respond to a circumstance where a desert tortoise wanders into the construction area. If complete avoidance cannot be achieved, the County shall obtain an ITP first from the USFWS and also a CESA ITP from the CDFW under Fish and Game Code section 2081.

BIO-3 Preconstruction presence/absence surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted no less than 14 days prior to initiation of any onsite ground disturbing activity by a qualified biologist. The burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted pursuant to the recommendations and guidelines established by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the “California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation.” In the event this species and sign thereof is not identified within the Project limits, no further mitigation is required, and a letter shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the survey. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW prior to commencement of Project activities. If during the preconstruction survey, the burrowing owl and sign thereof is found onsite, Mitigation Measure BIO-5 shall be required.

BIO-4 If burrowing owls are identified during the pre-construction presence/absence survey period detailed in MM BIO-4, CDFW shall be notified immediately and the applicant shall take the following actions to offset impacts prior to ground disturbance:

Active nests within the areas scheduled for disturbance or degradation shall be avoided by establishing and flagging avoidance buffers according to the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG 2012) until fledging has occurred and/or juvenile owls are no longer dependent

on the burrows, as confirmed by a qualified biologist. Following fledging and confirmation that juvenile owls are no longer dependent on the burrows, owls may be passively relocated by a qualified biologist, as described below.

If impacts on occupied burrows are unavoidable, onsite passive relocation techniques may be used if approved by the CDFW to encourage owls to move to alternative burrows provided by the Applicant outside of the impact area. Passive relocation shall only be implemented if a qualified biologist has determined that there are no nesting owls and/or juvenile owls are no longer dependent on the burrows.

If relocation of the owls is approved for the site by CDFW, CDFW shall require the Applicant to hire a qualified biologist to prepare a plan for relocating the owls to a suitable site and conduct an impact assessment. A qualified biologist shall prepare and submit a passive relocation program in accordance with Appendix E (i.e., Example Components for Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow and Exclusion Plans) of the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG 2012) to the CDFW for review/approval prior to the commencement of disturbance activities onsite.

The relocation plan must include all of the following and as indicated in Appendix E:

- The location of the nest and owls proposed for relocation.
- The location of the proposed relocation site.
- Land owner approval to relocate owls to the relocation site.
- The number of owls involved and the time of year when the relocation is proposed to take place.
- The name and credentials of the biologist who will be retained to supervise the relocation.
- The proposed method of capture and transport for the owls to the new site.
- A description of site preparation at the relocation site (e.g., enhancement of existing burrows, creation of artificial burrows, one-time or long-term vegetation control).

The applicant shall conduct an impact assessment, in accordance with the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation prior to commencing Project activities to determine appropriate mitigation, including the acquisition and conservation of occupied replacement habitat at no less than a 2:1 ratio.

Prior to passive relocation, suitable replacement burrows site(s) shall be provided at a ratio of 2:1 and permanent conservation and management of burrowing owl habitat such that the habitat acreage, number of burrows and burrowing owl impacts are replaced consistent with the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation including its Appendix A within designated adjacent conserved lands identified through coordination with CDFW and the Applicant. A qualified biologist shall confirm the natural or artificial burrows on the conservation lands are suitable for use by the owls. Monitoring and management of the replacement burrow site(s) shall be conducted and a reporting plan shall be prepared. The objective shall be to manage the replacement burrow sites for the benefit of burrowing owls (e.g., minimizing weed cover), with the specific goal of maintaining the functionality of the burrows for a minimum of 2 years.

A final letter report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the passive relocation. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW.

BIO-5 Burrowing owl, along with desert tortoise, western Joshua tree, and other sensitive species that may occur on the Project site shall be covered in the WEAP that all construction crews, foremen, and other project personnel potentially working on site shall attend prior to the first day of work.

BIO-6 All Project activities on-site shall be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (generally, raptor nesting season is January 1 through September 15; and passerine bird nesting season is February 1 through September 1) to the maximum extent feasible. If Project activities begin outside of nesting season, a pre-construction survey shall be performed by a qualified biologist to verify the absence of nesting birds. A qualified biologist shall conduct the pre-activity survey

within the Project footprint (including access routes) and a 300-foot buffer surrounding the Project area, no more than two hours prior to initiating Project activities.

If Project activities begin during the nesting bird season (generally, raptor nesting season is January 1 through September 15; and passerine bird nesting season is February 1 through September 1), nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified avian biologist no more than three (3) days prior to Project initiation. Preconstruction surveys shall focus on both direct and indirect evidence of nesting, including nest locations and nesting behavior. The qualified avian biologist will make every effort to avoid potential nest predation as a result of survey and monitoring efforts. If active nests containing eggs or young are found during the preconstruction nesting bird surveys, a qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate nest buffer to be marked on the ground and discussed in the WEAP. Nest buffers are species-specific and shall be at least 100 feet for passerines and 300 feet for raptors. A smaller or larger buffer may be determined by the qualified biologist familiar with the nesting phenology of the nesting species and based on nest and buffer monitoring results. Established buffers shall remain on site until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active. Active nests and adequacy of the established buffer distance shall be monitored daily by the qualified biologist until the qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged or the Project has been completed. The qualified biologist has the authority to stop work if nesting pairs exhibit signs of disturbance.

Cultural Resources

CUL-1 Should any cultural resources be encountered during construction of these facilities, earthmoving or grading activities in the immediate area of the finds shall be halted and an onsite inspection shall be performed immediately by a qualified archaeologist. Responsibility for making this determination shall be with the County. The archaeological professional shall assess the find, determine its significance, notify any Tribes of interest, and make recommendations for appropriate management measures within the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Geology and Soils

GEO-1 The Applicant shall retain the services of a Qualified Paleontologist meeting the standards of SVP (2010). The Qualified Paleontologist shall monitor ground disturbing activities for the duration of ground disturbing activities. The monitor shall have authority to temporarily divert construction activity away from exposed fossils to evaluate the significance of the find and, should the fossils be determined to be significant, professionally and efficiently recover the fossil specimens and collect associated data. Paleontological monitors shall use field data forms to record pertinent location and geologic data, measure stratigraphic sections (if applicable), and collect appropriate sediment samples from any fossil localities. In the event of fossil discovery, the provision of County's General Plan EIR mitigation measure GEO-1 shall be implemented and adhered to.

Hydrology and Water Quality

HYD-1 The project must implement a design that perpetuates the existing flood plain. This can be accomplished using either of the following design concepts:

- Design a footing/crawl space design as shown on Figure 3A of Appendix 4.
- Install the geo-dome units outside the floodplain as shown on Figure 3B of Appendix 4.

Noise

NOI-1 All construction vehicles and fixed or mobile equipment shall be equipped with operating and maintained mufflers.

NOI-2 All employees that will be exposed to noise levels greater than 75 dB over an 8-hour period shall be provided adequate hearing protection devices to ensure no hearing damage will result from construction activities.

NOI-3 No construction activities shall occur during the hours of 7 PM through 7 AM, Monday through Friday and 9 AM to 6 PM on Saturday; at no time shall construction activities occur on Sundays or holidays, unless a declared emergency exists.

NOI-4 Equipment not in use for five minutes shall be shut off.

NOI-5 Equipment shall be maintained and operated such that loads are secured from rattling or banging.

NOI-6 Construction employees shall be trained in the proper operation and use of equipment consistent with these mitigation measures, including no unnecessary revving of equipment.

Wildfire

WF-1 During site clearing within the project site when any electrical construction equipment is in use, the construction crew shall have fire prevention equipment (such as fire extinguishers, emergency sand bags, etc.) to put out any accidental fires that could occur from the use of electrical construction/maintenance equipment.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC REFERENCES

CRM TECH, "*Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report: Assessor's Parcel No. 0351-171-33, Cajon Pass Area, San Bernardino County, California*" dated February 8, 2023

Jennings Environmental, LLC, "Biological Resource Assessment, Jurisdictional Delineation and Native Plant Protection Plan for the Joshua Tree Campsite Development (APN 0631-283-07), Joshua Tree, San Bernardino County, California" dated October 2022

JLC Engineering & Consulting, Inc., *"Hydrology and Hydraulic Drainage Report PROJ-2022-00040 CUP, City of Joshua Tree, California*" dated February 1, 2023

Urban Crossroads, *"Stonehill Avenue Camp Site Noise Impact Analysis, County of San Bernardino"* dated December 15, 2022

Urban Crossroads, *"Victorville Residential Greenhouse Gas Analysis, City of Victorville"* dated November 16, 2021

Websites

http://countywideplan.com/theplan/