
NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: May 18, 2015

To: Responsible Agencies and Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT TITLE: JOSHUA TREE GENERAL RETAIL PROJECT

The Notice of Preparation dated May 8, 2015 which was recently distributed inadvertently included a public hearing notice of a public hearing to occur on January 17, 2013 for the Joshua Tree General Retail Project. This Notice of Preparation supersedes and replaces that Notice of Preparation of May 8, 2015.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2012, the County prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Joshua Tree General Retail Project. Based on comments received on the MND during the public review period, the County made minor revisions and recirculated the document from November 13, 2012 through December 12, 2012. The County adopted the MND and approved the Project in early 2013.

Following approval of the Project and adoption of the MND, a lawsuit was filed in Superior Court challenging the adequacy of the MND. Specifically, the lawsuit alleged the following:

- a. The County violated CEQA by failing to evaluate potential "urban decay" impacts associated with the Project;
- b. The Project Description, as presented within the MND, was inadequate because Dollar General was not specifically identified as the tenant;
- c. Inconsistency with the County General Plan and Joshua Tree Community Plan; and
- d. Inadequacy of the Traffic Generation Analysis.

While the Court ruled in favor of the County regarding items b, c, and d (above), the Court also determined that further analysis was needed to address potential "urban decay" impacts of the Project. An EIR is being prepared in response to the Court's directive.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project proposes the development of 9,100 square feet of commercial uses (identified as Dollar General). Table 1 provides a breakdown of internal floor area.

Table 1
Joshua Tree General Retail Project

Store area	Size
General merchandise sales area	4,500 sq. ft.
Food (grocery) sales area	4,000 sq. ft.
Stockroom/non-sales areas	600 sq. ft.
<i>Total</i>	<i>9,100 sq. ft.</i>

Access and Parking

Vehicular access would be provided to the site via driveways along Commercial Street and Mountain View Street. Unless otherwise specified by the County, all parking areas, to include parking stalls, drive aisles, parking lot landscaping, and hardscaping will be designed and constructed pursuant to County requirements. Final design and implementation of all improvements would be subject to review and approval by the County.

Utilities Infrastructure

As elements of the Project, public utility systems would be modified or extended to serve the Project facilities. Such modifications may include, but are not limited to: new service connections, service/distribution line upgrades, and realignment(s) of existing service/distribution lines. Certain aspects and attributes of infrastructure improvements and modifications incorporated in the Project are summarized below.

Domestic Water

Water service to the site would be provided by the Joshua Basin Water District (District). According to the District, "There are currently existing adequate source, storage and distribution line capacities to provide potable water to the referenced site in sufficient quantities to satisfy domestic water service and fire protection requirements of the proposed use. The water mains to serve each proposed service connection are currently installed and operable." (Joshua Basin form W1 Public Water Certification, July 20, 2012).

Sanitary Sewer

A 1,500-gallon capacity septic system would be installed to handle the sanitary sewer needs of the Project. Final design and implementation of all improvements would be subject to review and approval by the County of San Bernardino Environmental Health Services Division.

Storm Drainage

The vacant site currently drains south to north (Twentynine Palms Highway to Commercial Street) via sheet flow. The Project does not propose substantial alteration of this drainage pattern. Bioswales, to be located in the landscaped setback areas along Sunburst Avenue, Commercial Street, and Mountain View Street, would be used to filter and detain onsite stormwater flow. Catch basin inserts would also be used to prevent unwanted materials from moving downstream. Roof drains and hardscaped areas would be designed to direct flows toward the landscaped areas and bioswales.

Dry Utilities

The Joshua Tree community receives electrical service from Southern California Edison (SCE), natural gas service from The Gas Company, and trash service from Waste Management.

Landscape Concept

The perimeter of the site would feature enhanced setbacks with plantings clusters and themed landscaping treatments. Landscaping used along the site periphery will also be used in parking lot plantings and pedestrian path planters to provide cohesion.

Lighting

The Project will include building-mounted, wall-mounted, and pole-mounted fixtures to properly illuminate Project entrances, walkways, and parking areas. All lighting will be provided consistent with County requirements.

Signage

Signage, including freestanding, building, directional and informational signage, will be provided onsite. All signage is subject to County review and approval.

PROJECT SITE

The Project site is located within the downtown commercial core of the unincorporated community of Joshua Tree, in San Bernardino County. Specifically, the site is bounded by Twentynine Palms Highway on the south, Commercial Street on the north, Sunburst Avenue on the east, and Mountain View Street on the west.

The Project site is currently vacant and has been substantially disturbed as a result of previous human use. The Project site has little vegetation and consists of sparse creosote brush, burrobush, and cheesebrush. The site is relatively flat and generally slopes from the southeast to the northwest with an elevation ranging from 2,734 feet above mean sea level at the southeast corner of the site to 2,730 feet above mean sea level at the northwest corner of the site.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As previously mentioned, an EIR is being prepared in response to the Court's directive. Section 15123 of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR identify areas of potential concern or controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by other agencies and the public. In this case, based on the direction of the Court as a result of the previously mentioned lawsuit, this EIR will focus solely on the potential for the Project to result in "urban decay."

This Notice provides a description of the Project and solicits comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state and local agencies, and the general public. Comments received in response to this Notice will be reviewed and considered by the lead agency. Due to time limits, as defined by CEQA, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than thirty (30) days after the publication of this notice, which will end on June 17, 2015. If you are representing an agency, we need to know the views of your agency germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project.

Comments and questions should be directed to:

San Bernardino County
Land Use Services Department
Attention: Heidi Duron, Supervising Planner
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0187
(909) 387-8311
Email: hduron@lusc.sbcounty.gov

Please include the name, phone number, and address of the contact person in your response.

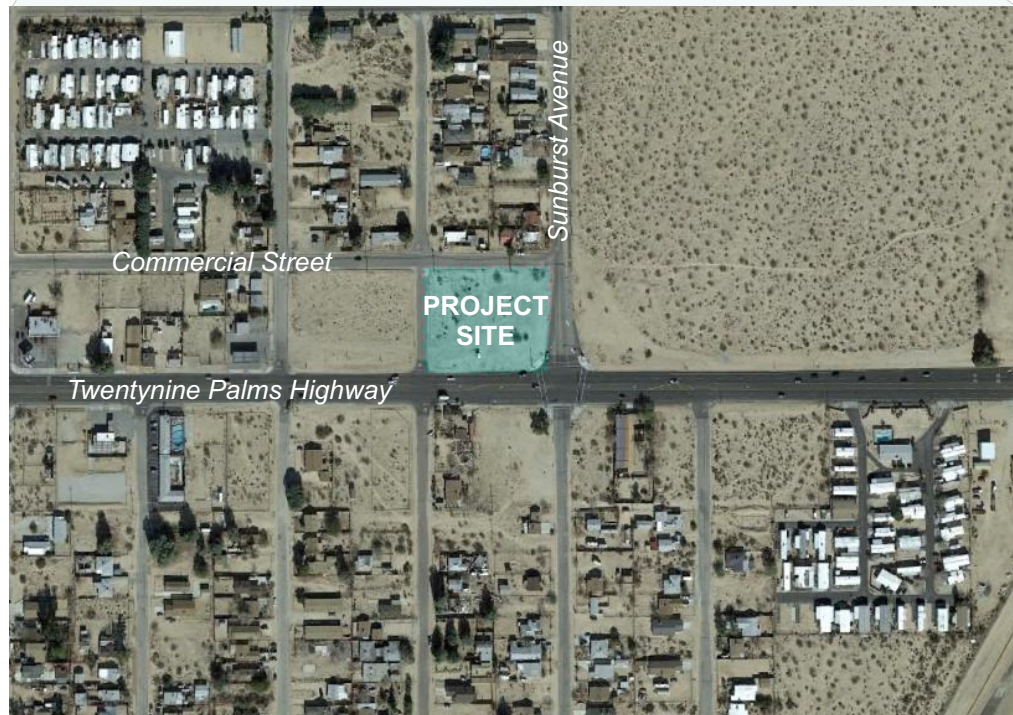
Sincerely,



Heidi Duron, Supervising Planner
Land Use Service Department
San Bernardino County

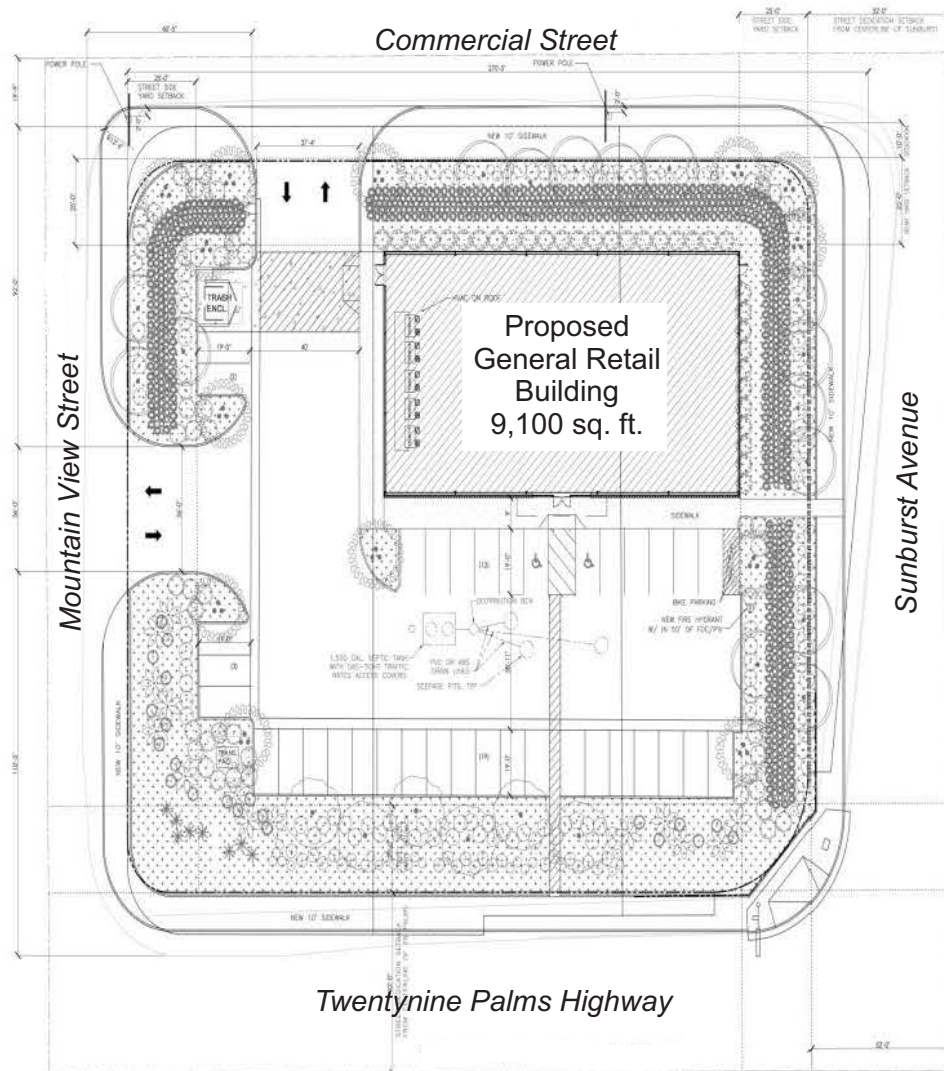
Figure 1 – Project location

Figure 2 - Site Plan



Source: Google Earth, Applied Planning, Inc.

Figure 1
Project Location



NOT TO SCALE

Source: Dynamic Development LLC.