

4.8 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES: POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

4.8.1 Introduction and Background

As discussed in Section 3.15, the Coachella Valley economy is a self-contained unit, although it is closely tied with the economy of the Southern California region and the entire nation. The existing demographic and economic conditions in the Coachella Valley are summarized below.

Since 1980, the Coachella Valley's population has grown rapidly. The combined population of the valley's nine incorporated cities doubled in the 1980s, and grew approximately 40.1% during the 1990s. For year 2000, the total population for the entire valley, including unincorporated areas of Riverside County, was estimated at 323,480.¹ It is estimated that the population increases to about 500,000 during winter months, due to the influx of seasonal and part-year residents.² Based on SCAG estimates, the valley's permanent population is expected to increase to approximately 440,301 by year 2010, and 540,901 by year 2020.

The valley's population is diverse, and includes students, families, professionals, retirees and seniors. Based on 2000 U.S. Census data, the median age of residents in the Coachella Valley ranges from 22.8 years in Coachella to 63.4 years in Indian Wells. Approximately 68.6% of residents in the incorporated cities classify themselves as white, and approximately 44.3% identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.³

Household and population data indicates that the Coachella Valley region is comprised of family units ranging from singles and couples to large, extended families. Average household sizes ranged from a low of 1.92 persons per household to a high of 4.72 among the nine incorporated cities, while data indicates that the average in the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area is 2.28.

Housing in the Coachella Valley is comprised of a mix of single-family detached and multi-family residential units. Year 2000 U.S. Census data indicates that there were approximately 126,000 total dwelling units in the nine incorporated cities and unincorporated portions of the Plan Area. Of these, approximately 82,000 are single-family units, approximately 32,000 are multi-family units, and approximately 12,000 are mobile homes, trailers, or other types of dwelling units.⁴

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1980, 1990, 2000.

² "Palm Springs Desert Resorts Fact Sheet," Palm Springs Desert Resorts Convention and Visitors Bureau, Spring 2000.

³ Op, Cit.

⁴ Ibid.

Retail Sales

In 2000, the approximately 7,776 retail outlets in the Coachella Valley generated approximately \$2.45 billion in retail sales, with total retail sales estimated at \$3.49 billion for the same time period.⁵ A variety of retail establishments operate in the Coachella Valley, including restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores and others, which are patronized by valley residents and visitors.

Total Assessed Valuation

Total assessed valuation for each of the nine incorporated cities in the Plan Area for fiscal year 2003-2004 is shown in *Table 4-7*, below. Assessed valuation provides information about the property tax revenue base within each city.

TABLE 4-7
Total Assessed Valuation per City
Fiscal Year 2003–2004

City	Total Assessed Valuation
Cathedral City	\$2,594,000,000
Coachella	\$634,000,000
Desert Hot Springs	\$642,000,000
Indian Wells	\$3,364,000,000
Indio	\$2,322,000,000
La Quinta	\$5,453,000,000
Palm Desert	\$8,779,000,000
Palm Springs	\$5,995,000,000
Rancho Mirage	\$4,972,000,000
Total	\$34,755,000,000

Source: "Inland Empire Quarterly Economic Report," John E. Husing, Ph.D., October 2003.

Median Housing Prices

Based on data for the first quarter of 2001, median housing prices for new single-family homes for the nine incorporated cities in the valley ranged from \$111,000 in Coachella, to \$376,800 in Rancho Mirage. Median housing prices for the same period in unincorporated portions of the Plan Area were \$239,000.

⁵ "Palm Springs Desert Resorts Fact Sheet," Palm Springs Desert Resorts Convention and Bureau, Spring 2000.

A profile of 48 cities in the Inland Empire region of Southern California indicates that with equal weighting of a number of economic factors, four Coachella Valley cities, (Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells and La Quinta) are among the ten cities in the region with the highest standards of living. Factors assessed include per capita retail sales, assessed value and financial deposits, the city's population growth, median income, and median price of all homes in the city. However, data for median household income in the Coachella Valley shows that there is a considerable difference between the economic situations and expendable income among residents of the nine valley cities. In 2001, median household incomes ranged from \$29,307 in Desert Hot Springs to \$102,208 in Indian Wells.

Employment and Jobs

As discussed in Section 3.19, 2001 employment data indicates that retail trade is the region's largest employment sector, providing 23,765 jobs, followed by the hotel and amusement industry, which provided 17,180 jobs.⁶ Agriculture, which was previously the second largest employment sector, was third. The construction industry was the fastest growing jobs sector in the valley during the period from 1991 to 1999, increasing 103.6% over that period.

Agriculture and Tourism

As indicated in the regional economic overview provided in Section 3.19, the valley's economy has historically largely been supported by agriculture, including date palm farming, grapes and citrus, and other fruits and vegetables. In addition to fruit and nut crops, the valley also produces livestock and poultry products. Approximately 7.5% (84,852 acres) of the Plan Area is comprised of farmland,⁷ with regional agricultural lands largely concentrated in the eastern portion of the valley. As previously stated, agriculture is currently the third ranked employment sector in the valley.⁸

The growth of the valley's resort and tourism industry began in the 1920s and 1930s, primarily in the western portion of the valley. Today, the entire urbanized portion of the valley, from Palm Springs southeastward, is considered a world-class tourist destination. The valley attracts approximately 3 million overnight visitors annually, generating approximately \$1.5 billion in annual revenues to the region.⁹ The hotel/amusement (travel) sector is the second largest job sector in the valley.

⁶ California Employment Development Department data, as presented in "Coachella Valley's Recent Economic History," John W. Husing, Ph.D., May 2003.

⁷ Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan GIS Database. Coachella Valley Association of Governments and US Bureau of Land Management. April 2003.

⁸ California Economic Development Department, as shown in "Coachella Valley Economic Review," John E. Husing, Ph.D., July 22, 2000.

⁹ "Palm Springs Desert Resorts Fact Sheet," Palm Springs Desert Resorts Convention and Visitors Bureau, Spring 2000.

Retail

The retail industry, which is closely related to the tourism industry discussed above, is the largest job sector in the valley. Since 1991, Coachella Valley retail sales have risen \$1.3 billion, or 64%.¹⁰ As previously discussed, retail sales account for approximately \$2.45 billion in revenues annually. The automotive sector, eating-drinking establishments, lumber and building materials, and general merchandise, are among the strongest markets.

Developable Lands

Table 4-8 shows total acreage within each jurisdiction in the Plan Area. It also compares developable lands outside the Conservation Area (not proposed for conservation) with those in each jurisdiction that are included in the Conservation Areas conservation. Lands are considered developable if they are below 25% slope and vacant or in use for agriculture. For this analysis, public lands, Private Conservation Lands, and Indian reservation lands are not included in developable lands.

TABLE 4-8
Total Developable Lands in the Plan Area

Jurisdiction	Total Acreage	Total Developable Land Outside Conservation Areas/Preferred Alternative
Cathedral City	12,472	2,019
Coachella	18,822	13,949
Desert Hot Springs	14,789	7,266
Indian Wells	9,321	1,317
Indio	16,826	8,578
La Quinta	22,582	5,185
Palm Desert	16,083	2,472
Palm Springs	60,396	5,460
Rancho Mirage	15,764	2,096
Riverside County	1,018,254	107,747
Total	1,205,311	156,089

¹⁰ California Board of Equalization, as shown in Exhibit 4, "Coachella Valley Economic Review," John E. Husing, Ph.D., July 22, 2000.

Agriculture

Of the approximately 1.2 million acres of land within the Plan Area, approximately 84,000 acres are designated for or currently in production for agriculture. While some agricultural lands are located in incorporated cities, including Coachella and Indio, the bulk of these lands are located in the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area. The Riverside County General Plan (Eastern and Western Coachella Valley Plans) has established an agricultural conversion restriction on lands in the unincorporated County that are currently designated as “Agricultural.” This is discussed further under Project Impacts.

4.8.2 Thresholds of Significance/Criteria for Determining Significance for CEQA Analysis

The Plan and the Alternatives would have a significant effect on Population, Housing and Employment if they would:

- (a) Cause a significant adverse socioeconomic effect on communities located within the project planning Area.
- (b) Create a substantial adverse fiscal effect on local governments as a consequence of the loss of public revenues or in association with the provision of governmental infrastructure (staff and facilities) associated with Plan implementation.
- (c) Create a substantial adverse economic effect on an important sector of the planning area's economy.
- (d) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of road or other infrastructure).
- (e) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- (f) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

4.8.3 Population-, Housing-, and Employment-Related Project Impacts

A fiscal impact analysis was prepared to quantify the potential impacts of the buildout of the MSHCP on the Cities and the County in the Coachella Valley.¹¹ The full text of the analysis is included in Appendix J, and is summarized below.

While an attempt is made to provide analysis per CEQA and NEPA socioeconomic impacts derived from the adoption of the Proposed Project and Alternatives, the Fiscal Impact Study is relatively general in nature. Measures of economic activity (e.g., property values, development rates, development costs, tax base, financing of public improvements, housing and housing prices, economic activity, and employment) are affected by a great number of variables (e.g., interest rates, state and federal budgets, public policy, aggregate demand and technological change) that are unrelated to the environmental impacts associated with implementing the MSHCP. Consequently, it is not possible or foreseeable to quantify how the environmental consequences of implementing the alternatives described in the EIR/EIS would affect individual measures of economic activity. For these reasons, the EIR/EIS discusses the potential economic impacts of implementing the MSHCP in general terms (e.g., greater or lesser effects, higher or lower costs), rather than in terms of quantitative estimates. The discussion is directed toward aggregate or average impacts in the region, rather than impacts on an individual, firm, or property. Additional analysis of economic impacts is neither required nor warranted under CEQA and NEPA.

Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative

A. Impacts to City and County Budgets

The analysis considered the lands in Conservation Areas in each city and on unincorporated County lands, and calculated potential costs and revenues associated with buildout of those lands according to each jurisdiction's General Plan, in current dollars. In order to present a most conservative analysis, it was assumed that all lands were currently vacant, and generating no revenues or costs for the jurisdiction. It was further assumed that lands with either a "Public/Quasi Public" or "Open Space" land use designation would not generate future revenues or costs for the jurisdiction.

The land use designations assigned by each jurisdiction's General Plan to the lands in Conservation Areas were assumed to build out at 75% of maximum density for residential lands, 22% building coverage for commercial lands, and 34% building coverage for industrial lands. As

¹¹ "Fiscal Impact Analysis for the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan," Terra Nova Planning & Research, November, 2003.

shown in *Table 4-9*, below, the amount of land in each jurisdiction varies considerably, with the impacts to the County being by far the greatest. In most of the jurisdictions, the potential buildout of the lands proposed for inclusion in Conservation Areas results in residential development at low or very low densities, and would also result in a negative cash flow to the jurisdiction at buildout. The potential impact to each jurisdiction is discussed individually below.

TABLE 4-9
Acreage and Potential Cash Flow at Buildout of
Developable Conservation Lands by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Acreage in Conservation*	Buildout Cash Flow
Cathedral City	952.8	-\$561,473
Coachella	299.46	-\$295,301
Desert Hot Springs	1,893.44	-\$594,615
Indian Wells	180.13	-\$28,714
Indio	89.32	-\$77,096
La Quinta	426.33	-\$1,438,458
Palm Desert	134.2	-\$240,424
Palm Springs	5,483.06	\$706,686
Rancho Mirage	364.2	-\$52,536
Riverside County	153,270.79	\$22,100,100

*Does not include lands designated either open space or public/quasi-public.

B. Impacts on Development Potential

As discussed in Section 3.19, the Plan Area encompasses a total of 1,205,311± acres, or approximately 1,885 square miles. However, Indian Reservation lands within the Plan Area, which total 69,578± acres, are excluded from the Plan, reducing actual Plan coverage area to 1,135,733± acres. The Plan Area is comprised of the nine incorporated cities and unincorporated portions of Riverside County in the Coachella Valley.

Of the total acreage within the Plan Area, approximately 155,431 acres with developable potential lie outside the proposed Conservation Areas, and approximately 200,536 acres with at least some and often constrained development potential are within Conservation Areas under the MSHCP. The following analysis shows potential impacts of the MSHCP on future development by jurisdiction. As with the Fiscal Impact Analysis conducted for the MSHCP, this analysis assumes that lands designated for uses such as Open Space would not be developed, and

therefore does not include them in this analysis. Lands designated for Public/Institutional uses, which would not be expected to generate revenues, are also not included, consistent with the Fiscal Impact Analysis.

City of Cathedral City

Should developable lands in the Conservation Area in Cathedral City be conserved, residential lands designated for Hillside Reserve and Estate Residential would be most impacted, with a loss of 89.1% and 70.4% of these lands to conservation, respectively. These are very low density designations, with density ranges of between one and two dwelling units per acre. In general, homes that would be constructed on lands with these designations would likely range from the middle to upper end of housing values in the City. In the case of the Hillside Reserve lands, which allow development of one unit per 20 acres, the allowance for development of 10% of the land within the Conservation Areas may allow for a substantial portion of these lands to be constructed, since a home and associated ancillary facilities could be sited on less than 10% of a 20 acre parcel.

The impacts associated with development potential on Hillside Development, therefore, may be less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes. In the case of lands designated Estate Residential, where development of up to two units per acre would be permitted, it is likely that the majority of this land would not be able to develop, and that the potential large-lot (one half acre or more) residential development would be lost on these lands.

As discussed in the Fiscal Impact Analysis, residential development does not generate sufficient municipal revenues to cover associated costs, particularly in Cathedral City, which has not established special revenue sources that might be expected to further off-set costs associated with residential development. The fiscal analysis demonstrated that in Cathedral City, development of lands in the Conservation Areas would result in a negative cash flow to the City in both the near and long terms.

Lands designated for revenue-generating uses, such as commercial and industrial development within Conservation Areas, are limited to approximately 86 acres of a total of 684 acres (12%) that are located outside of proposed Conservation Areas. This is summarized in *Table 4-10*.

TABLE 4-10
Cathedral City Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(HR) Hillside Reserve (0-1 du/20 ac)	552.53	67.83	620.36
(RE) Estate Residential (0-2 du/ac)	314.20	132.15	446.35
(LDR) Low Density Residential (24.5 du/ac)	0.00	786.41	786.41
(RR) Resort Residential (3-6.5 du/ac)	0.00	44.22	44.22
(RM) Medium Density Residential (4.5-10 du/ac)	0.00	29.92	29.92
Residential Total	866.73	1,060.53	1,927.26
(GC) General Commercial	0.00	288.22	288.22
Commercial Total	0.00	288.22	288.22
(BP) Business Park	0.00	49.45	49.45
(I) Business Industrial	86.07	344.59	430.66
Industrial Total	86.07	394.04	480.11
Total	952.28	1,742.79	2,695.59

Coachella

Table 4-11 illustrates that no commercial or industrial lands would be included in Conservation Areas, and approximately 300 acres, or 12%, of very low density residential lands are conserved. If the Very Low Density Residential land use category develops at 75% of total densities, up to 3,488 residential units could be constructed within this designation outside Conservation Areas, and the potential for 449 units would be on lands included in the Conservation Areas. Approximately 6,086 acres of developable lands are still available for residential development in the City, with development potential for over 25,000 units at buildout of the City. Should all lands be conserved, the 449 units that might not be developed would represent 1.8% of the total potential housing stock in the City at buildout.

Desert Hot Springs

In Desert Hot Springs, impacts to future development from the MSHCP are primarily to residential lands with maximum allowable densities of one dwelling unit per acre. As previously discussed, however, costs associated with residential development generally outstrip revenues resulting from that development.

TABLE 4-11
City of Coachella Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(AG) Agriculture	0.00	154.97	154.97
(RVL) Very Low Density Res (0 -2 du/ac)	299.46	2,325.44	2,624.90
(RL) Low Density Res (0 – 8 du/ac)	0.00	3,352.03	3,352.03
(RM) Medium Density Res (0 – 10 du/ac)	0.00	222.67	22.67
(RH) High Density Res (0 – 20 du/ac)	0.00	31.04	31.04
Agricultural and Residential Subtotal	299.46	6,086.16	6,385.62
(CE) Entertainment Commercial	0.00	3,296.05	3,296.05
(CG) General Commercial	0.00	461.40	461.40
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	3,757.45	3,757.45
(IH) Heavy Industrial	0.00	1,339.92	1,339.92
(IL) Light Industrial	0.00	1,977.22	1,977.22
Industrial Subtotal	0.00	3,317.14	3,317.14
Totals	299.46	13,160.74	13,460.20

None of the lands available for medium density residential development in Desert Hot Springs would be placed in conservation under the MSHCP. Potential impacts to affordable housing resulting from conservation of high density residential lands in the Plan Area are further discussed later in this document. However, there are approximately 4,993.89 acres available outside Conservation Areas in the City for residential development, including approximately 923.23 acres of high density residential lands. If in the future the City requires additional lands for medium density development, the analysis indicates that sufficient residential lands are available should the City choose to re-designate these residential lands to a higher density.

Impacts to commercial lands would be less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes, since no available commercial lands in the City would be assigned to conservation. The bulk of commercially designated lands in the City occurs in the urban core, and would be unaffected by the implementation of the MSHCP.

All of the developable lands designated for Energy Industrial development are outside Conservation Areas. Development on these lands may include windfarms and solar photovoltaic or thermal arrays on an industrial scale. Industrial development is a low generator of property tax, but has the potential to be valuable for its creation of jobs.

The Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance severely limits the types of buildings which can be constructed to only those required as ancillary to energy production uses. Therefore, construction of other uses on these lands would be unlikely, and the potential impacts associated with development on Energy Industrial lands would be insignificant.

Land uses within and outside Conservation Areas are shown in *Table 4-12*.

TABLE 4-12
Desert Hot Springs Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(R-E) Residential Estates (0-1 du/varies ac)	0	263.87	263.87
(R-L) Low Density Res. (0-5 du/ac)	1,333.70	3,279.84	4,613.54
(R-M) Medium Density Res. (08du/ac)	0	108.08	108.08
(R-MH) Res. Mobile home (0-10 du/ac)	0.00	1.72	1.72
(R-H) High Density Res. (0-14 du/ac)	40.38	923.23	963.62
(R-VS-L/M/H) Res. Visitor Serving (varies du/ac)	0.00	417.15	417.15
Residential Subtotal	1,374.08	4,993.89	6,367.98
C-C	0.00	25.09	25.09
C-G	0.00 *	299.29	299.29
C-N	0.00	39.37	39.37
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	363.75	363.75
I-E	0	161.61	161.61
I-L	38.48	306.00	344.48
Industrial Subtotal	38.48	467.61	506.09
TOTAL	1,412.56	5,825.25	7,237.82

* There are 8.69 acres of developable lands designated as C-G within the City of Desert Hot Springs (which is not a Permittee to the Plan) in Conservation Areas; however, these lands have been permitted and are therefore not included in this table.

Indian Wells

As *Table 4-13* shows, there is a less than 1% impact on residential lands, and no impacts to commercial lands. There are no lands designated for industrial development in the City.

TABLE 4-13
Indian Wells Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
Very Low Density Res (1.0 – 3.0 du/ac)	1.32	549.80	551.12
Low Density Res (3.1 – 4.5 du/ac)	0.00	31.65	31.65
Medium Density Res (4.6 – 7 du/ac)	0.00	49.50	49.50
Med – High Density Res (7.1 – 12 du/ac)	0.00	39.05	39.05
Residential Subtotal	1.32	670.01	671.33
(CC) Community Commercial	0.00	2.47	2.47
Resort Commercial	0.00	275.70	275.70
Sports Complex	0.00	6.71	6.71
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	284.88	284.88
Totals	1.32	954.89	956.21

Indio

Lands proposed for conservation would impact approximately 4% of the Low Density Residential lands within the City, and represent a loss of up to 668 single family units in the total housing stock, which should exceed 28,000 units at buildout. There would be no commercial lands affected by the proposed Conservation Areas.

Land uses within and outside Conservation Areas are shown in *Table 4-14*.

TABLE 4-14
Indio Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(CE) Country Estates (3.5 du/ac)	0.00	2,028.62	2,028.62
(LDR) Low density (9 – 4 du/ac)	0.00	3,990.26	3,990.26
(RL) Residential – Low (5 du/ac)	89.32	2,325.44	2,414.76
(RM) Residential Medium (10 du/ac)	0.00	297.89	297.89
(RH) Residential High (20 du/ac)	0.00	52.94	52.94
Residential Subtotal	89.32	8,695.16	8,784.48
(CC) Community Commercial	0.00	203.58	203.58
(CO) Commercial Office	0.00	55.05	55.05
(RC) Regional Commercial	0.00	22.32	22.32
(DC) Downtown Commercial	0.00	11.80	11.80
(NC) Neighborhood Commercial	0.00	43.21	43.21
(MU DA) Mixed Use (DA)	0.00	280.73	280.73
(MU SP-100) Mixed Use	0.00	110.66	110.66
(MU SP-200) Mixed Use	0.00	16.58	16.58
(MU SP-300) Mixed Use	0.00	200.24	200.24
Commercial/Mixed Use Subtotal	0.00	944.18	944.18
(IP) Industrial Park	0.00	211.86	211.86
(BP) Business Park	0.00	247.26	247.26
(M) Manufacturing	0.00	89.16	89.16
Industrial/Manufacturing Subtotal	0.00	548.29	549.29
Totals	89.32	10,187.63	10,276.95

La Quinta

In the City of La Quinta, approximately 18% of low density residential lands are in Conservation Areas. The potential 1,280 units lost represent 5% of the total units potentially developable within the City. The analysis shows no effects to future development on commercial lands.

Land uses within and outside Conservation Areas are shown in *Table 4-15*.

TABLE 4-15
La Quinta Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(VLDR) Very Low Density Res (0 – 2 du/ac)	0.00	318.69	318.69
(LDR) Low Density (0 – 4 du/ac)	426.33	1,903.24	2,329.57
(MDR) Med Density Res (up to 8 du/ac)	0.00	204.89	204.89
(MHDR) Medium – High Density Res (0 – 12 du/ac)	0.00	83.00	83.00
(HDR) High Density Res (0 – 16 du/ac)	0.00	65.09	65.09
Residential Subtotal	426.33	2,574.92	3,001.25
(CC) Community Commercial	0.00	73.62	73.62
Commercial Park	0.00	41.36	41.36
Office	0.00	35.82	35.82
(TC) Tourist Commercial	0.00	209.16	209.16
(VC) Village Commercial	0.00	71.42	71.42
(NC) Neighborhood Commercial	0.00	64.82	64.82
(M/RC) Mixed Commercial	0.00	234.32	234.32
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	730.52	730.52
Totals	426.33	3,305.44	3,731.77

City of Palm Desert

In the City of Palm Desert, approximately 96.23 acres, or 81% of lands available for Hillside Residential (HR) development, would be in Conservation Areas under the MSHCP. This represents 144 units of a total potential number of units in this designation of 177 units. In the Medium Density Residential category, up to 128 units of the potential 657 units or 19% would be lost. Other impacts to residential lands are limited. No Affordable High Density development is located within Conservation Areas.

All of the lands available for Regional Commercial development (one acre) would be included in a Conservation Area. Approximately 84.1 acres of lands with other commercial designations are available outside the Conservation Areas and are not affected by the MSHCP.

Land uses within and outside Conservation Areas are shown in *Table 4-16*.

TABLE 4-16
Palm Desert Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
Hillside Planned Residential (2 du/ac)	96.23	22.05	118.28
Low Density Residential (3 – 5 du/ac)	13.11	1,132.02	1,145.13
Medium Density Residential (5 – 7 du/ac)	24.29	100.86	125.15
Affordable High Density Res (15 – 25 du/ac)	0.00	35.42	35.42
Planned Community Development	0.00	20.60	20.60
Residential Study Zone	0.00	154.39	154.39
Residential Subtotal	133.63	1,465.34	1,598.97
Core Commercial	0.00	2.34	2.34
District Commercial	0.00	77.06	77.06
Office Professional	0.00	4.70	4.70
Regional Commercial	0.57	0.00	0.57
Commercial Subtotal	0.57	84.10	84.67
Commercial Industrial	0.00	664.38	664.38
Service Industrial	0.00	25.85	25.85
Low Density / Service Industrial	0.00	117.77	117.77
Industrial Subtotal	0.00	808.00	808.00
Totals	134.20	2,357.45	2,491.65

City of Palm Springs

As shown in *Table 4-17*, below, effects to future development in Palm Springs would be primarily to lands designated for Conservation, or in the Desert designation, which allow for one dwelling unit per 20 acres and 1/5-3.5 units per acre, respectively. Lands designated for Conservation and Desert provide for limited development due to the potential for sensitive environmental resources. Environmental constraints on these lands would therefore limit and possibly preclude future Development, the proposed MSHCP notwithstanding.

TABLE 4-17
Palm Springs Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(C) Conservation (1 du/20 ac)	2,399.10	124.82	2,523.92
(CDL 6) Density Controlled (6 du/ac)	0.00	423.70	423.70
(CDL 8) Density Controlled (8 du/ac)	0.00	29.83	29.83
(D) Desert (1/5-3.5 du/ac)	2,096.44	276.99	2373.43
(L1) Low Density Res. (1 du/ac)	843.79	34.33	878.12
(L2) Low Density Res. (2 du/ac)	33.81	262.38	296.19
(L4) Low Density Res. (4 du/ac)	1.13	302.78	303.91
(L6) Low Density Res. (6 du/ac)	0.00	170.47	170.47
(M15) Medium (12 - 15 du/ac)	0.00	104.75	104.75
Residential Subtotal	5,374.27	1,730.05	7,104.32
(CSC) Community Shopping Center	0.00	10.28	10.28
(H 43/21) High Density Res. (43 du/ac-Hotel 43/Apt. 21)	0.00	55.05	55.05
(H 43/30) High Density Res. (Hotel 43/Apt. 30)	0.00	7.69	7.69
(HC) Highway Commercial	0.00	125.29	125.29
(GC) General Commercial	0.00	48.57	48.57
(LSR) Large Scale Resort (30 du/ac)	0.00	2.66	2.66
(RC) Resort Commercial	0.00	16.30	16.30
(P) Professional	0.00	33.89	33.89
(CBD) Central Business District	0.00	3.68	3.68
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	303.40	303.40
(EI) Energy/Industrial	0.00	1047.44	1047.44
IND Business/Industrial	108.79	956.13	1064.92
Industrial	108.79	2,003.58	2,112.37
Totals	5,483.06	4,037.03	9,520.09

However, since these lands allow development of one unit per 20 acres, or one unit per 5 acres, the allowance for development of 10% of the land within the Conservation Areas may allow for a substantial portion of these lands to be constructed, since a home and associated ancillary facilities could be sited on less than 10% of a parcel.

Approximately 88% and 96% of lands designated for low density residential development with allowable densities of one to two dwelling units per acre, respectively, would be affected by

proposed Conservation Areas. However, approximately 473.25 acres of lands with other low density designations occurring outside Conservation Areas in the City would remain available for future development. Additional lands designated for medium density development would also be available for development. Of the more than 12,300 units potentially buildable in the City, the implementation of the plan would result in the loss of 1,092 units, or 9% of the total potential housing stock.

No potentially developable commercial lands in Palm Springs would be within Conservation Areas under the proposed MSHCP. Approximately 10% of lands designated for Business/Industrial uses are located within Conservation Areas. However, approximately 108 of the 2,003.58 acres of lands designated for industrial development are located within Conservation Areas.

City of Rancho Mirage

In Rancho Mirage, all lands designated for Hillside Reserve (R-HR) development would be in a Conservation Area under the proposed MSHCP. The R-HR designation allows for one dwelling unit per 640 acres. Since approximately 337.91 acres are available for such development in the City, buildout on these lands would result in only one dwelling unit. Approximately 4% of low density residential lands would be located within a Conservation Area. No potentially developable commercial or industrial lands would be within a Conservation Area.

Land uses within and outside Conservation Areas are shown in *Table 4-18*.

County of Riverside

Impacts on future development on unincorporated Riverside County lands in the Plan Area are shown in *Table 4-19*. Approximately 95.7% of lands designated for Open Space Rural (OS-RUR) in the Plan Area would be in Conservation Areas. These lands provide for up to one single-family dwelling unit per 20 acres. Approximately 92.4% of lands designated for Rural Mountain (RM) would be in Conservation Areas; these lands allow for one dwelling unit per ten acres of land. According to the RCIP General Plan, approximately 70% of lands with the RM designation occur have slopes of 25% or greater.¹² However, since these lands allow development of one unit per 20 acres, or one unit per 10 acres, the allowance for development of 10% of the land within the Conservation Areas may allow for a substantial portion of these lands to be constructed, since a home and associated ancillary facilities could be sited on less than 10% of a parcel.

¹² Table LU-3, Land Use Designations Summary, RCIP General Plan, October 7, 2003.

TABLE 4-18
Rancho Mirage Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(R-HR) Hillside Reserve (01du/640ac)	337.91	0.00	337.91
(R-L) Low Density Res. (0-2 du/ac)	26.29	633.20	659.49
(R-L-3) Low Density Residential (0-3 du/ac)	0.00	168.43	168.43
(R-M) Medium Density Res. (0-5 du/ac)	0.00	321.25	321.25
(R-H) High Density Res. (0-9 du/ac)	0.00	171.54	171.54
Residential Subtotal	364.20	1,294.42	1,658.62
Community Commercial	0.00	114.56	114.56
Commercial Neighborhood	0.00	10.74	10.74
Commercial Office	0.00	72.38	72.38
General Commercial	0.00	4.72	4.72
Mixed Use - Density Varies	0.00	25.37	25.37
Commercial Subtotal	0.00	227.77	227.77
Light Industrial	0.00	168.81	168.81
Industrial Subtotal	0.00	168.81	168.81
Totals	364.20	1,691.00	2,055.20

All lands designated for Estate Density Residential (EDR) in the Plan Area would be in a Conservation Area. These lands allow for up to one dwelling unit per two acres. Approximately 44.5% of lands designated for Rural Residential development, and 45.1% of lands designated for Very Low Density residential development, respectively, would be in a Conservation Area. Densities allowed on these lands range between one dwelling unit per five acres, and one dwelling unit per acre. The available residential lands would allow for a potential total of 37,000 additional dwelling units at buildout, of which 11,856 units, or 32%, would be affected by the plan.

As the analysis shows, future development under the MSHCP would largely impact lands designated for very low or low density residential development. Approximately 82,734 acres of potentially developable residential lands in the Plan Area would remain available to the County. These include approximately 47,818 acres of Agricultural lands, and 10,623± acres of Rural Desert lands, which provide for development of one dwelling unit per 10 acres.

TABLE 4-19
Riverside County Land Uses within and outside Conservation Areas

Land Use	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands
(OS-RUR) Open Space Rural (1du/20ac)	134,627.99	6,062.10	140,690.09
(AG) Agriculture (1du/10ac)	1,057.85	47,818.83	48,876.68
(RD) Rural Desert (1du/10ac)	5,317.61	10,622.53	15,940.14
(RM) Rural Mountain (1du/10ac)	2,502.12	206.91	2,709.03
(RR) Rural Residential (1du/5ac)	6,380.88	7,944.17	14,325.05
(EDR) Estate Density Residential (1 du/2 ac)	455.08	0.00	455.08
(VLDR) Very Low Density Residential (1du/ac)	1,928.98	2,345.16	4,274.14
(LDR) Low Density Residential (2du/ac)	58.40	5,488.19	5,546.59
(MDR) Medium Density Residential (2-5 du/ac)	231.82	1,520.09	1,751.91
(MHDR) Medium High Density Residential (5-8 du/ac)	0.00	468.07	468.07
(HDR) High Density Residential (814 du/ac)	0.00	218.17	218.17
(CC) Community Center (5-40 du/ac)	0.00	39.84	39.84
Residential Subtotal	152,560.73	82,734.08	235,294.81
(CR) Commercial Retail	26.77	965.63	992.40
(CT) Commercial Tourist	42.39	348.05	390.44
Commercial Subtotal	69.16	1,313.68	1,382.84
(BP) Business Park	350.46	391.36	741.82
(LI) Light Industrial	290.44	5,659.06	5,949.50
(HI) Heavy Industrial	0.00	414.45	414.45
Industrial Subtotal	640.90	6,464.87	7,105.77
Totals	153,270.79	90,512.63	243,783.42

Source: CVAG, November 2003

It is also important to note that much of the land outside Conservation Areas in the County is designated for very low density residential land uses, and could be converted to higher densities to compensate for the loss of housing units in the Conservation Areas. This is particularly true of the Rural Desert and Rural Residential lands, which represent a total of 18,566.7 acres outside the Conservation Areas available for development, and allow one unit per ten acres and one unit per 5 acres, respectively. Increases in densities to these lands alone could accommodate all the units on land conserved through Plan implementation. Therefore, while the proposed MSHCP would result in conservation of substantial amounts of very low density residential lands,

sufficient lands with potential for residential development would remain available to the County for such development through the plan’s implementation.

Approximately 89% and 97% of lands with potential for commercial retail and commercial tourist development, respectively, would remain available to the County for future development. Of the 1,382 acres of commercial land available, conservation would remove 69 acres, or 5% of the total land available. Approximately 9% of lands designated for industrial or business park development would be in a Conservation Area. Approximately 6,464.87 acres of potentially developable lands designated for industrial uses would remain available to the County with a loss of 641 acres. Based on this analysis, therefore, it appears there are sufficient potentially developable industrial lands available in the Plan Area to provide the County with future industrial development opportunities.

In summary, *Tables 4-10 to 4-19* describe the total lands located within and outside of Conservation Areas by land use designation throughout the Plan Area.

Tables 4-20 to 4-22 describe acreages of potential impacts to residential, commercial, and industrial lands in the Plan Area.

TABLE 4-20
Potential Impacts to Residential Lands in the Plan Area

City	Developable Lands In Conservation Area (acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (acres)	Total Residential Lands (acres)
Cathedral City	866.73	1,060.53	1,927.26
Coachella	299.46	6,086.16	6,385.62
Desert Hot Springs	1,374.08	4,993.89	6,367.98
Indian Wells	1.32	670.01	671.33
Indio	89.32	8,695.16	8,784.48
La Quinta	426.33	2,574.92	3,001.25
Palm Desert	133.63	1,465.34	1,598.97
Palm Springs	5,374.27	1,730.05	7,104.32
Rancho Mirage	364.20	1,294.42	1,658.62
Riverside County	152,560.73	82,734.08	235,294.81
TOTAL	161,490.08	111,304.56	272,794.64

TABLE 4-21
Potential Impacts to Commercial Lands in the Plan Area

City	Developable Lands In Conservation Area (acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (acres)	Total Commercial Lands (acres)
Cathedral City	0.00	288.22	288.22
Coachella	0.00	3,757.45	3,757.45
Desert Hot Springs *	0.00	363.75	363.75
Indian Wells	0.00	284.88	284.88
Indio	0.00	944.18	944.18
La Quinta	0.00	730.52	730.52
Palm Desert	0.57	84.10	84.67
Palm Springs	0.00	303.40	303.40
Rancho Mirage	0.00	227.77	227.77
Riverside County	69.16	1,313.68	1,382.84
TOTAL	69.73	8,297.95	8,367.68

* There are 8.69 acres of developable lands designated as C-G within the City of Desert Hot Springs (which is not a Permittee to the Plan) in Conservation Areas; however, these lands have been permitted and are therefore not included in this table.

TABLE 4-22
Potential Impacts to Industrial Lands in the Plan Area

City	Developable Lands In Conservation Area (acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (acres)	Total Industrial Lands (acres)
Cathedral City	86.07	394.04	480.11
Coachella	0.00	3,317.14	3,317.14
Desert Hot Springs	38.48	467.61	506.09
Indian Wells	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indio	0.00	548.29	548.29
La Quinta	N/A	N/A	N/A
Palm Desert	0.00	808.00	808.00
Palm Springs	108.79	2,003.58	2,112.37
Rancho Mirage	0.00	168.81	168.81
Riverside County	640.90	6,464.87	7,105.77
TOTAL	874.24	14,172.34	15,046.58

C. Impacts Associated with Growth Constraints

The following discussion examines potential constraints resulting from the proposed MSHCP using a categorical analysis of impacts on future development of residential, commercial, and industrial lands for the overall Plan Area. Generally, the Plan would not restrict growth because, although the Conservation Areas would change precise location where growth may occur, the Plan also allows 111,304.56 acres to be developed outside the Conservation Areas and approximately 22,420 acres within the Conservation Areas.

D. Impacts on Affordable Housing

Affordable housing generally occurs on lands designated for medium to high density residential development. For most jurisdictions, potential impacts to future residential development occur on lands designated for very limited to low density residential.

Table 4-23 summarizes total developable lands within the Plan Area that are designated for medium and high density residential development.

**TABLE 4-23
Medium- to High-Density Residential Lands in the Plan Area**

City	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands (Acres)	Percentage Assigned to Conservation (Acres)
Medium Density				
Cathedral City	0.00	29.92	29.92	0.00%
Coachella	0.00	222.67	222.67	0.00%
Desert Hot Springs	0.00	108.08	108.08	0.00%
Indian Wells	0.00	49.50	49.50	0.00%
Indio	0.00	297.89	297.89	0.00%
La Quinta	0.00	204.89	204.89	0.00%
Palm Desert	24.29	100.86	125.15	19.40%
Palm Springs	0.00	104.75	104.75	0.00%
Rancho Mirage	0.00	321.25	321.25	0.00%
Riverside County	231.82	1,520.09	1,751.91	13.23%
Medium Density Total	256.11	2,959.90	3,216.01	
Medium High Density				
Cathedral City	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coachella	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Desert Hot Springs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indian Wells	0.00	39.05	39.05	0.00%
Indio	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

TABLE 4-23 (cont.)

City	Developable Lands in Conservation Area (Acres)	Developable Lands Outside Conservation Area (Acres)	Total Lands (Acres)	Percentage Assigned to Conservation (Acres)
La Quinta	0.00	83.00	83.00	0.00%
Palm Desert	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Palm Springs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rancho Mirage	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Riverside County	N/A	468.07	468.07	0.00%
Medium High Density Total	0.00	590.12	590.12	
High Density				
Cathedral City	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coachella	0.00	31.04	31.04	0.00%
Desert Hot Springs	40.38	923.23	963.62	4.19%
Indian Wells	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indio	0.00	52.94	52.94	0.00%
La Quinta	0.00	65.09	65.09	0.00%
Palm Desert	0.00	35.42	35.42	0.00%
Palm Springs*	0.00	62.74	62.74	0.00%
Rancho Mirage	0.00	171.54	171.54	0.00%
Riverside County**	0.00	258.01	258.01	0.00%
High Density Total	40.38	1,600.01	1,640.39	

* Includes lands in the H43/21 and H43/30 designations.

** Includes lands in the High and Community Center designations.

As shown in the table above, there are a total of 3,216.01± acres of potentially developable medium density residential lands in the Plan Area, of which 256.11± occur in the Conservation Areas. Therefore, at least 2,959.9± acres would be potentially developable for medium density residences.

There are 590.12± acres of lands with potential for development for medium-high density residences in the Plan Area. All of these lands occur outside the Conservation Area. Therefore, there are no impacts to future development of potentially developable medium-high density lands.

Of the approximately 1,640.39 acres in the Plan Area with potential for high density residential development, 1,600.01± acres occur outside the Conservation Area. The remaining 40.38± acres occur in the Conservation Areas; this constitutes a relatively small portion of the total lands and potential units.

In most jurisdictions, there would be minimal or no impact on affordable housing, since lands designated for medium to high-density residential development occur outside the Conservation

Areas. An exception to this trend occurs in Palm Desert. In Palm Desert, approximately 19.4% of lands with potential for medium density development are located in the Conservation Areas. There are approximately 1,465.34 acres in Palm Desert with residential development potential outside the Conservation Area. Of these, approximately 35.42 acres are designated for high density residential development, none of which occur in the Conservation Area.

In total, lands in Conservation Areas throughout the Plan Area represent only 5.4% of the total medium and high density lands available for development. As with other land use designations, as discussed above, the individual jurisdictions would continue to have the ability to change their General Plans to accommodate either increased density or increased acreage in more dense land uses to accommodate market pressures for this small loss in medium and high density lands.

E. Impacts to Employment

The potential impacts of the proposed MSHCP on creation of jobs within the Plan Area may be characterized by a review of the land uses that occur in the Conservation Areas. As has been shown throughout this analysis, the majority of potentially developable lands that occur in the Conservation Areas within each jurisdiction are designated for very low and low density residential development. Residential land uses have limited potential to generate jobs. In general, they may generate a limited number of short-term construction jobs.

Residential development may also generate jobs associated with landscaping, and a limited number of domestic service positions, which are generally lower paying positions. Should lands designated for residential development in the Conservation Areas be allowed instead to develop, employment generation resulting directly from this development is likely to be limited.

Lands designated for commercial and industrial development have the potential to directly generate employment in the Plan Area. As shown in *Table 4-21*, of the 8,367.68 acres of land with potential for commercial development in the Plan Area, approximately 70 acres (or approximately 1%) occur in Conservation Areas. The commercial lands within Conservation Areas represent less than 1% of the total lands. The loss in potential employment could be expected to be equivalent to the loss in leasable retail space.

In the Plan Area, there are 15,046.58 acres of designated industrial lands that are potentially developable. Of these, only 1,035.85 acres occur in the Conservation Areas. The industrial lands within Conservation Areas represent approximately 7% of the developable lands. The loss in potential employment could be expected to be equivalent to the loss in industrial space.

Therefore, under the MSHCP, the vast majority of potentially developable commercial and

industrial lands in the Plan Area would remain available for development, and resulting job generation.

F. Other Impacts

The Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative would not directly induce substantial population growth in the Plan Area as the Plan does not propose any new construction. To the extent the Plan provides Take Authorization for Covered Activities, which include residential, commercial, and industrial Development, as well as public infrastructure projects, the Plan could be construed as facilitating substantial growth. This growth is, however, what is currently projected for the Plan Area in the Local Permittees' general plans, and, absent the Plan, it is assumed that this growth would still take place, although it might be delayed to some degree by the necessity of projects that would result in Take having to obtain their own Take Permits. The Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative is not, therefore, expected to have a significant adverse impact by inducing substantial population growth for CEQA analysis purposes.

The Plan would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The Plan also does not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Public Lands and Core Habitat and Ecological Processes Alternatives

These Alternatives would result in the conservation of 19.5% and 4.2% less acreage, respectively, than under the Preferred Alternative. As such, these Alternatives would allow the Cities and County to permit development on lands which would otherwise be conserved. With the exception of Palm Springs and the County, all jurisdictions could experience a negative cash flow as a result of development in the Conservation Areas, due primarily to the residential nature of potential development, and its low revenue production. Therefore, development of these Alternatives could have a negative impact on most of the jurisdictions. However, any additional development on County and Palm Springs lands under these two Alternatives would likely be of too small a scale to significantly impact the costs and revenues otherwise anticipated. The overall impacts under these Alternatives would still be expected to be less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes.

Although the jurisdictions would be able to develop lands which would otherwise be conserved, the increased land mass in each jurisdiction would not be significant for CEQA analysis purposes, and would not impact any jurisdiction's ability to provide adequate lands for Development. Based on historic land absorption rates within the Valley, the addition of lands for Development would only slightly increase the number of years until buildout of the jurisdictions.

The impacts associated with Alternatives are not expected to vary significantly from the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative.

These Alternatives would allow the Cities and County to permit affordable housing on lands, which would otherwise be conserved. These alternatives would be expected to slightly increase the potential for affordable housing, since more land would be available for development. Due to the small amount of Medium density land affected by conservation, however, the potential impacts are not expected to vary significantly from the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. These alternatives would potentially increase the potential employment opportunities marginally within each jurisdiction. However, the increased lands available would not be significant for CEQA analysis purposes, and would not provide a high number of potential jobs for any of the jurisdictions.

These Alternatives would not directly induce substantial population growth in the Plan Area, as the Plan does not propose any new construction. To the extent these Alternatives provides Take Authorization for Covered Activities, which include residential, commercial, and industrial Development, as well as public infrastructure projects, these Alternatives could be construed as facilitating substantial growth. This growth is, however, only what is currently projected for the Plan Area, and, absent these Alternatives, it is assumed that this growth would still take place, although it might be delayed to some degree by the necessity of projects that would result in Take having to obtain their own Take Permits. These Alternatives are not, therefore, expected to have a significant adverse impact by inducing substantial population growth for CEQA analysis purposes.

These Alternatives would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. These Alternatives also do not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Enhanced Conservation Alternative

This Alternative would conserve an additional 3.6% more land than the Preferred Alternative. This would result in slight increases in lands included in Conservation Areas in each jurisdiction. The overall percentage increase, however, would not significantly increase the lands lost by each jurisdiction. Impacts to the fiscal health of each jurisdiction would be expected to be similar to those described above under the Preferred Alternative. Impacts to the development potential within each jurisdiction would be expected to be similar to those described above under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. The increase in lands in Conservation Areas would only marginally reduce the number of years required to reach buildout in the Valley, and would result in similar impacts to those proposed under the Preferred Alternative.

This alternative could slightly increase the Medium and High Density lands that would be included in Conservation Areas. Overall, however, the small increase in lands in Conservation Areas would not significantly increase the potential impacts to the provision of affordable housing. This Alternative could slightly reduce commercial and industrial lands available for Development. Overall, however, the small increase in lands in Conservation Areas would not significantly increase the potential impacts to job creation.

This Alternative would not directly induce substantial population growth in the Plan Area, as the Plan does not propose any new construction. To the extent this Alternative provides Take Authorization for Covered Activities, which include residential, commercial, and industrial Development, as well as public infrastructure projects, this Alternative could be construed as facilitating substantial growth. This growth is, however, only what is currently projected for the Plan Area, and, absent the Plan, it is assumed that this growth would still take place, although it might be delayed to some degree by the necessity of projects that would result in Take having to obtain their own Take Permits. This Alternative is not, therefore, expected to have a significant adverse impact by inducing substantial population growth. for CEQA analysis purposes

This Alternative would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. This Alternative also does not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The No Project/No Action Alternative

The No Action/No Project Alternative would result in all lands proposed for inclusion in Conservation Areas under the Preferred Alternative potentially being available for development. Individual development, however, would be required to secure permits for any projects that would result in Take. The jurisdictions would, with the exception of Palm Springs and the County, experience a financial loss at buildout, since the costs and revenues described above and in the Appendix would actually occur. This alternative would result in negative cash flow for these jurisdictions. In the case of Palm Springs and the County, they would experience an increase in their revenues at buildout of 0.6% and 2%, respectively. Although not a large fiscal increase, the No Project/No Action Alternative would represent a small beneficial impact for these jurisdictions in the event that all o the land could be developed which is unlikely.

This Alternative would allow all the jurisdictions to continue to implement their General Plan designations on the lands currently proposed for conservation. This alternative would primarily impact low and very low residential land use designations, which are the predominant designations in the Conservation Areas, other than open space designations. This alternative

would not constrain any development site, and assuming that individual permits were secured for projects as they occur, would allow the full development of each jurisdiction's land use plans, without constraint. This alternative also ultimately allows for the development of slightly more Medium and High Density residential land, as well as commercial and industrial development.

This Alternative could result in longer buildout timelines for all jurisdictions, insofar as the absorption rates described above would still apply, but more land would be available over the buildout period. Under this alternative the commercial and industrial lands within the Conservation Areas would be allowed to develop, and would provide additional opportunities for shopping and employment. However, as demonstrated in the absorption analysis above, the industrially designated lands appear to be in excess of the local need, and their absorption into the market may not occur, regardless of the alternative implemented. As previously stated, the conversion of some of these industrial lands to other uses is likely under this Alternative.

This Alternative would result in the potential availability of 389 additional acres of Medium and High Density residential land. Assuming that individual developers were able to secure permits for any listed or sensitive species which might occur on the site, at a considerably higher cost than under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative, additional apartment and townhouse units would be available, particularly in Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert and the County. These lands could generate up to 2,575 additional dwelling units within the Plan area, an increase of about 7% over buildout of the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. Although there is no requirement or assurance that these lands be used for affordable or subsidized housing, it could be expected that the majority of these units would be developed at less expensive price points than single family homes, and would therefore be more likely to be affordable to low and moderate income households.

This Alternative would not directly induce substantial population growth in the Plan Area as no Plan is implemented under this Alternative. It is assumed that growth currently projected for the Plan Area would still take place, although it might be delayed significantly by the necessity of projects that would result in Take having to obtain their own Take Permits. This Alternative is not expected to have a significant adverse impact by inducing substantial population growth for CEQA analysis purposes.

This Alternative would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. This Alternative also does not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Conclusion

Based on the above analyses, the MSHCP would not, overall, significantly constrain development potential within the Plan Area. For some land use designations in some jurisdictions, there is a higher percentage of lands in Conservation Areas. Impacts to each jurisdiction are primarily associated with very low density residential land uses, on lands which are outside the development core of each community. However, as the analysis has demonstrated, these impacts are overall less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes.

Based on the analysis of lands with potential for development outside Conservation Areas, it appears that sufficient lands are available for residential development over the Plan buildout period and beyond. It is also important to note that each jurisdiction has the ability to modify its General Plan as development pressures arise, and development patterns change within the community. As stated above, much of the impacted lands in all jurisdictions are in relatively low density residential land use designations. In all cases, minor modifications to the densities or intensities of lands not in Conservation Areas would recoup the number of dwelling units that might otherwise develop in Conservation Areas. This, combined with the likelihood that lands designated for one unit per 10 or 20 acres could develop under the provisions of the plan, result in impacts to development potential of residential lands within the plan boundary being less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes.

The large number of commercial and industrially designated acres in the Coachella Valley and the anticipated absorption rates for that acreage appear to indicate that industrial land use designations exceed the need in this area. Based on historic developments trends, these lands are likely to be converted to commercial and even residential designations over time. For commercial and industrial lands, the number of affected acres represents a small percentage of the total acreage available and is expected to result in less than significant impacts for CEQA analysis purposes. Impacts of the proposed Plan on employment generation (i.e., commercial and industrial designated lands) would be similarly less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes.

Overall, this analysis indicates that impacts to future development in the Plan Area would be less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes. Sufficient developable lands appear to be available outside the Conservation Areas to satisfy development demand over buildout of the Plan. Impacts to lands with potential for medium to high density development potential are less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes, with sufficient lands remaining available outside the Conservation Areas to meet affordable housing needs within each jurisdiction. Based on the availability of these lands, it appears that land costs would not be adversely impacted by the Plan.

The MSHCP would create socioeconomic benefits to Coachella Valley communities due to creation of open space resources, which often result in increased property values. Due to the regional nature of the Plan and geographical relationship of areas planned for future development (central/urban areas) versus those planned for open space (outlying areas), sprawl would be reduced, which would result in benefits to communities such as efficient provision of services, reduced commute times, and less sprawl.

4.8.4 Mitigation Measures

Socioeconomic impacts on the jurisdictions comprising the Plan Area are less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes. This analysis has identified impacts to potential residential development, primarily very low and low density designations. Some impacts have been identified for medium density residential development; these occur in Palm Desert. However, in each city there is sufficient land available for residential development outside the Conservation Areas to provide opportunities for redistribution of land uses to assure adequate housing for a range of household incomes. Overall, impacts to lands with potential for development of affordable housing therefore appear to be less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes, with most of these lands occurring outside the Conservation Areas.

Each jurisdiction has the option up to four times annually to re-balance the land use mix within its boundaries via amendments to its General Plan. Since as previously noted, the majority of the impacts to future development involve residential lands designated for very low or low density residential development, jurisdictions may choose to provide for higher density development on lands in less environmentally sensitive areas, which are more likely to be located closer to infrastructure and less likely to be constrained by environmental conditions.

Impacts to revenue-generating commercial and industrial land uses are minimal, with most of these lands occurring outside Conservation Areas. In the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area, nearly one-half of the developable lands designated for Business Park development occur in Conservation Areas. However, sufficient developable lands are available outside the Conservation Areas, and the industrial lands absorption rates appear to be sufficiently low, to provide the County with adequate opportunities for industrial development.

Overall, impacts to the jurisdictions within the Plan Area are less than significant for CEQA analysis purposes, and are further reduced by recommendations for review and redistribution of land use designations discussed herein. No further mitigation is necessary.

4.8.5 Levels of Significance after Mitigation for CEQA Analysis

No significant impacts have been identified for CEQA analysis purposes.

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