

# 4.4 | CULTURAL RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

This section describes the cultural resources present or potentially present in the City of Coachella Planning Area. Cultural resources are defined as prehistoric and historic sites, structures, and districts, or any other physical evidence associated with human activity considered important to a culture, a subculture, or a community for scientific, traditional, religious or any other reason. For analysis purposes, cultural resources may be categorized into groups: archaeological resources, historic resources, contemporary Native American resources, and paleontological resources. Resources used in the preparation of this section include a cultural resources database search at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) and the City of Coachella General Plan 2020 EIR.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE CONDITIONS

The CGPU Planning Area environmental baseline conditions outline the current physical ‘on-the-ground’ conditions of the Planning Area with additional content to outline historic significance of existing environmental conditions.

### PREHISTORIC BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

The prehistory of the Southern California Deserts is generally described in terms of cultural “complexes.” A complex is a specific archaeological manifestation of a general mode of life, characterized archaeologically by technology, particular artifacts, economic systems, trade, burial practices, and other aspects of culture. Complexes are typically associated with particular chronological periods.

#### Paleo-Indian (11,000-8,000 B.C.)

While human occupation of California is known to date back to at least 11,000 B.C., the Paleo-Indian period is sparsely represented in the Coachella area<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren, C. N., “The Desert Region”, In *California Archaeology*, Coyote Press, Salinas, California, 2004, reprinted from 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Schaefer, Jerry, and Don Laylander, “The Colorado Desert”, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 247-258, 2007.

**Lake Mojave Complex (8,000-6,000 B.C.)**

In terms of material culture, the Lake Mojave Complex is typified by stone tools such as Lake Mojave and Silver Lake projectile points, bifaces, steep-edged unifaces, crescents, and some ground stone implements<sup>3</sup>. Lake Mojave groups were organized in relatively small, mobile groups and practiced a forager-like subsistence strategy. Some trade with coastal groups was practiced, as evidenced by the presence of shell beads.

**The Pinto Complex (circa [c.] 6,000 to 3,000 B.C.)**

Archaeological deposits dating from the Pinto Period suggest that Pinto settlement patterns consisted of seasonal occupation by small, semi-sedentary groups that were dependent upon a combination of big and small-game hunting and collection strategies, which could include the exploitation of stream or water resources. Typically, sites of this period are found along lakeshores and streams or springs, some of which are now dry. Material culture representative of this period in California prehistory include roughly formed projectile points, “heavy-keeled” scrapers, choppers, and a greater prevalence of flat millingstones and manos, indicating a more intensive use and processing of plant resources. At the end of the middle Holocene, around 3000 B.C., environmental conditions became much drier and hotter, and few sites in the Mojave date to the period between 3000 and 2000 B.C., suggesting that the area may have been largely abandoned during this period of unfavorable climate<sup>4</sup>.

**Gypsum Complex (c. 2,000 B.C. to A.D. 200)**

Many archaeological sites of this period are small and surficial, probably of a temporary nature. At the same time, it is during this time that we see more archaeological evidence suggestive of inter-tribal trade, particularly between the desert and the coast. The artifact assemblage associated with this period includes an increase in the prevalence of millingstones and manos, and it is believed that it was during this period that the pestle and mortar were introduced. These technological developments may point to the increased consumption of seeds and mesquite. Other artifacts associated with the Gypsum Period include Humboldt Concave Base, Gypsum Cave, Elko Eared, and Elko Corner-notched projectile points. Towards the end of the Gypsum period, there is evidence for the use of the bow and arrow.

**Rose Springs Complex (c. A.D. 200 to 1,200)**

The general cultural pattern for this period is a continuation of that of the preceding Gypsum Period. The increase in cultural complexity continued into this period and the archaeological record attests to established trade routes between desert and coastal populations by way of shell beads and steatite, as well as an introduction of Anasazi influence from the eastern Great Plains as evidenced by the appearance of turquoise and pottery. Material culture related to this period includes obsidian artifacts, Rose Spring and Eastgate projectile points, millingstones, manos, mortars and pestles, slate pendants, and incised stones. Archaeological sites from this period are more numerous and contain more well-developed middens, indicating an increase in population and a more permanent settlement pattern.

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<sup>3</sup> Sutton, Mark Q., Mark E. Basgall, Jill K. Gardner, and Mark W. Allen, “Advances in understanding Mojave Desert Prehistory”, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 229-245, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

### **The Protohistoric Period (A.D. 1,200 to European Contact)**

By the Protohistoric period, an extensive network of established trade routes wound their way through the desert, shuffling quality goods to populations throughout the Mojave Region. It is also believed that these trade routes encouraged or were the motivating factors for the development of an “increasingly complex socioeconomic and sociopolitical organization” within Protohistoric peoples in the Southern California area. Housepit village sites are prevalent during this period, as are the presence of Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood projectile points, brownware and buffware ceramics, steatite shaft straighteners, painted millingstones, and to a lesser degree, coastal shell beads. By the end of this period, however, a decline in trade occurred and well-established village sites were abandoned.

### **Prehistoric Sites in the Coachella Valley**

Coachella sits on the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla, a large intermittent freshwater lake created by the Colorado River. Its shorelines continually changed as the lake was filled and emptied by the river, and when it was full it would have attracted human settlement with its plentiful resources<sup>5</sup>. Settlement along the lakeshore in the Coachella Valley was particularly intensive, with evidence of large-scale, multiseasonal occupation.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Cahuilla Indians are the first known human inhabitants of the Coachella Valley. The Cahuilla were a Takic-speaking people consisting of hunters and gatherers who are generally divided into three groups based on their geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the Beaumont/Banning area; the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains; and the Desert Cahuilla from the Coachella Valley, as far south as the Salton Sea.

The Cahuilla lived in family groups, or clans that were in turn grouped within two main divisions. People from clans in one division had to marry into clans from the other division. Interaction between clans was limited to trade, intermarriage, and performing ceremonies. Individual clans had villages, or central places, and territories they considered theirs for purposes of hunting game, gathering food and other necessary resources.

Varying clan groups of the Desert Cahuilla had many villages throughout the Coachella Valley. Planted crops, as well as hunting and gathering, was identified as the main way of life for the Cahuilla. Prior to European contact, population estimates for the Cahuillas range from 3,600 to as high as 10,000 persons. Due to European diseases, such as smallpox, the Cahuilla population was decimated during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first official United States land survey in Southern California in the mid-1850's noted eight Indian villages or Indian Rancherias within or just outside the boundaries of the Planning Area, presumably occupied by the Desert Cahuilla people.

A number of roads and trails were observed crisscrossing the Planning Area, connecting the villages and Rancherias to one another. Two of these roads and trails, both traversing through the Planning Area in a northwest-southeast direction, appear to have been the main thoroughfare for traffic in the

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<sup>5</sup> Schaefer, Jerry, and Don Laylander, “The Colorado Desert”, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 247-258, 2007.

vicinity. One road passed through the Planning Area in the southwestern corner while the other was recorded along the Whitewater River bed, running directly through the center of the Planning Area. These two main roads were considered to be two branches of the ancient Cocomaricopa Trail.

In 1862, this ancient Indian trade route was “rediscovered” by William David Bradshaw, and soon became known as Bradshaw Trail and a stagecoach was put into service adjacent to this trail. After the late 1880’s the trail served little more than the needs of local ranchers.

In 1866, development of the Southern Pacific Coachella Valley railroad brought waves of Euroamerican settlers to the Coachella Valley, and a series of new communities sprang up along the tracks. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Euroamerican settlements had replaced the Indian villages and Rancherias to become the prevailing cultural landscape in the Planning Area. These settlements were scattered throughout the level of western portion of the Planning Area, which lies today south and west of the Coachella Canal.

By the 1940s, the Planning Area showed significant growth in population and agriculture. The fast-growing date palm industry in the Coachella Valley had become the main agricultural staple in the region. Since the late 1940’s, the Coachella Canal (formerly known as the All-American Canal) has served as the main water supply for residents of the Coachella Valley.

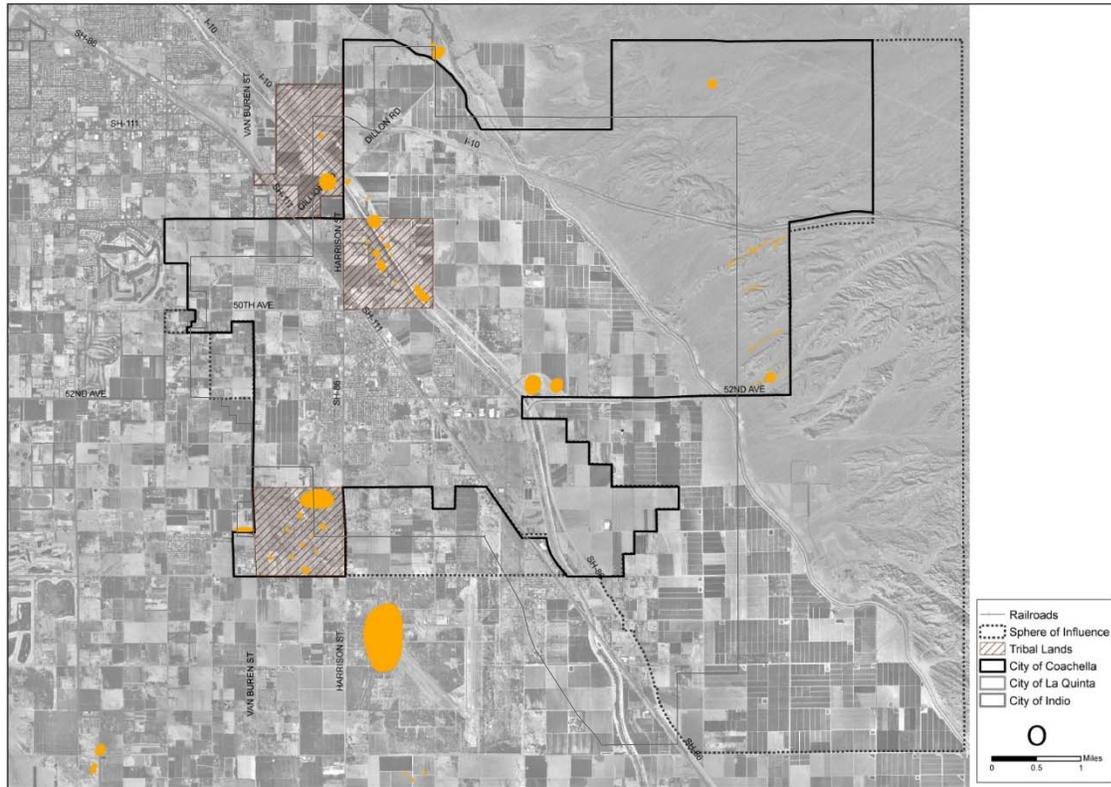
The completion of the Coachella Canal had a dramatic impact on the growth of the Coachella Valley. This growth took place in the western portion of the Planning Area south of the Coachella Canal, while the eastern portion north of the Canal essentially remained untouched by civilization.

#### **KNOWN CULTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA**

The Eastern Information Center (EIC), located at the University of California, Riverside, is the designated repository of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), for records concerning archaeological and historical resources and associated studies in Riverside County, as well as Indio County and Mono County. The EIC provides archaeological and historical resources information on a fee-for-service basis, to local governments and individuals with responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

According to an October, 2008 records search at the EIC, there are 176 recorded cultural resources within the Planning Area. Sixty-eight are historic-period sites or structures; 96 are prehistoric sites, ten are both prehistoric and historic; and two are of unknown age. These resources are discussed below by age and type.

Figure 4.4-1: Sited Archeological Resources



Source Files: Sphere\_of\_Influence\_06\_dissolve; City\_bndy\_line\_07; City\_of\_Indio\_bndy; City\_of\_La\_Quinta\_bndy; Airport\_bndy; Parcel\_Assessor\_View; railroads\_Coachella; and Streets\_07.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological resources are places where human activity has measurably altered the earth or left deposits of physical remains. Archaeological resources may be either prehistoric-era (before European contact) or historic-era (after European contact). The majority of such places in California are associated with either Native American or Euro-American occupation of the area. Archaeological Resources can be found in the Planning Area on Figure 4.4-1.

### Types of Prehistoric Archaeological Sites in the Planning Area

- Prehistoric habitation sites: These are generally located in areas that offer optimal climate and resources and can be occupied for extended periods of time. Resources found at occupation sites include chipped stone, groundstone tools, faunal remains, housepit foundations, and burials.
- Campsites or temporary habitation sites: These are temporary occupation sites, smaller and generally with fewer artifacts than village sites.
- Prehistoric trails: These are the remains of Indian trails that were likely used as important travel corridors.
- Burial sites: This includes both isolated, individual burials (typically cremation burials), and cemeteries, such as the Augustine Indian Reservation Cemetery.

- Sparse lithic or pottery scatters: These sites include the remains of stone-making activities, pot drops, or other ephemeral events.
- Rock features: These include rock cairns and rock art.

### **Types of Historic-era Archaeological Sites in the Planning Area**

- Historic residential sites: These sites are the remains of historic-period homes or properties and include house foundations, wells, and associated artifacts.
- Historic-period agricultural complexes or canals.
- Historic-period roads or trails, often reusing portions of prehistoric trails.
- Mining sites: These include mineshafts, mining claims, and shallow pits in which mining prospects may have occurred.
- Trash dumps/can scatters: These sites contain historic-period refuse, primarily metal cans.
- Historic survey markers, many associated with the 1911-1912 GLO land survey.

### **Sensitivity for Archaeological Resources**

Given the sheer number of recorded resources and their location through the Planning Area, the entire Planning Area can be considered sensitive for archaeological resources. Over 159 archaeological surveys have been performed within the Planning Area, and the majority of them resulted in the discovery of previously unknown cultural resources.

Certain areas are more likely to contain particular types of archaeological resources. The eastern portion of the Planning Area, including the Mecca Hills, Thermal Canyon, and the hills and washes just north of Thermal Canyon, contain numerous historic and prehistoric trails, mining sites, historic survey markers, and isolated prehistoric lithic and ceramic scatters. Prehistoric villages and campsites are more likely to be located along and to the west of the Whitewater River, where water resources were more abundant. The remains of historic-period structures or agricultural operations tend to be located in the western portion of the Planning Area, in the area ringing the historic center of Coachella and on the valley floor west of the Whitewater River.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Historic resources are standing structures of historic or aesthetic significance that are generally 50 years of age or older (i.e., anything built in the year 1958 or before). Additionally, resources listed on registers of historic resources could also be eligible. In California, historic resources considered for protection tend to focus on architectural sites dating from the Spanish Period (1529-1822) through the early years of the Depression (1929-1930). Historic resources are often associated with archaeological deposits of the same age.

The following are brief descriptions of categories for historical designation that apply to the City of Coachella Planning Area.

*National Register of Historic Places* – This designation is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of Interior, and is the Nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. These resources may include historic and prehistoric sites, structures, and objects that are significant to American history, architecture, archaeology engineering, and culture.

There are no resources within the Planning Area listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

***National Historic Landmarks*** – This designation is administered by the National Park Service. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the U.S.

There are no resources within the Planning Area listed as National Historic Landmarks

***California Registered Historical Landmarks*** – This program is administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and recognizes buildings, structures, sites, or places of statewide historical significance to California. Areas of consideration include but are not limited to, anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, and experimental sites of significance.

There are no resources within the Planning Area listed as California Registered Historical Landmarks.

***California Points of Historical Interest*** – This program administered by the California OHP. It enables the state to recognize sites of local importance and to officially register them as California Points of Historical Interest. Areas of consideration include but are not limited to, anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, and experimental sites of significance.

There are no resources within the Planning Area listed as California Points of Historical Interest.

***Riverside County Historical Landmarks*** – Sites and structures with a high degree of historical and/or architectural integrity, and which are worthy of being preserved, would be declared to be County Historic Landmarks or Historic Preservation Districts, by the County Board of Supervisors upon recommendation by the Historical Commission.

The Riverside County Historical Commission provided an inventory of resources listed as California Point of Historical Interest and/or as a Riverside County Historical Landmark.<sup>6</sup> One historic resource is listed as a Riverside County Historical Landmark:

**Coachella Valley Water Building District** – located at Highway 111 and Grapefruit Boulevard in the City of Coachella. This site is designated as a California Point of Historical Interest and as a Riverside County Historical Landmark. The District was established in 1918 to protect and conserve the watershed, underground water storage, and to seek additional sources of irrigation.

Thirty-five other historic structures have been recorded in the Planning Area. Twenty-one of these have been evaluated for their eligibility for national, state, or local registers, and while some are considered eligible for listing on local registers, none have been formally listed. Most of the recorded structures are within or near the City's historic core.

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<sup>6</sup> Riverside County Points of Historical Interest List, provided by Keith Herron, Historic Preservation Officer, Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, November 1, 2007.

In 2006 a historic resources survey of the historic central part of Coachella was undertaken for the Pueblo Viejo Concept Plan. Nearly 500 structures were documented, many of them dating from the 1920s-1950s. However, none of these appear to have been formally recorded to OHP standards or assessed for their eligibility for national, state, or local registers.

A 1901 USGS topographic map (Indio 30' quadrangle) shows very few residences in the Coachella area. Several are shown in the town of Coachella, and several more on the Augustine Indian Reservation to the south. The land north and east of the Southern Pacific railroad is unmapped. A 1941 map shows the area to be much more developed, with structures clustering in the central part of the City of Coachella and in a community just north of the Augustine Indian Reservation. However, numerous other structures dot the landscape along roads on the valley floor. Some development occurs east of the Whitewater River.

### **Sensitivity for Historic Resources**

The area in and around the City of Coachella's historic core should be considered highly sensitive for historic resources. However, other parts of the Planning Area, particularly those west and south of the Whitewater River, should still be considered moderately sensitive for historic resources, Figure 4.4-2

### **PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Paleontological resources represent a limited, non-renewable, and impact-sensitive scientific and educational resource. Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains or traces of multi-cellular invertebrate and vertebrate animals and multi-cellular plants, including their imprints from a previous geologic period. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. Paleontological resources include not only the actual fossil remains, but also the collecting localities, and the geologic formations containing those localities.

The Planning Area is located on the following rock types, described by their paleontological sensitivity:

***Ocotillo Conglomerate – Low Sensitivity:*** The Ocotillo Conglomerate (or Ocotillo Formation) is present to the north of the Mecca Hills. No fossil site is recorded within the study area and vicinity where it is underlain by the Ocotillo Conglomerate and the formation as it exists in the study area is probably too coarse-grained to contain any fossil remains.

***Palm Springs Formation – High Sensitivity:*** Sandstones and siltstones of the Palm Springs Formation, present primarily in the Mecca Hills, have a high potential for containing significant non-renewable paleontological resources.

***Lake Cahuilla Sediments – High and Undetermined Sensitivity:*** Silts and sands of Pleistocene and early Holocene Lake Cahuilla contain fossil birds, pond turtles, large and small fish, and bivalves and snails. These sediments underlie a majority of the Planning Area, on the floor of the Coachella Valley. High potential is assigned to the area expressed at or below the high stand of the Lake Cahuilla shoreline. Underdetermined potential is assigned to areas which are underlain by Lake Cahuilla sediments, but which are overlain by recent sediments from the Whitewater Delta and have been disturbed by agriculture.

*Recent (Holocene) Alluvium – Low Sensitivity:* Recent alluvium has low potential to contain significant non-renewable paleontological resources. The recent alluvium and dune sand does not contain fossils in a meaningful context. Recent alluvium can be found as alluvial fans deposited at the base of the hills on the eastern side of the Planning Area.

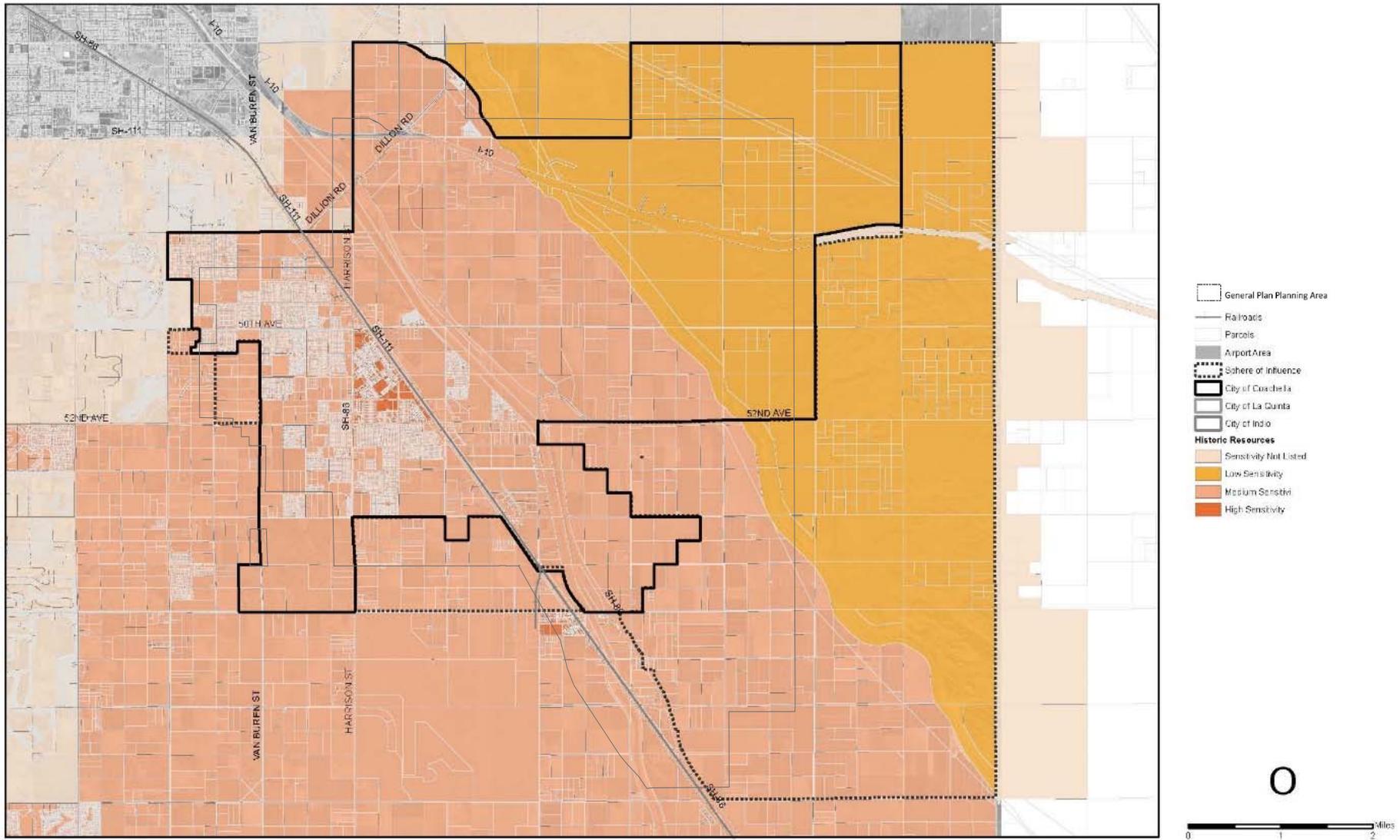
### **Sensitivity for Paleontological Resources**

According to Riverside County's paleontological sensitivity map, in Figure 4.4-3 most of the western and southern portion of the Planning Area is located within a high sensitivity area for paleontological resources, while the underdeveloped portion of the Planning Area (eastern half) has a low or undetermined sensitivity for paleontological resources.<sup>7</sup>

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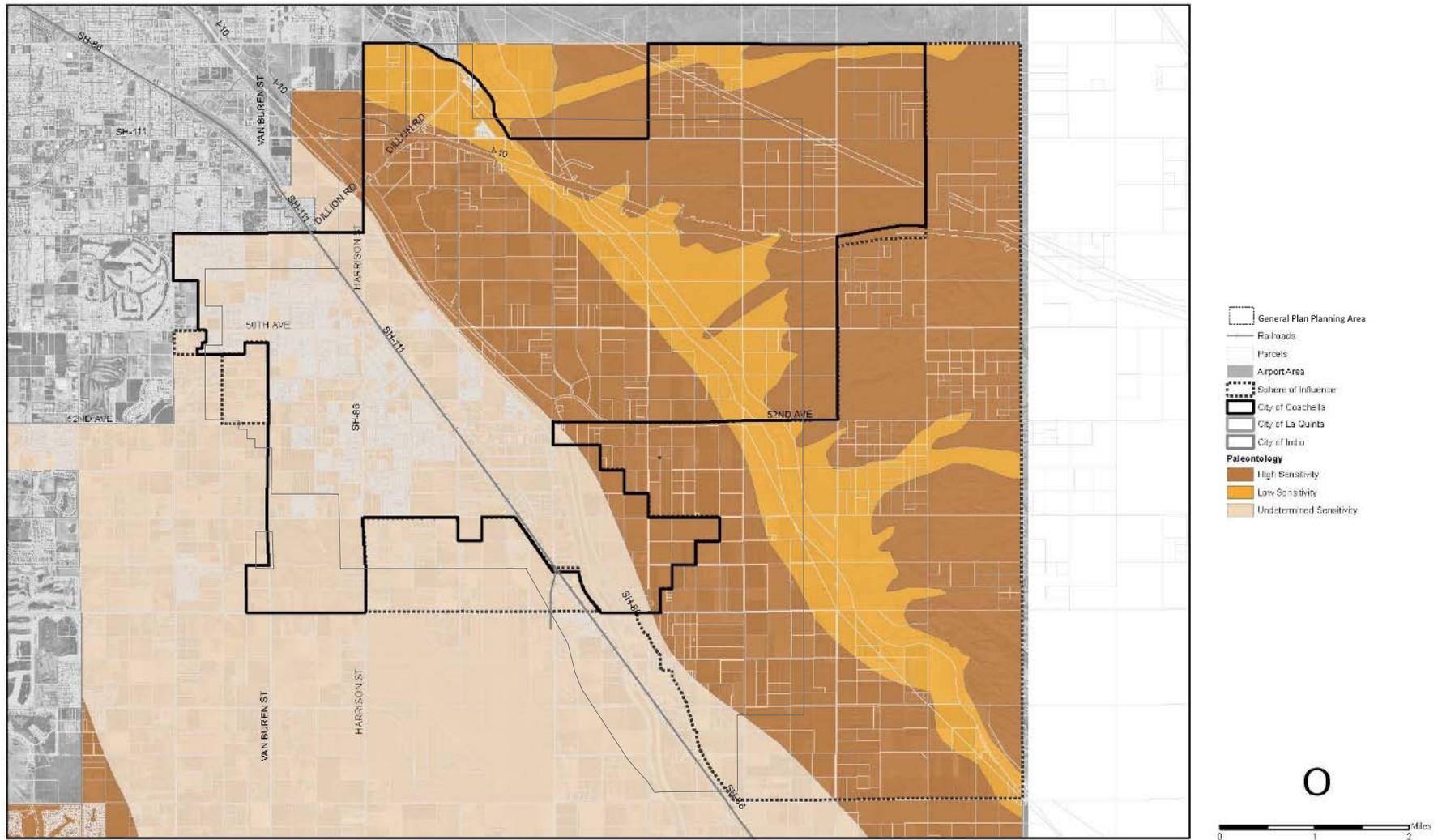
<sup>7</sup> Paleontological Sensitivity for the City of Coachella, Riverside County Geographic Information System, <http://www3.tlma.co.riverside.ca.us/pa/rclis/index.html>.

Figure 4.4-2: Historic Resource Sensitivity



Source Files: Sphere\_of\_Influence\_06.dwg; City\_bdry\_line\_07; City\_of\_Indio\_bdry; City\_of\_La\_Quinta\_bdry; Airport\_bdry; Parcel\_Assessor\_View; railroads\_Coachella; and Streets\_07.

Figure 4.4-3: Paleontological Resource Sensitivity



Source Files: Sphere\_of\_Influence\_06\_dissolve; City\_bndy\_line\_07; City\_of\_Indio\_bndy; City\_of\_La\_Quinta\_bndy; Airport\_bndy; Parcel\_Assessor\_View; railroads\_Coachella; and Streets\_07.

## TRIBAL RESOURCES

Two tribes, the Augustine and the Cabazon, have tribal lands located within the Planning Area. Augustine Tribal Land is located within the southwest portion of the Planning Area, generally bordered by 54th Avenue to the north, Van Buren Street to the west, Airport Boulevard to the south, and Harrison Street to the east. Cabazon Tribal Land is located within the western portion of the Planning Area, generally bordered by 48th Street to the north, Harrison Street to the west, 50th Avenue to the south, and Tyler Street to the east. Additionally, Cabazon Tribal Land is located northwest of the Planning Area boundary in the City of Indio and is generally bordered by 44th Avenue to the north, Jackson Street to the west, 48th Avenue to the south, and Harrison Street to the east.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

#### Federal

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was established by the NHPA of 1966, as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s historic resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 36 Section 60.2). The National Register recognizes both historical-period and prehistoric archaeological properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. In the context of the Planning Area of the CGPU, which does not involve any historical-period structures, the following National Register criteria are given as the basis for evaluating archaeological resources.

- To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must meet one or more of the following four established criteria:
- Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- Unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least fifty years old to be eligible for National Register listing (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995).

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a property to convey its significance”<sup>8</sup>. The National Register recognizes seven qualities

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, Washington, DC.. 1995.

that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law passed in 1990 that provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items, such as human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony, to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated Indian tribes.

California Public Resources Code 5097.9.-5097.998 provides protection to Native American historical and cultural resources and sacred sites, prohibits interfering with Native American religion, and identifies the powers and duties of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). It makes the destruction, looting, or vandalizing of archaeological sites on public land a misdemeanor. It also requires notification of discoveries of Native American human remains to the NAHC and provides for treatment and disposition of human remains and associated grave goods.

### **State**

The State implements the NHPA through its statewide comprehensive cultural resources surveys and preservation programs. The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, implements the policies of the NHPA on a statewide level. The OHP also maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the State's jurisdictions.

### **California Register of Historical Resources**

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is “an authoritative listing and guide to be used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the State and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.” (California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1[a]). The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria (California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1[b]). Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places.

To be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, a prehistoric or historical-period property must be significant at the local, State, and/or federal level under one or more of the following criteria:

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- A resource eligible for the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above, and retain enough of its historic character or appearance (integrity) to be

recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reason for its significance. It is possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

- Additionally, the California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:
- California properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward.
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Commission for inclusion on the California Register.
- Other resources that may be nominated to the California Register include:
- Historical resources with a significance rating of Category 3 through 5 (Those properties identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and/or a local jurisdiction register).
- Individual historical resources.
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts.
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an historic preservation overlay zone.

#### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

CEQA is the principal statute governing environmental review of projects occurring in the State. CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed project would have a significant effect on archaeological resources. CEQA is codified at Public Resources Code sec 21000 et seq. As defined in Section 21083.2 of CEQA a “unique” archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site, about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

In addition, the CEQA Guidelines recognize that certain historical resources may also have significance. The Guidelines recognize that a historical resource includes: (1) a resource in the California Register of Historical Resources; (2) a resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g); and (3) any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California by the lead agency, provided the lead agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

If a lead agency determines that an archaeological site is a historical resource, the provisions of Section 21084.1 of CEQA and Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines apply. If an archaeological site does not meet the criteria for a historical resource contained in the CEQA Guidelines, then the site is to be treated in accordance with the provisions of CEQA Section 21083, which is a unique archaeological resource. The CEQA Guidelines note that if an archaeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor a historical resource, the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)(4)).

### **Senate Bill (SB) 18**

Senate Bill 18 (SB 18), which went into effect January 1, 2005, requires local governments (city and county) to consult with Native American tribes before making certain planning decisions and to provide notice to tribes at certain key points in the planning process. The intent is to “provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places” (Governor’s Office of Planning and Research 2005).

The purpose of involving tribes at these early planning stages is to allow consideration of cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy, before individual site-specific, project-level, land use designations are made by a local government. The consultation requirements of SB 18 apply to general plan or specific plan processes proposed on or after March 1, 2005.

According to the Tribal Consultation Guidelines: Supplement to General Plan Guidelines (2005), the following are the contact and notification responsibilities of local governments:

Prior to the adoption or any amendment of a general plan or specific plan, a local government must notify the appropriate tribes (on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission [NAHC]) of the opportunity to conduct consultations for the purpose of preserving, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places located on land within the local government’s jurisdiction that is affected by the proposed plan adoption or amendment. Tribes have 90 days from the date on which they receive notification to request consultation, unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe (Government Code § 65352.3).

Prior to the adoption or substantial amendment of a general plan or specific plan, a local government must refer the proposed action to those tribes that are on the NAHC contact list and have traditional lands located within the city or county’s jurisdiction. The referral must allow a 45-day comment period (Government Code § 65352). Notice must be sent regardless of whether prior consultation has taken place. Such notice does not initiate a new consultation process.

Local government must send a notice of a public hearing, at least 10 days prior to the hearing, to tribes who have filed a written request for such notice (Government Code § 65092).

The Planning Area covers some Native American Tribal land and is affected by SB 18. Creation and implementation of then CGPU requires early consultation with the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians whose land is located in the southwest, northeast and eastern parts of the Planning Area. Coordination with Tribal Community Officials will allow for the proper conservation and planning for the protected land occupied by local Native Americans.

## Local

The *City of Coachella Municipal Code* Chapter 15.48, Historic Districts and Sites, was “adopted pursuant to the authority of Government Code Section 37361 for the purpose of preserving areas and specific buildings of the City which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, architectural and archaeological history” . This chapter is intended to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of specific buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens.

Section 15.48.190 of the *City of Coachella Municipal Code* prohibits persons from undertaking any of the following actions within or upon a class 1 historic site without a certificate of approval from the planning commission:

- (A) Construction of a new structure.
- (B) The moving, demolition or alteration of an existing structure in any manner which affects the exterior appearance of the structure.
- (C) A change in land use which affects the exterior appearance of a structure or the interior arrangement of public buildings.
- (D) The erection, remodeling or replacing of a sign which affects the exterior appearance of a structure.

## PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Federal

A variety of federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources. They are generally applicable to a project if that project includes federally owned or managed lands or involves a federal agency license, permit, approval, or funding. Federal legislative protection for paleontological resources stems from the Antiquities Act of 1906 (PL 59-209; 16 United States Code 431 *et. seq.*; 34 Stat. 225), which calls for protection of historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on federal lands. This federal statute is not applicable on private or other agency lands (e.g., City, State or County land).

### State

Paleontological resources are also afforded protection by environmental legislation set forth under CEQA. Appendix G (Part V) of the CEQA Guidelines provides guidance relative to significant impacts on paleontological resources, stating that a project will normally result in a significant impact on the environment if it will “...disrupt or adversely affect a paleontologic resource or site or unique geologic feature, except as part of a scientific study.” Section 5097.5 of the Public Resources Code specifies that any unauthorized removal of paleontological remains is a misdemeanor. Further, the California Penal Code Section 622.5 sets the penalties for the damage or removal of paleontological resources.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Impacts of significance will be determined from both short and long term effects of cultural resources under the full implementation of the CGPU. Short term effects are considered temporary and would occur during development phases, long term effects will last beyond initial development stages, and last throughout the timeline of the CGPU. In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines the project would have a significant effect if it would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource [inclusive of archaeological resources] which is either listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources, or a local register of historic resources.
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resources (i.e., an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest or best available example of its type, or is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person).
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.
- Directly or indirectly destroys a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

## HISTORICAL RESOURCES

*Impact 4.4-1: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource which is either listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources, or a local register of historic resources?*

### **Significance: Less than significant.**

Development under the CGPU will occur around historically significant resources within the Planning Area. Without proper mitigation or protection of these resources, the CGPU implementation could result in damage or loss of historically resources that are part of the historical development and use of the Planning Area. These finite resources provide local importance of knowledge of historical events, buildings and culture.

Based on Eastern Information Center (EIC), there are 176 historical resources in the Planning Area and over 159 archeological resources spread throughout the Planning Area. Many of the 300 plus cultural resources consist of prehistoric habitation sites, trails, historic residential sites, mining sites, and architecturally significant structures. All but one eligible historical or archeological resource has not been formally designated by any state or national register, but many sites are considered eligible for formal designation. The only registered historical resource is the Coachella Valley Water Building District, a Historical Landmark along Highway 111 and Grapefruit Boulevard.

Based on the City of Coachella General Plan 2020 EIR, there is a high sensitivity area of historical sites within Sub-Area 2 and the Northeast corner of Sub-Area 5. These highly sensitive lands make up one square mile of the entire Planning Area and are planned for residential or suburban retail land uses under the CGPU. The west side of the Coachella Canal is considered medium sensitive for having historic (non-Indian) resources, where the eastern side of the Coachella Canal is considered a low sensitivity area for historic resources.

Archeological resources are located throughout the entire Planning Area. Over 159 archeological surveys have discovered remnants from earlier settlements. As population and development increase under the CGPU, development may result in discovery of archeological sites or artifacts. In past events where archaeological findings have occurred, reports and mitigation measures were carried out with consultation from the Native American Heritage Commission to determine significance of findings. The archaeological resources would then be preserved on site, or relocated. This practice is to be continued as development occurs under the CGPU, to ensure preservation and protection of the finite cultural resources within the Planning Area.

Due to the abundance of cultural resources, the City of Coachella has an existing ordinance (section 15.98.190) to prevent destruction or impact on Class 1 historical resources. Historic resources within the City are protected through Federal and State codes that prevent the removal or destruction of any historic resources covering the Planning Area. These existing regulations provide a framework for preventing impacts to historic resources through preventing removal or destruction of resources without first assessing the value of the resource and documenting its attributes for the historical record. Summaries of these regulations can be found on page 4.4-12 of this section. In addition to the existing regulations, policies in the CGPU further emphasize and ensure development under the CGPU follows the regulatory framework in place and adhere to policies of the CGPU. The following policies found in the Sustainability + Natural Environment Element address preservation of historical resources.

- 12.1 **Tribal coordination.** Require notification of California Native American tribes and organizations of proposed projects that have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources.
- 12.3 **Preservation of historic resources.** Where practical, encourage the preservation of historic resources.
- 12.4 **Document historic resources.** When it is not practical to preserve a historic resource, require the architectural details and design elements of historic structures to be preserved during renovations and remodels.

As development occurs under the CGPU, projects are required to comply with the existing regulations that are currently in place to protect historic resources as well as the above policies proposed by the CGPU. If new projects do not comply with existing regulations and the proposed CGPU policies, the projects cannot be approved. Because of the existing laws and regulations, and the protection of the CGPU policies, impacts to historic resources would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are necessary.

## UNIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

*Impact 4.4-2: Would the Project Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resources (i.e., an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest or best available example of its type, or is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person)?*

### **Significance: Less than significant.**

The Planning Area contains a significant amount of archeological resources due to its rich history and historic settlements within the Planning Area. The City of Coachella has an extensive past and present Native American population. The Planning Area was once the site of Native American land and some tribal land still exists within the Planning Area. This unique feature of Coachella is an asset to the City's history and preservation of archaeological resources is important to historic and archeological preservation. The Mecca Hills, Thermal Canyon, and washes north of Thermal canyon have sites of archeologically significant trails, mining sites, and other artifacts from previous settlements. Possible sites are also located along land west of the Whitewater River, and within the Downtown core of the City.

Another archaeological feature that is prevalent in the Planning Area are human remains. Human remains, including cemeteries and tribal burial sites, do exist within the Planning Area. Considering the history of the Coachella Valley, there is potential for discovery of human remains under the implementation of the CGPU. The City falls under the regulation of the Native American Graves Protection and Registration Act that requires return of Native American cultural items to be returned to affiliated Indian tribes, and the California Public Resources Code 5097.9-5097.998 that prohibits interference with archeological and interference with Native American resources or sites. In response to the unique archaeological findings, and potential future findings, in the Planning Area, a number of regulations have been put in place to protect these resources.

The exact location of archaeological resources on Tribal Lands would require a Sacred Lands Search through the Native American Heritage Commission. The information from Sacred Lands Search would identify potential locations for cultural resources, but not disclose or confirm the types of cultural resources of the land. Additionally, the Sacred Lands Search also withholds this information to protect resources from unlawful extraction, as there is a market demand for historic California resources. For this reason, the Sacred Lands Search was not used to assess cultural resource locations for the DEIR as pre-determined identification of cultural resources may place artifacts at risk of unlawful and undocumented removal of cultural resources.

Additionally, State regulations currently protect against impacts to unique archaeological resources. These regulations currently serve to protect and preserve archaeological resources that might be found in the Planning Area. A summary of these regulations can be found on page 4.4-12 of this section and prevents removal or destruction of paleontological resources without documentation or preservation of such findings, or without determination of a resource being worthy of preservation. In addition to state policy, the CGPU have also recognized the need for protecting and preventing the disturbance of Unique Archeological features. Both state and CGPU policies require any findings of archeological sites or objects should be reported immediately. The CGPU also stipulates that any human remain discoveries be registered and handled in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and

Registration Act. The following policies from the Sustainability + Natural Environment address protection and preservation of archaeological resources found within the Planning Area.

- 10.3 **Archaeological resource preservation.** Preserve important archaeological and paleontological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.
- 10.4 **Mitigation and preservation of cultural resources.** Require development to avoid archaeological and paleontological resources, whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to the resources.
- 10.5 **Grading.** Require that proposed projects that involve a significant amount of grading shall have an archaeological and paleontological survey conducted before construction.

The existing regulations provide a framework for protection of archeological resources within the Planning Area. To supplement existing regulations, the CGPU provides additional policies to further enforce the protection of archaeological resources. These policies will provide decision makers additional tools to ensure the preservation and proper handling of unique archeological resources should any be discovered during the course of development. The CGPU requires the preservation of archaeological resources, and requires development to implement strategies to protect or reduce impacts on archaeological resources. A project or development that does not comply with the existing regulations and CGPU policies would not be granted permits for development. Based upon the regulatory setting that decision makers would use in the development review stages of a project and the proposed CPGU policies, implementation of the CGPU, impacts on unique archeological resources would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are necessary.

## **PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

*Impact 4.4-3: Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?*

***Significance: Less than significant.***

Paleontological resources are a cultural resource within the Planning Area. Loss of paleontological resources, that is caused by development and grading in most cases, would forever wipe out a cultural resource for the community.

The western and southern portion of the Planning Area have a low sensitivity, or probability, for having paleontological resources. The eastern portion of the Planning Area has high sensitivity for occurrence of paleontological resources. Existing regulations protecting paleontological resources in the Planning Area are in place and prevent the removal or destruction of any resource without presenting the findings and restricting and preserving the resources, or determination of resources not being worthy of reporting. The existing regulations, found on page 4.4-12, are also supported by CGPU Land Use designations and policies. Much of the eastern portion of the Planning Area where there is high sensitivity of paleontological resources is proposed for open space and preservation under the CGPU. Restrictions ranging from very limited to no development in the eastern portion of the Planning Area

would also prevent negative impacts on paleontological resources often brought about by development. As for the lower sensitivity areas within the Planning Area, and areas that cannot be determined to have paleontological resources, are in subareas of the Planning Area where development currently exists. To provide more regulatory support, and better ensure the proper treatment and protection of paleontological resources wherever they may occur in the Planning Area, the following policies from the Sustainability + Natural Environment Element of the CGPU provide regulatory framework:

- 10.3 **Archaeological resource preservation.** Preserve important archaeological and paleontological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.
- 10.4 **Mitigation and preservation of cultural resources.** Require development to avoid archaeological and paleontological resources, whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to the resources.
- 10.5 **Grading.** Require that proposed projects that involve a significant amount of grading shall have an archaeological and paleontological survey conducted before construction.
- 12.6 **Paleontological resources.** Require any paleontological artifacts found within the City or Sphere of Influence be reported to the City and temporarily loaned to local museums like the Western Science Center for Archaeology and Paleontology, in Hemet, CA.

The regulations covering the Planning Area that protect paleontological resources serve as the foundation for reducing impacts to these resources and proposed projects in the Planning Area would be required to comply with the existing regulations in order to obtain development permits. Additionally, projects proposed in the Planning Area would also need to comply with CGPU policies and guidelines in order to be granted permits. Failure to follow regulations and CGPU guidelines and policies would result in permits not being granted. It is the combined regulations that will be used in the development permit review stage where decision makers can conduct site-by-site analysis of any negative paleontological impacts from development. Because of this regulatory framework protecting paleontological resources as well as CGPU land use designations in the eastern portion being reserved for open space, negative impacts are considered less than significant.

## HUMAN REMAINS

*Impact 4.4-4: Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

### **Significance: Less than significant with Mitigation.**

Existing paleontological resources within the Planning Area include fossilized remains of plants and animals and the generation of rock types in the geology of the Planning Area. Human remains are determined to be non-renewable remains or resources of past land activity, and are categorized based on their sensitivity from human impacts, into high and low sensitivity. Areas of low paleontological sensitivity within the Planning Area are the Ocotillo Conglomerate located in North of the Mecca Hills, and the Recent (Holocene) Alluvium located in the east side of the Planning Area at the hill base. The location of these formations is located in an area that is not planned for development under the CGPU. The Mecca Hills, and hill bases, are to have little to no development along the timeline of the CGPU, and are to be preserved while development will increase in the western portion of the City.

There is potential for human remains to occur on Tribal Lands. The exact location of human remains on Tribal Lands would require a Sacred Lands Search through the Native American Heritage Commission. The information from Sacred Lands Search would identify potential locations for cultural resources, but not disclose or confirm the types of cultural resources of the land. Additionally, the Sacred Lands Search also withholds this information to protect resources from unlawful extraction, as there is a market demand for historic California resources. For this reason, the Sacred Lands Search was not used to assess cultural resource locations for the DEIR as pre-determined identification of cultural resources may place artifacts at risk of unlawful and undocumented removal of cultural resources.

Additionally, existing regulations protecting human remains in the Planning Area are in place and prevent the removal or destruction of any resource without presenting the findings, or determination of resources not being worthy of reporting. These regulations, found on page 4.4-12 of this section, currently protect and preserve human remains in the Planning Area, and would reduce negative impacts from development in the Planning Area. The CGPU does address the paleontological importance of the Planning Area and has policies to provide more protection for the discovery or any existing paleontological resources to preserve, store, or re-locate resources as needed to reduce impact on such finite resources. The following policies from the CGPU found in the Sustainability + Natural Environment Element aim for the protection of paleontological resources.

- 10.3 **Archaeological resource preservation.** Preserve important archaeological and paleontological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.
- 10.4 **Mitigation and preservation of cultural resources.** Require development to avoid archaeological and paleontological resources, whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to the resources.
- 10.5 **Grading.** Require that proposed projects that involve a significant amount of grading shall have an archaeological and paleontological survey conducted before construction.
- 12.5 **Discovery of human remains.** Require that any human remains discovered during implementation of public and private projects within the City be treated with respect and dignity and fully comply with the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and other appropriate laws.
- 12.6 **Paleontological resources.** Require any paleontological artifacts found within the City or Sphere of Influence be reported to the City and temporarily loaned to local museums like the Western Science Center for Archaeology and Paleontology, in Hemet, CA.

The existing regulations preserving and protecting human remains in the Planning Area serve as a foundation for development restrictions. Additionally, the CGPU proposes multiple development policies to reduce impacts on cultural resources, including human resources and develop around these resources or develop with proper oversight in case any resources are discovered. In the event of the discovery of human remains, policies proposed in the CGPU advise any discovery of paleontological resources to be documented and handled in accordance with state law and with enough care to preserve resources in the original condition they were founded. However, these policies were found not to be significant to reduce impacts on human remains to a level of less than significant. To reduce impacts to a level of less than significance, mitigation measures will be needed. Based on

environmental review, impacts from the CGPU to human resources are considered less than significant with mitigation.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Prior to adoption of the Final EIR and CGPU, update CGPU add policy the following policy to Chapter 7: In areas where there is a high chance that human remains may be present, require proposed projects to conduct survey to establish occurrence of human remains, if any. If human remains are discovered on proposed project sites, the project must implement mitigation measures to prevent impacts to human remains in order to receive permit approval.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

The Planning Area is located within a diverse area of cultural resources, making for strategic planning efforts to regulate preservation of such resources. Because the proposed project is a General Plan Update, which takes into account existing and potential development over approximately the next twenty years, the analysis of cultural resource-related impacts contained within this chapter of the EIR is already cumulative in nature. There are a number of sensitive areas and potential impacts under the development of the CGPU. Combined impacts on historical, paleontological, archaeological and human remains could result in a negative impact on the combined cultural resources within the Planning Area.

Although there are potential cumulative impacts under the CGPU, there are equally as many regulatory strategies to preserve the finite cultural resources within the Planning Area. Through a combination of the development review process, the regulatory strength of the CGPU, and land development strategies and policies within the CGPU, the proposed project is structured to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources. As development occurs under the CGPU to full implementation, following the development strategies and implementing the policies of the CGPU will reduce cumulative impacts. Potential cumulative impacts are mitigated by federal, state, regional, and local actions regulates and policies. Based on the impact analysis and regulatory framework, cumulative impacts on cultural resources under the CGPU would be less than significant.

## **SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS**

Based on the above impact analysis and cumulative impact assessment, no significant and unavoidable impacts on cultural resources are expected.

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