



STAFF REPORT
7/26/2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment No. 23-03 and Environmental Assessment No. 23-03 “General Plan Addendum Project” Establishment of General Plan land use designations for three areas that were evaluated as part of the City of Coachella General Plan Planning Area in the certified 2015 Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) but for which no General Plan land use designation was identified. The three areas include: (1) the area generally bounded by Dillon Road to the west, Fargo Canyon to the north, parcel boundaries to the east, and East Side Dike to the southeast (Northern Project Area); (2) the area generally bounded by Jackson Street on the west, approximately 0.25 mile north of 51st Avenue on the north, Calhoun Street on the east, and 52nd Avenue on the south (Western Project Area); and (3) the area generally bounded by State Route 86 (SR-86) to the west, Avenue 60 to the north, Lincoln Street to the east, and 62nd Avenue to the south (Southern Project Area). (Applicant: City-Initiated)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2023-49 adopting an addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR), finding and determining that additional environmental review is not required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162.
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2023-50 approving General Plan Amendment No. 23-02 including text modifications to Chapter 4 Land Use and Community Character Element and a change to Figure 4-23 of the General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element, entitled “General Plan Designation Map.”

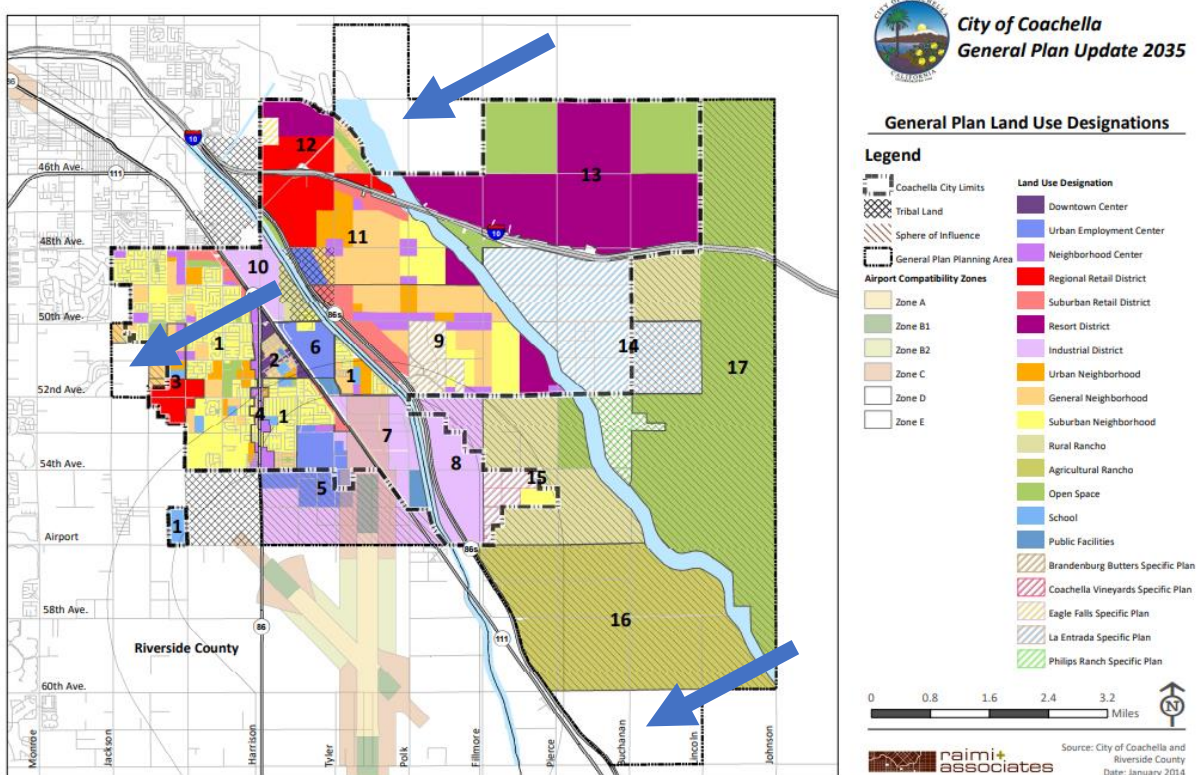
BACKGROUND:

The City Council adopted the Coachella General Plan 2035 on April 22, 2015, that established the goals, policies, and implementation strategies that will implement the vision for the City of Coachella along with the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The General Plan 2035 also included a new adopted General Plan Land Use Map, which included the establishment of new General Plan Land Use designations for land within the City and within the Planning Area of the City of Coachella. Government Code 65300 requires that every city and county adopt “a comprehensive, long-term general plan” and the general plan must cover a city’s planning area.

The Planning Area of the General Plan is the territory within the boundaries of the City as well as any land outside its boundaries, which the City determines is related to its future planning. The State of California General Plan 2017 Guidelines state that when establishing a planning area, that each city should consider using its sphere of influence as a starting point and build off of that area. The Coachella General Plan Update established a Planning Area beyond its sphere of influence into unincorporated areas of Riverside County. General Plan land use designations were established for the existing sphere of influence areas of the City, but not for the planning areas outside the sphere of influence.

The Planning Division engaged the professional services of Raimi + Associates to assist in preparation of General Plan land use designations for the Planning Areas outside of the City of Coachella sphere of influence (see figure 1) that includes (1) the area generally bounded by Dillon Road to the west, Fargo Canyon to the north, parcel boundaries to the east, and East Side Dike to the southeast (Northern Project Area); (2) the area generally bounded by Jackson Street on the west, approximately 0.25 mile north of 51st Avenue on the north, Calhoun Street on the east, and 52nd Avenue on the south (Western Project Area); and (3) the area generally bounded by State Route 86 (SR-86) to the west, Avenue 60 to the north, Lincoln Street to the east, and 62nd Avenue to the south (Southern Project Area). Establishing general plan land use designation for these areas would be consistent with the City’s past practice in previous general plan updates of establishing general plan land uses for the entirety of the City’s Planning Area. Adopting the general plan land use designations for these areas would allow the City to amend its sphere of influence with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the agency that regulates local public agency boundaries. LAFCO requires cities to establish general plan land use designations as a prerequisite for areas proposed for sphere of influence amendments. Currently, the P7 Western Project Area and Southern Project Area are in no other city sphere of influence.

Figure 1: General Plan Map identifying Planning Areas with no general plan land use



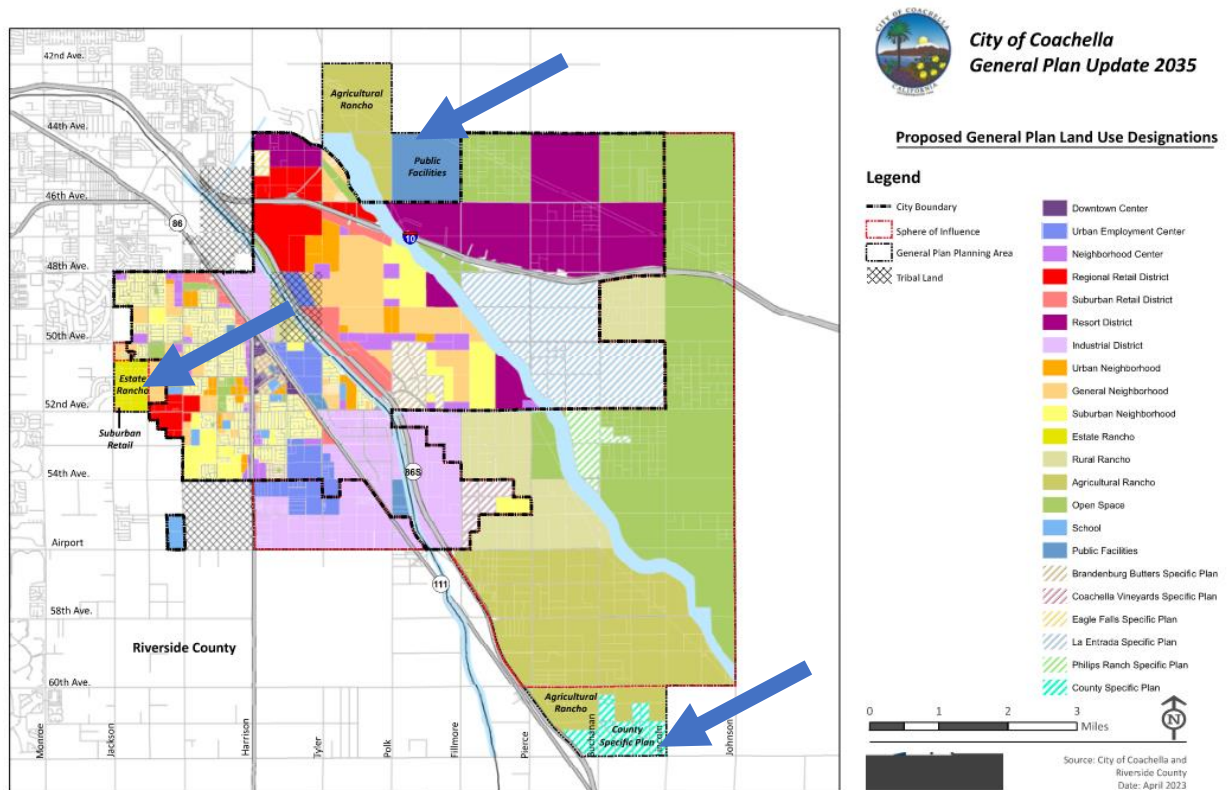
The Planning Commission at their regular meeting of June 21, 2023 considered General Plan Amendment No. 23-03 and Environmental Assessment No. 23-03 and recommended a continuance to July 5, 2023 to ensure the project approvals and the EIR addendum address removal of General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element Policy 1.2 regarding annexations. Policy 1.2 allows the annexation of new land into the City when at least 60 percent of the land within the city limits is built with urban uses or permanently preserved open space. The General Plan Land Use Element would retain Policies 1.1 and 1.3 through 1.7, which would continue to support growth in a sustainable and orderly manner. Policy 1.1 requires establishing city limits that allow for realistic growth, while Policy 1.5 requires that all development and policy decisions conform to the vision and policies for that planning area.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

General Plan Updates

The General Plan land uses identified for the three subject planning areas are existing City of Coachella general plan land uses that are most closely align with the existing Riverside County General Plan land use designations. Figure 2 identifies the proposed general plan land use designations for the Northern, Western and Southern project areas.

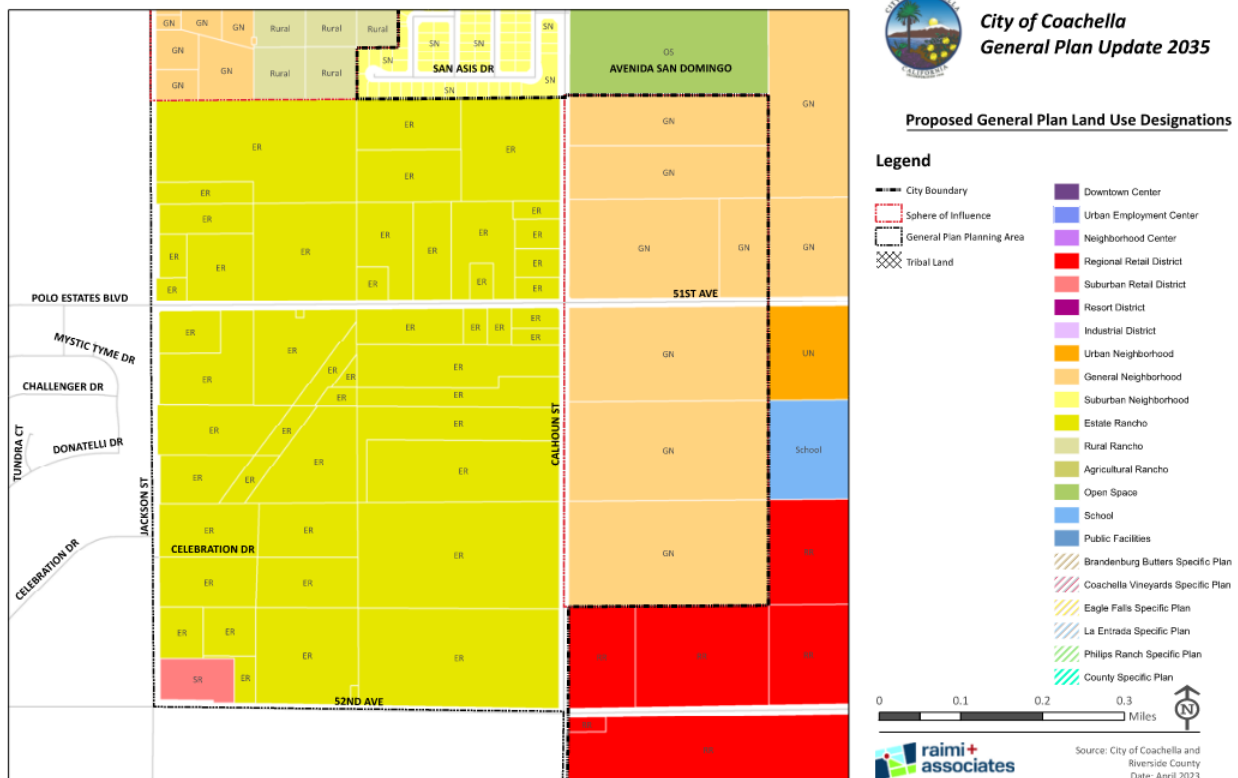
Figure 2: City of Coachella proposed amendment to General Plan Map identifying a General Plan land use for undesignated planning areas



Western Project Area

The Western project area, also known as P7 by LAFCO, is predominately Estate Density Residential (EDR) in the Riverside County General Plan Map, which allows for a residential density of 0.2-0.5 dwelling units an acre. Allowed uses for this land use designation include detached single-family homes, limited agriculture and animal keeping. The parcel at the northeast corner of Jackson Street and Avenue 52 is the location of Forest Lawn CV business and has a land use designation of Commercial Retail (CR). The Commercial Retail (CR) land use has a Floor Area Ratio requirement of 0.2-0.35 and allows local and regional serving retail uses. Planning staff recommends that a new General Plan land use designation, Estate Rancho, be established for this area for consistency with the County’s Estate Density Residential general plan designation. An Estate Rancho land use designation would allow for a residential density of 1.0-2.2 dwelling units an acre and would allow for single-family dwellings, limited agriculture, and animal keeping under the consistent (R-E) Residential Estate zoning district. Establishment of the Estate Rancho designation would involve inclusion of the new land use on the Official City of Coachella General Plan map and within the text of the General Plan Update 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element. The R-E zone allows clubs and lodges, golf courses, and schools with approval of a conditional use permit. Planning staff also recommend that the City’s Suburban Retail general plan land use designation be applied to the Forest Lawn CV parcel with a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 and allows a range of local and regional serving retail uses with the consistent General Commercial zoning district.

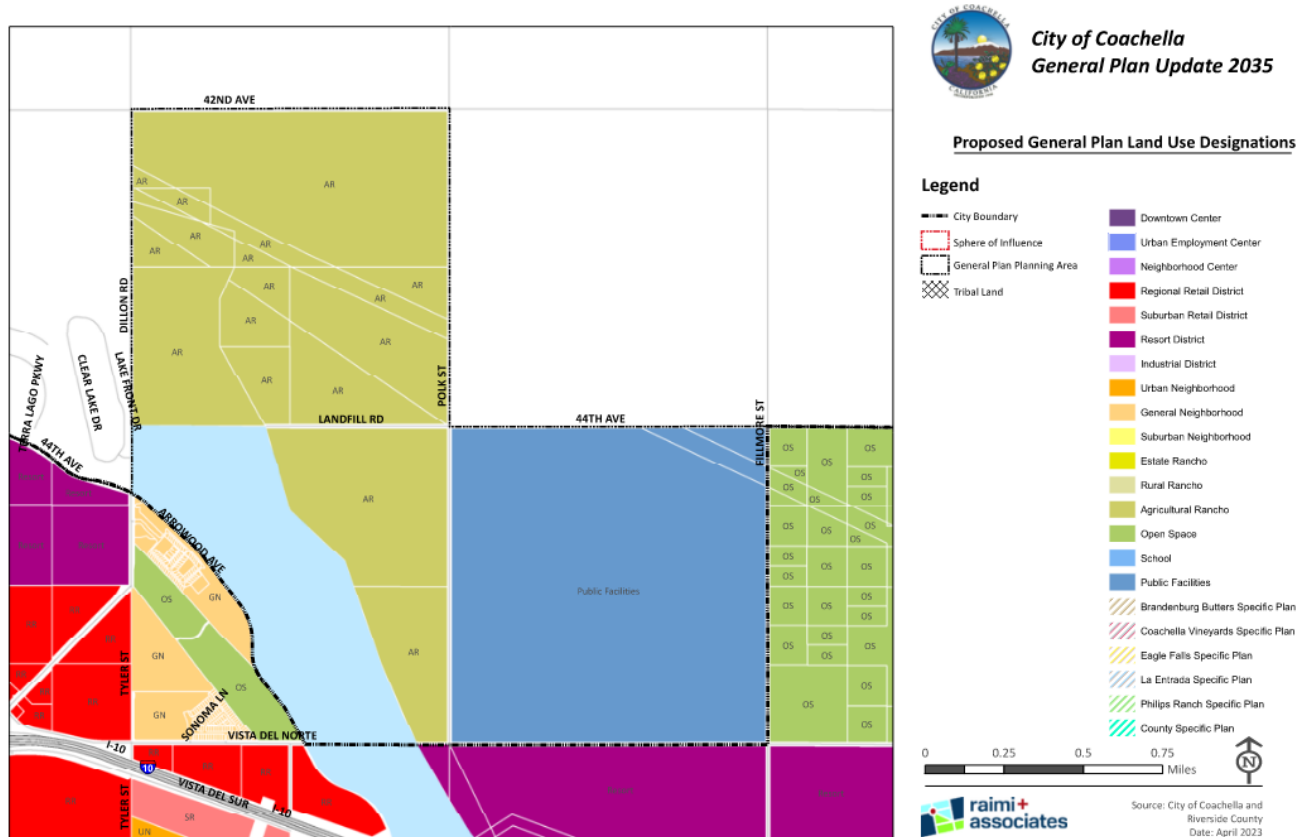
Figure 3: Proposed City of Coachella General Plan Land Use for Western Project Area (P7)



Northern Project Area

The Northern project area is predominately Open Space Rural (OS-RUR) and Public Facilities (PF) in the Riverside County General Plan Map. The Open Space Rural (OS-RUR) land use allows for a residential density of .05 dwelling units an acre and allows single family residences and limited mineral resource extraction. The Public Facilities (PF) land use allows a floor area equal of greater than .06 and allows civic uses and school. The area of the Public Facilities designation is the location of the Coachella Valley Transfer Station. Planning staff recommends that the City’s Agricultural Rancho general plan land use be applied to the areas with the Open Space Rural County general plan land use designation, as staff believes this most closely aligns with the County general plan land use designation. Agricultural Rancho allows for a residential density of .025 dwelling units an acre or 1 unit/parcel, whichever is smaller. This designation also would allow for primarily agricultural uses and parks under the corresponding (A-R) Agricultural Reserve zoning district.

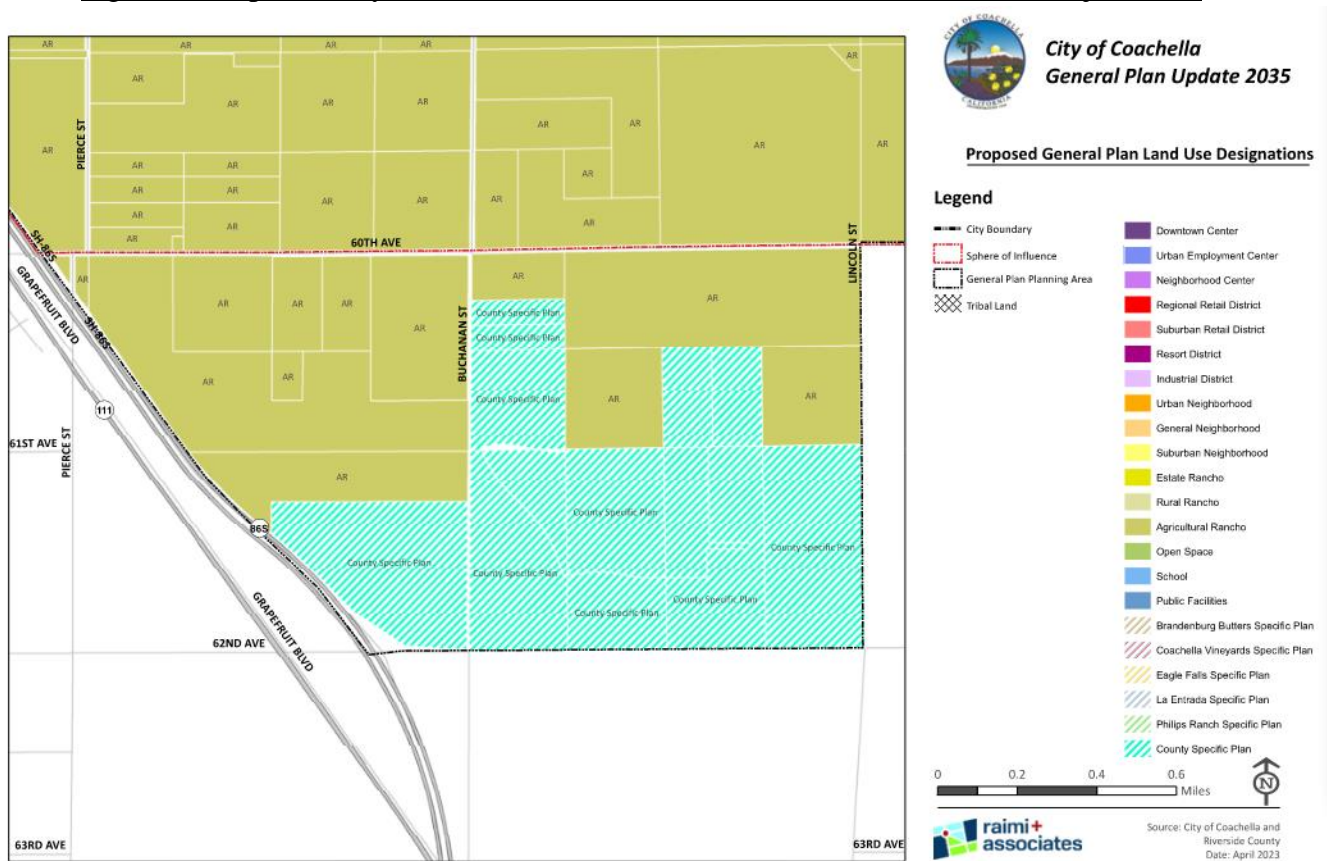
Figure 4: Proposed City of Coachella General Plan Land Use for Northern Project Area



Southern Project Area

The Southern project area is predominately Agriculture (AG) in the Riverside County General Plan Map and land uses associated with the Panorama Specific Plan, which was a master planned development plan to support the future development of the College of the Desert East Valley Campus. County land uses in the Panorama Specific Plan include Open Space Recreation, Medium High Density Residential, Very High Density Residential, Commercial Retail, Commercial Office, and Public Facilities. The Agriculture land use allows for a maximum residential density of 0.1 dwelling units an acre and allows agricultural uses and single-family residences. Planning staff recommends that the City’s Agricultural Rancho general plan land use be applied to the areas with the Agriculture (AG) County land use designation, as staff believes this most closely aligns with the County designation. Agricultural Rancho allows for a residential density of 0.025 dwelling units an acre or 1 unit/parcel, whichever is smaller. Agricultural Rancho allows for a residential density of 0.025 dwelling units an acre or 1 unit/parcel, whichever is smaller. This designation also would allow for primarily agricultural uses and parks under the consistent (A-R) Agricultural Reserve zoning district. Planning staff recommends that the Coachella General Plan identify the Panorama Specific Plan area similar to other approved specific plans in the City limits where the land uses of the specific plans would be applicable.

Figure 5: Proposed City of Coachella General Plan Land Use for Southern Project Area



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City has determined that analyses of project environmental effects are best provided through use of an Addendum and that none of the conditions set forth in Public Resources Code Section 21166 or Section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines requiring preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR have been met. 1) There are no substantial changes to the project that would require major revisions of the certified 2015 Program EIR due to new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in severity of impacts identified in the 2015 Program EIR; 2) Substantial changes have not occurred in the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken that will require major revisions to the certified 2015 Program EIR to disclose new significant environmental effects or that would result in a substantial increase in severity of impacts identified in the 2015 Program EIR; and 3) There is no new information of substantial importance that was not known at the time the 2015 Program EIR was certified, indicating any of the following:

- The project will have one or more new significant effects not discussed in the 2015 Program EIR;
- There are impacts determined to be significant in the 2015 Program EIR that would be substantially more severe;
- There are additional mitigation measures or alternatives to the project that would substantially reduce one or more significant effects identified in the 2015 Program EIR; and
- There are additional mitigation measures or alternatives rejected by the project proponent that are considerably different from those analyzed in the 2015 Program EIR that would substantially reduce a significant impact identified in that EIR.

The complete evaluation of potential environmental effects of the project, including rationale and facts supporting the City's findings, is contained in Chapter 3.0 of the Addendum (Attachment 1).

A comment letter was received by Judy Deertrack before the Planning Commission of July 5, 2023 concerning the proposed EIR addendum. The City Attorney upon review of the comment letter recommended adding language in the addendum that the action before the City is identifying Coachella General Plan land use designations for three areas that were evaluated as part of the General Plan Planning Area in the previously certified EIR pursuant to its authority under section 65302 of the California Government Code and not to amend its sphere of influence or annex any of these areas. Furthermore, text was added to the addendum clarifying that the City of Coachella is also not proposing to remove the County of Riverside continued land use authority over the Northern, Western, and Southern Project Areas with the proposed general plan amendment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no expected fiscal impact of the proposed General Plan Amendments. The General Plan Amendments provide certainty to property owners that are within existing non-designated General Plan planning areas about the expectations for future land use.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. 2023-49 adopting an addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR), finding and determining that additional environmental review is not required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162; Adopt Resolution No. 2023-50 approving General Plan Amendment No. 23-02 including text modifications to Chapter 4 Land Use and Community Character Element and a change to Figure 4-23 of the General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element, entitled “General Plan Designation Map.”
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. 2023-50 adopting an addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report finding and determining that additional environmental review is not required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162; Adopt Resolution No. 2023-50 approving General Plan Amendment No. 23-02 including text modifications to Chapter 4 Land Use and Community Character Element and a change to Figure 4-23 of the General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element, entitled “General Plan Designation Map” *with amendments*.
- 3) Deny Resolution No. 2023-49 and Resolution No. 2023-50.
- 4) Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1 as noted above.

Attachment:

1. Resolution No. 2023-49, EA No. 23-03 Addendum
Exhibit A – Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan (SCH No: 2009021007) for the General Plan Addendum Project
2. Resolution No. 2023-50, General Plan Amendment No. 23-03
Exhibit A – City of Coachella General Plan 2035 GPA No. 23-03 text modifications – Chapter 4 Land Use and Community Character Element
Exhibit B – City of Coachella General Plan Map Amendments (GPA No. 23-03)
3. Existing City of Coachella General Plan Map
4. Western Project Area Proposed Land Use Map (Zoomed In)
5. Northern Project Area Proposed Land Use Map (Zoomed In)
6. Southern Project Area Proposed Land Use Map (Zoomed In)
7. City of Coachella General Plan 2035
<https://www.coachella.org/departments/general-plan-2035>
8. Comment Letter