



STAFF REPORT
11/13/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Annexation request to LAFCO for the Western Annexation Area (Pocket 7 and Mesquite Areas) and Adoption of a Negative Declaration for EA No. 24-02

SPECIFICS: Resolution No. 2024-53 requesting the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission to take proceedings for the annexation of 388 acres of land located south of Avenue 50, north of avenue 52, east of Jackson Street and east and west of Calhoun Street between the cities of Indio and Coachella and Resolution No. 2024-56 Adopting a Negative Declaration for EA No. 24-02.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council open the public hearing and take the following action:

- Adopt Resolution No. 2024-56 approving a Negative Declaration for EA No. 24-02 for the Western Annexation; and
- Adopt Resolution No. 2024-53 requesting the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to take proceedings for the annexation of 388 acres of land located south of Avenue 50, north of avenue 52, east of Jackson Street and east and west of Calhoun Street.

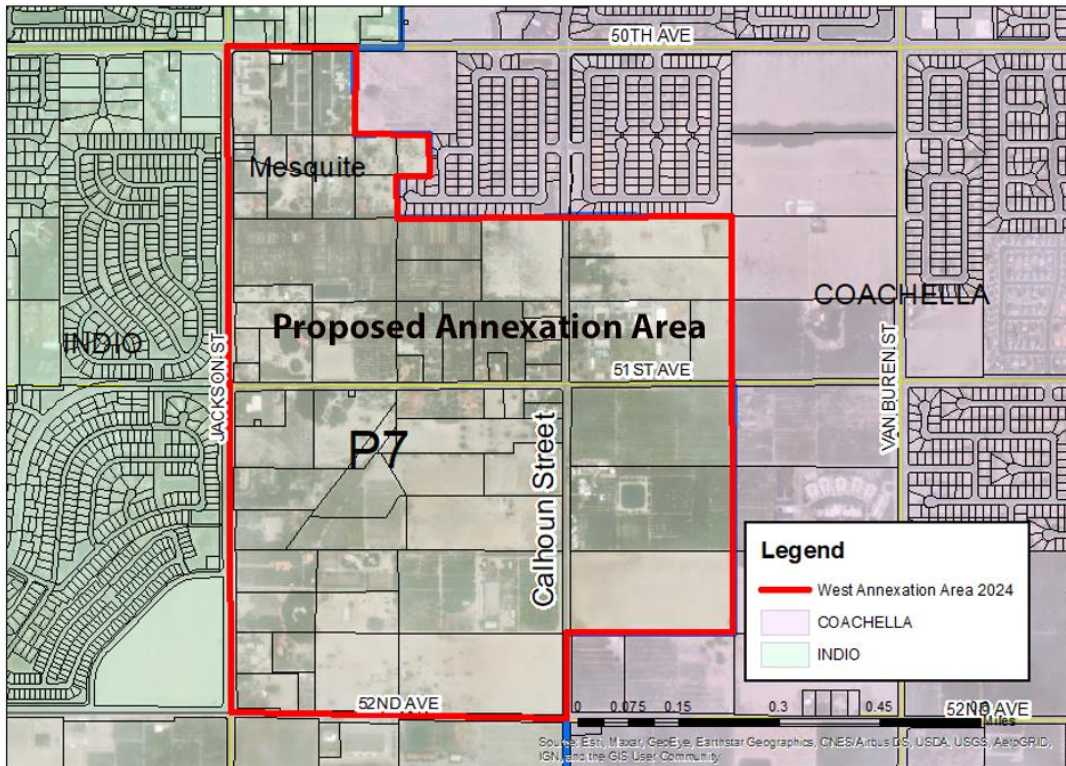
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Coachella has initiated the proposed annexation of the Pocket 7 (P7) and Mesquite areas that comprise approximately 388 acres located south of Avenue 50, north of Avenue 52, east of Jackson Street and east and west of Calhoun Street between the cities of Indio and Coachella as shown on Figure_1. The Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is the decision maker on the proposed annexation. LAFCO requires the City to adopt the resolution and negative declaration that has been prepared as part of the LAFCO application.

The area consists of a combination of vacant properties, agricultural uses, nurseries and single-family homes on large lots. Forest Lawn-Coachella is located at the NE corner of Avenue 52 and Jackson Street. The area also includes the Old Polo Estate and the Rancho 51 Date Garden event facilities. Other commercial uses include the Grand Paw Pet Resort located on Jackson Street and Loving All Animals Pet Adoption Center located on 51st Street, west of Calhoun Street. The

annexation area also includes the Imagine School Riverside County, located at the northeast corner of Avenue 51 and Calhoun. The Coachella Christian Church is located at the SE corner of Avenue 50 and Jackson Street. The project area also includes three parcels that are in Agricultural Preserves as shown on the exhibit below. The City of Indio is located adjacent to the subject area, west of Jackson Street and north of Avenue 50.

Figure 1: Proposed Annexation Area



BACKGROUND:

The above referenced area was added to the City’s General Plan Planning area in 2023 through a General Plan Amendment and the P7 area was added to the City Sphere of Influence by LAFCO in March 2024. Pre-Zoning for P7 was approved by the City Council in October 2024. The Coachella General Plan designates the area as General Neighborhood, Estate Rancho, Rural Rancho and Suburban Retail with corresponding zoning as illustrated on Figure 3.

Discussion/Analysis

Surrounding land uses and zoning designations are as follows:

North: The area immediately north of the proposed annexation area is within the City of Indio and includes existing commercial, residential and agricultural lands. The Indio General Plan includes General Plan Land Use Designations of Suburban Residential-High and Neighborhood Center. The Suburban Residential High Designation allows a density

between 4-8 dwelling units per acre. The Neighborhood Center designation allows retail and commercial uses with a maximum floor area ratio of 0.5 and housing with a maximum density of 20 DU/AC.

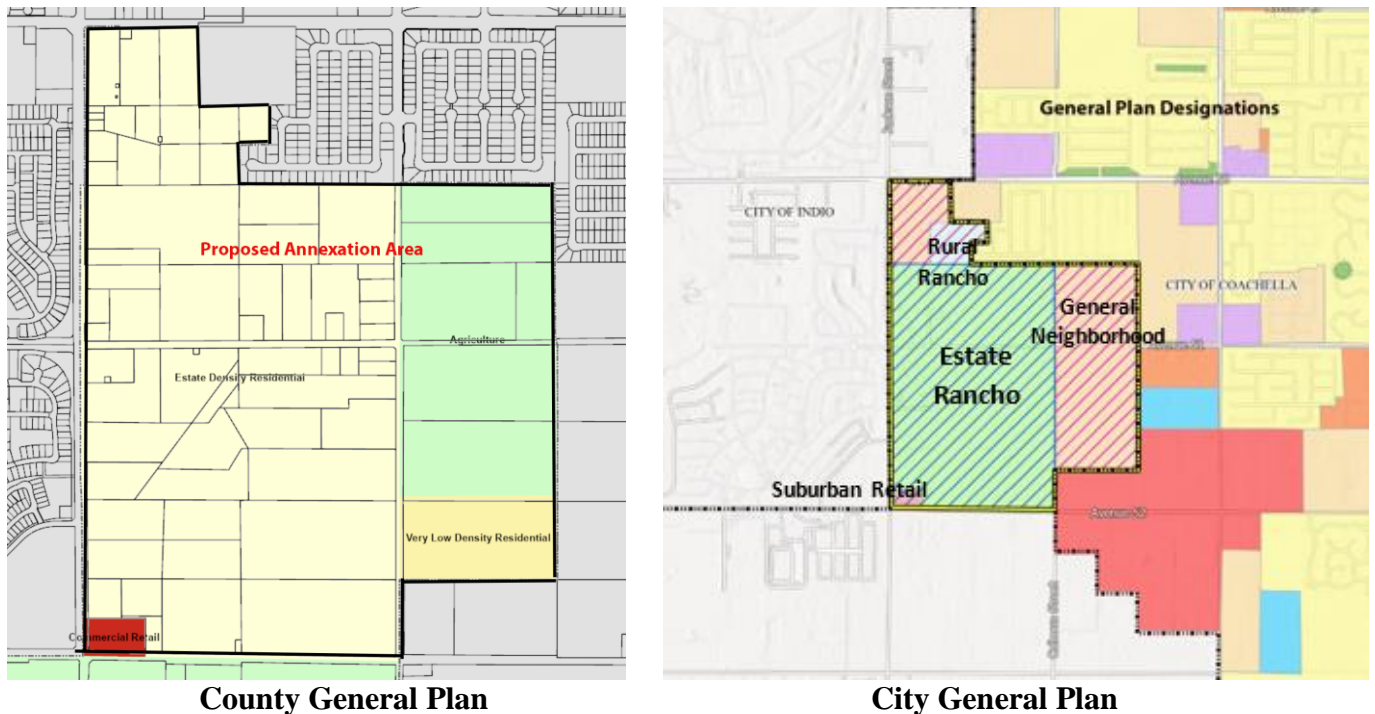
South: South of the subject area is unincorporated Riverside County that includes primarily agricultural lands with a General Plan designation of Agriculture and zoning of A-1-10 and A-1-20. (Light Agriculture-10 acre and 20-acre minimum lot sizes as shown on Figure 4.

East: East of the subject area across Calhoun Street are vacant properties within the unincorporated County. This area includes a City of Coachella General Plan designation and zoning of General Neighborhood.

West: West of the subject area is the City of Indio and includes existing single family residential homes.

Consistency with the Riverside County and City of Coachella General Plans

Figure 2 and 3: County and City General Plan designations



Within Unincorporated Riverside County, General Plan land use designations include Agriculture, Very Low Density Residential, Estate Density Residential and Commercial Retail as shown on Figure 4.

Land use designations within the City of Coachella include General Neighborhood, Rural Rancho, Estate Rancho and the Suburban Retail land use designations. The Estate Rancho designation accommodates low intensity residential development in an estate or low-density suburban format.

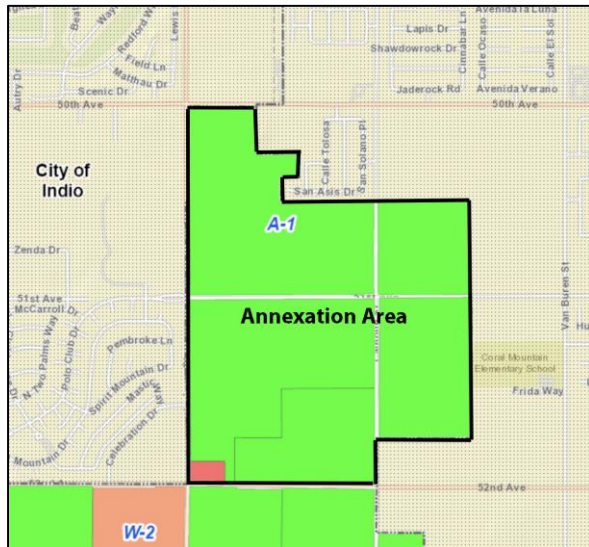
These areas are generally located on the outside edges of the City of Coachella and serve as a transition zone between more dense residential areas and the rural and agricultural landscape surrounding the City. The Estate Rancho land use designation was created in 2023 to match the existing County general plan designation because there was not a direct match for this density. Recent State legislation mandates that if there is a conflict in residential density between the General Plan and zoning, the higher density shall prevail (not necessarily the General Plan). The Estate Rancho designation allows up to 2.2 du/ac (1 unit per 20,000 square feet) while the existing County General Plan designation allows 0.5 du/ac. The City Estate Rancho designation would allow a density of 1.2 to 2 du/ac.

The Suburban Retail designation at the southeast corner of Avenue 52 and Jackson Street is intended to provide a concentration of retail business “large format” retailers in a setting that accommodates the parking requirements of such businesses. Allowed land uses for the Suburban Retail designation primarily include retail and services, sometimes with commercial uses on upper floors with a density of 0.35 to 1.0 FAR. This site currently exists as Forest Lawn-Coachella. The General Neighborhood designation allows residential densities between 8-25 dwelling units per acre and the Rural- Rancho land use designation permits densities between 1-2.5 dwelling units per acre.

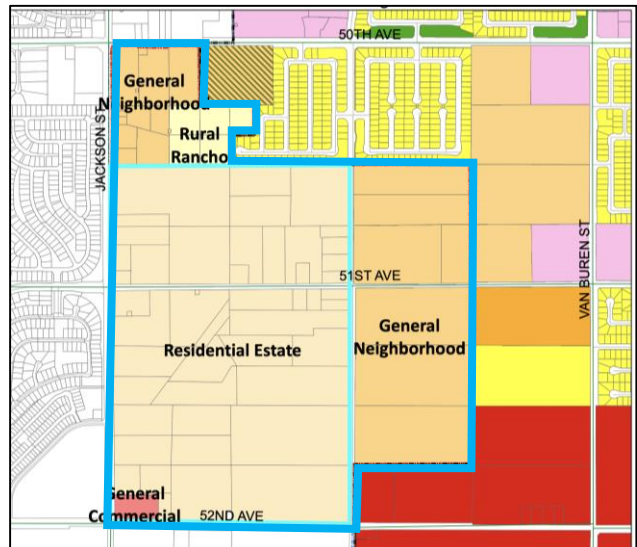
Zoning Consistency

Within unincorporated Riverside County zoning includes A-1, Light Agriculture, and CPS, Scenic Highway Commercial as illustrated on Figure 6. A-1 zoning provides for agricultural and residential land uses on a minimum 20,000 square foot lot size.

Figure 4 and 5: County Zoning and City Pre-Zoning



County Zoning



City Pre-Zoning

Pre-Zoning within the City includes Residential Estate, Rural Rancho, General Neighborhood and General Commercial zoning as shown on Figure 7.

Environmental Analysis

An Initial Study/Environmental Assessment was prepared for the proposed annexation. The initial study determined that there would be no environmental impacts resulting from the proposed annexation. 2 letters were submitted within the 30-day review period that ran from October 9, 2024, through November 8, 2024 and included in Attachment 5 from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and California Department of Conservation. The California Department of Conservation letter identifies a concern of any farmland conversion for land under contract in the Williamson Act program for parcels along Avenue 52. Because the annexation is not proposing any farmland conversion, any future proposed conversion would be analyzed and processed at that time.

Correspondence

The City received one correspondence from a property owner in the Pocket 7 area stating their preference to remain in the unincorporated Riverside County.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City would collect permitting and development impact fees as part of future development within the annexation area. Future development within the annexation area would be subject to the Coachella General Plan and Municipal Code. A fiscal impact analysis was prepared for the proposed annexation in Attachment 3, which concluded that the annexation would be revenue positive for the City. As such the project's long-term fiscal impacts will offset City services.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. 2024-56 (Negative Declaration) and Resolution No 2024-53 (Annexation Initiation).
- 2) Deny Resolutions 2024-56 and 2024-53.
- 3) Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Alternative #1

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 2024-56 Negative Declaration EA No. 24-02 Western Annexation Area Exhibit A – Negative Declaration
2. Resolution No. 2024-53 Annexation Initiation Exhibit A – Annexation Legal Description and Plat Map

3. Fiscal Impact Analysis
4. Plan of Services
5. Correspondence