



**STAFF REPORT**  
**10/13/2021**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Avenue 53 Re-zone Project

- a) Environmental Assessment (EA 21-02) recommending the adoption of a Negative Declaration pursuant to the environmental review guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act.
- b) Change of Zone (CZ 21-02) to change the zone of approximately 50.6 acres of a 118-acre site from Manufacturing Service (M-S) to R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac). The site is located south of Ave 53, north of Ave 54, and west of Tyler St. (APN: 778-390-003, 778-390-004, 778-390-005, and 778-390-007)

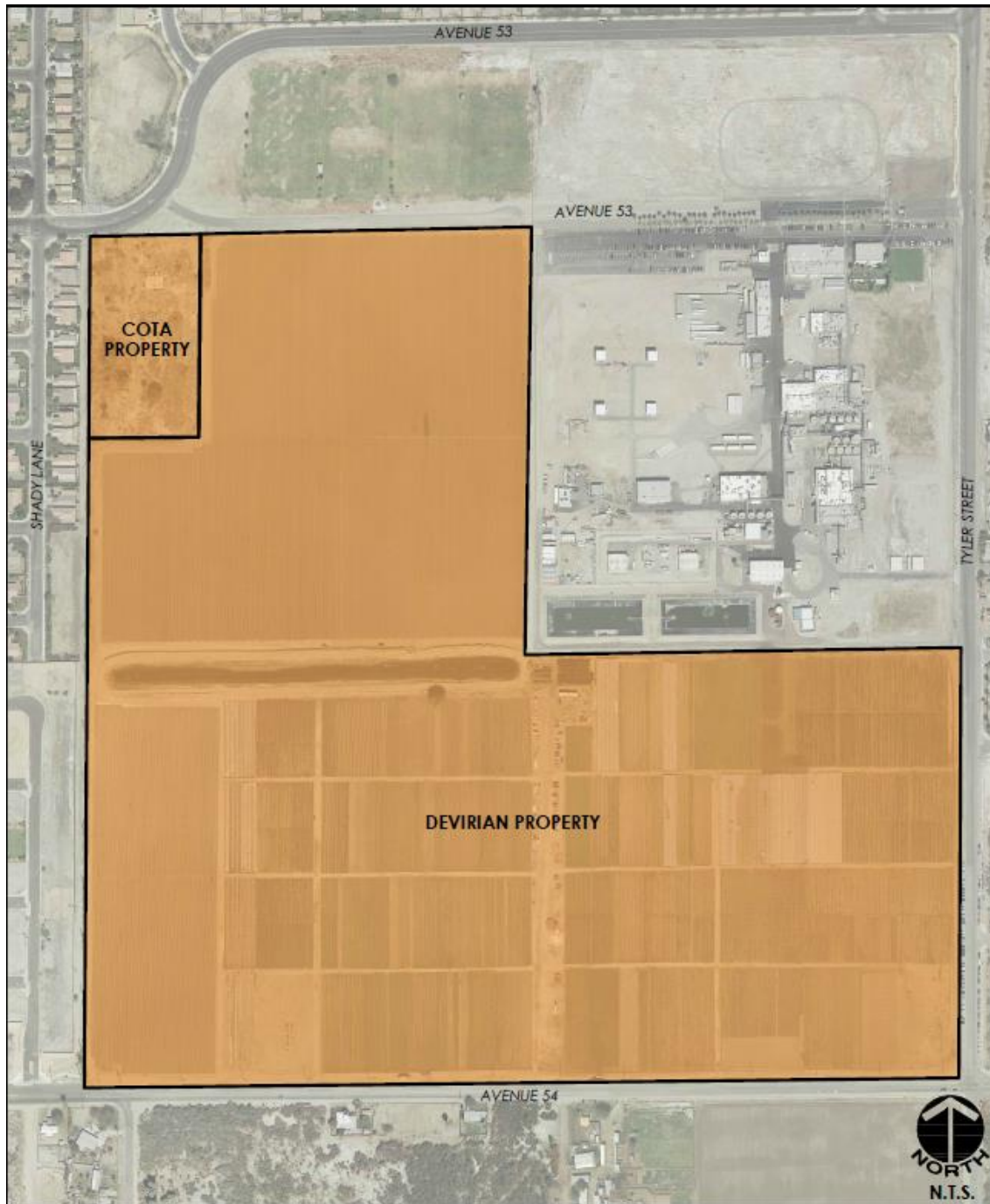
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2021-60 adopting a Negative Declaration, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, and introduce by first reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1187 approving Change of Zone No. 21-02 for the Avenue 53 Re-zone Project.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Avenue 53 Rezoning project ("Project") is located on approximately 118 acres located south of Ave 53, north of Ave 54, and west of Tyler St. (APN: 778-390-003, 778-390-004, 778-390-005, and 778-390-007). The City initiated effort is proposing a Change of Zone from the existing Manufacturing Service (M-S) to R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac). The Change of Zone will help create adequate zoning capacity to meet the City's 5th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), consistent with the adopted Housing Element and General Plan. It will also allow a mixture of housing types available to all residents including market rate housing and affordable housing. The Project proposes a Change of Zone only, no development plans are proposed at this time for the property. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Project on June 16, 2021. The exhibit below shows the project location.



### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The City of Coachella initiated Change of Zone No. 21-02 at the request of the State of California – Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) pursuant to a mandatory re-zoning effort called out in the City’s Housing Element. The Change of Zone’s main purpose is to create additional “development ready” multifamily residential zoning to accommodate the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle carryover which is required to be completed as part of the City’s 2013-2021 Housing Element. Communities use the RHNA in land

use planning, prioritizing local resource allocation, and in deciding how to address identified existing and future housing needs resulting from population, employment, and household growth. The rezoning is anticipated to allow for the development of a maximum of approximately 1,922 dwelling units as shown below in Table 4, Potential Project Units. The project would help create adequate zoning capacity to meet the City's 5th Cycle RHNA Allocation consistent with the adopted Housing Element and General Plan.

The Change of Zone will re-designate the property as shown below in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1 and 2 Proposed Change of Zone:

**Table 1: Current and Proposed Zoning**

Property	Existing Zones	Acres	Proposed Zones	Acres
Devirian	M-S	112.9	R-M Urban (20-38 un/ac)	45.9
			MS	21.7
			MS (Buffer Area)	45.3
Cota	M-S	4.7	R-M Urban (20-38 un/ac)	4.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>117.6</b>		<b>117.6</b>

The proposed Change of Zone will allow for Multi-Family uses. The R-M zone is intended to provide for the establishment and expansion of multiple family residential development areas at various medium and high population densities, including market rate housing, and related community services. The proposed zone is consistent with the project's land use designations of Urban Employment Center, established by the Coachella General Plan Update (CGPU) and therefore a General Plan Amendment is not needed for this project.

#### Land Use and Proposed Zoning Breakdown:

The project site is approximately 118 acres. The project proposes R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac) on approximately 50.6 acres of the site as illustrated in Figure 1 and 2 below. The R-M Urban land use permits 20 to 38 du/ac; therefore, this portion of the site could accommodate an average of 1,467 dwelling units. This is shown in Table 4, Potential Project Units.

The current General Plan Land Use category acreage, the Zoning District acreages, and the total dwelling unit yield for the project site are as shown below:

**Table 2 Existing GP Land Use Designations**

Land Use	Acres
Urban Employment Center	118

\*Approximate value

**Table 3 Proposed Zoning**

<b>Proposed Zoning</b>	<b>Acres</b>
R-M Urban (20-25 du/ac)	50.6
M-S	21.7
M-S (Buffer Area)	45.3
<b>Total*</b>	<b>117.6</b>

\*Approximate value

**Table 4 Potential Project Units**

<b>Proposed Zone</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Allowed DU</b>	<b>Mid Density</b>	<b>Total DU/AC</b>
R-M Urban	50.6	20-38 du/ac	29 du/ac	1,467

Currently, the site has Manufacturing Service (M-S) zoning consisting. The properties immediately adjacent to the site are zoned Residential Single Family (R-S) and Residential Planned Unit Development (R-PUD) and are fully constructed residential neighborhoods. The properties immediately north are Manufacturing Service (M-S) and Heavy Industrial (M-H) zones. The Heavy Industrial zoning is the location of the Armtec Defense Products complex. To the South is Avenue 54 and vacant properties in unincorporated Riverside County.

The proposed Change of Zone Exhibit will change the zoning to have R-M Urban (25-38 du/ac) zoning for the 50.6 acres of the 118-acre site. The change of zone would not apply to a 750-foot buffer area around the Armtec property and would maintain the existing Manufacturing Service (M-S) zone. The R-M district with “minimum density” requirements, will allow further development of the sites without the need for additional discretionary actions, and are consistent with State Laws regarding the low and moderate-income categories of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The City of Coachella as the lead agency for this project prepared an Initial Study pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Initial Study has been prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c) to provide a preliminary analysis of the proposed project’s actions and to determine if the project, as proposed, may have a significant effect upon the environment. Staff undertook review of the proposed rezoning and determined the project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and subsequently a Negative Declaration has been prepared.

Attached to this staff report is a copy of the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration and the Initial Study/Negative Declaration document. The Planning Commission must find adequacy with the environmental documents, in making a recommendation to the City Council for approval of the Change of Zone.

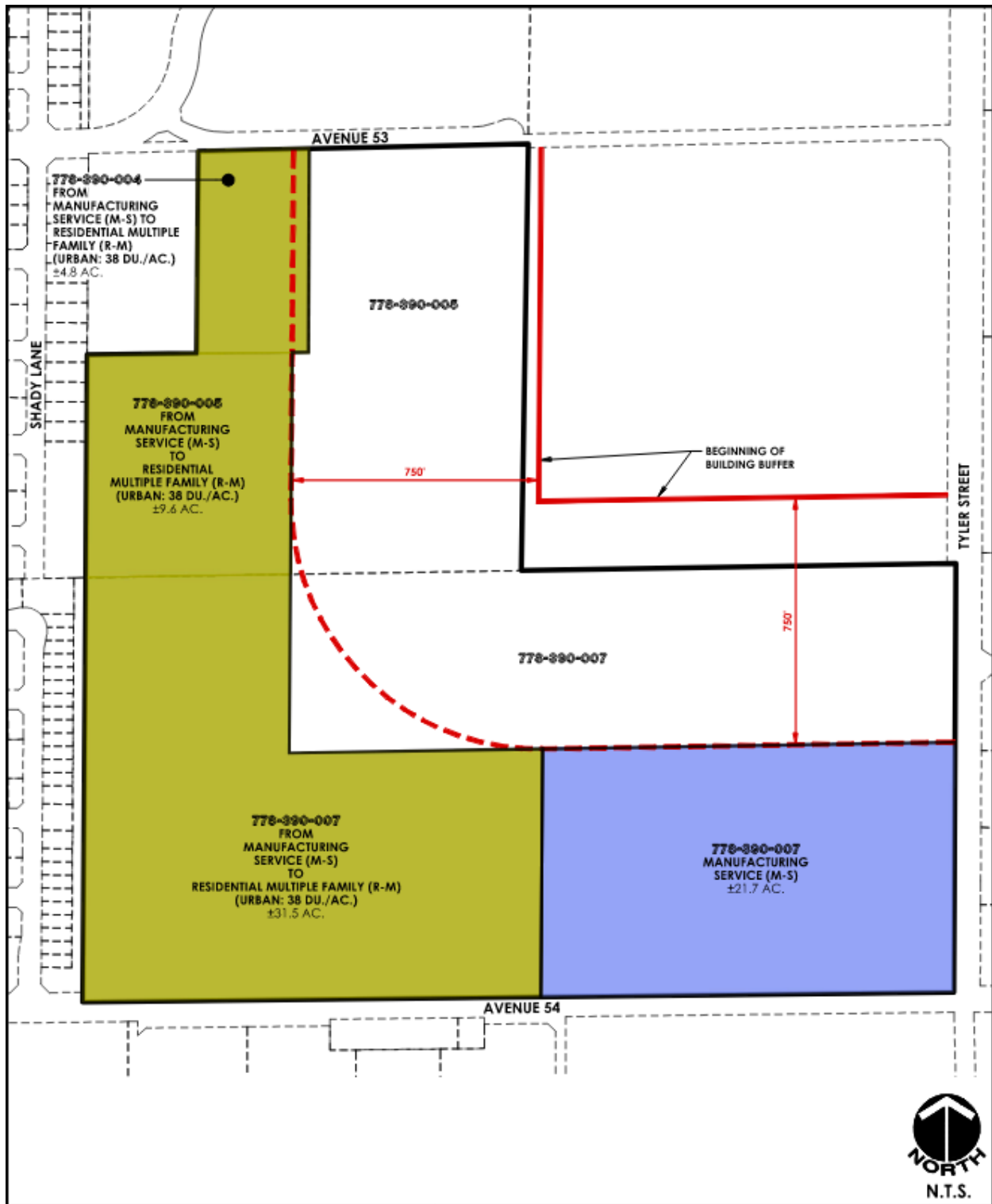


Figure 1: Proposed Change of Zone

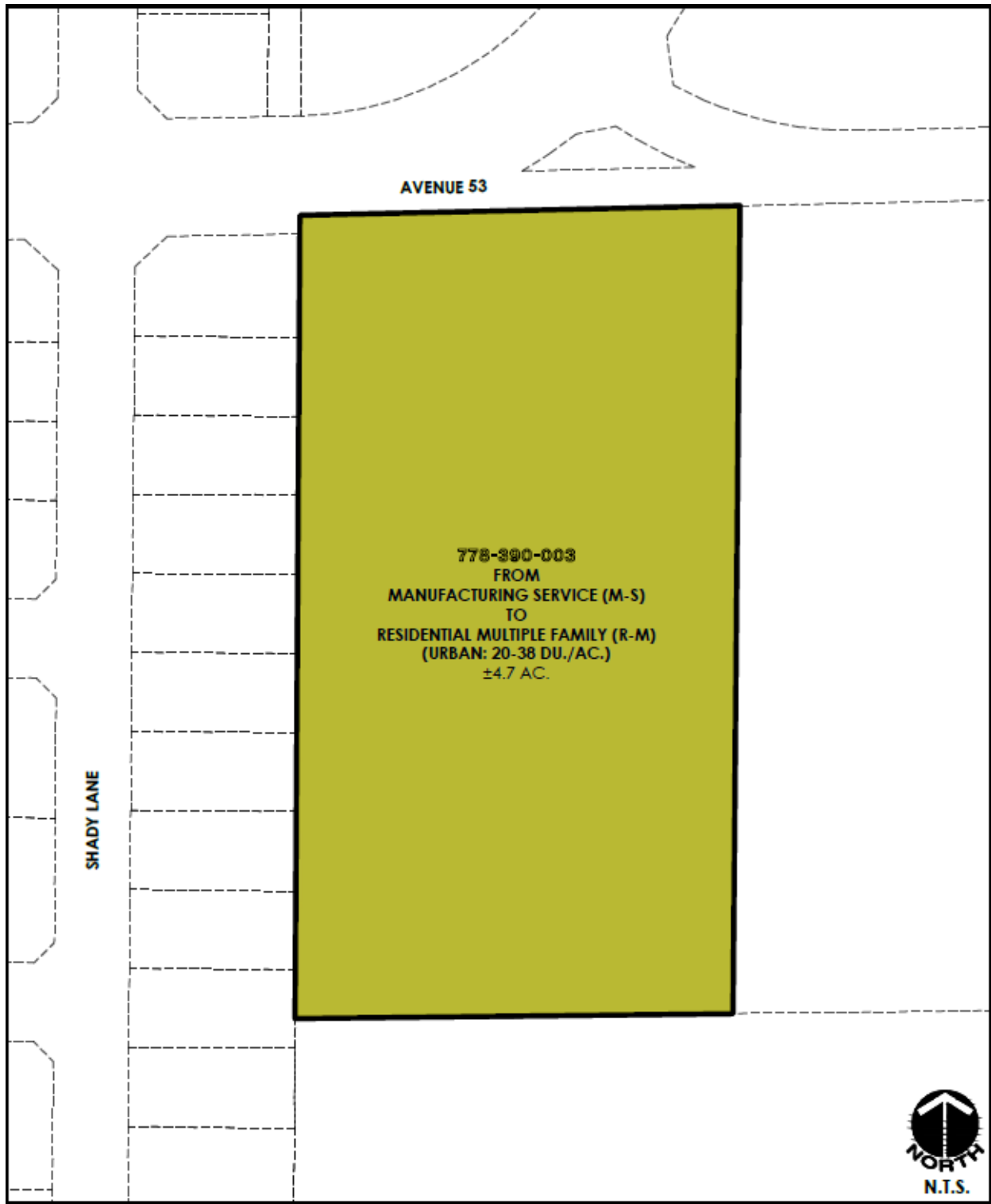


Figure 2: Proposed Change of Zone

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Adopt the attached Resolution No. 2021-60 approving a Negative Declaration (EA 21-02) and Introduce for 1<sup>st</sup> reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1187 approving Change of Zone (CZ 21-02).
2. Take no action.
3. Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):**

Staff recommends Alternative #1 as noted above.

**Attachment:**

1. Resolution No. 2021-60  
Exhibit A - CEQA Initial Study/ Negative Declaration (EA 21-02)
2. Ordinance No. 1187 (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)