



**STAFF REPORT**  
**10/23/2019**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Luis Lopez, Development Services Director  
**SUBJECT:** Zona Central – Downtown Expansion

**SPECIFICS:**

- a) Resolution No. 2019-57 to adopt a Negative Declaration pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines for the Zona Central - Change of Zone (CZ 18-10) project on approximately 206 acres of land located on the west side of Tyler Street between Avenue 50 and ¼ mile north of Avenue 52.
- b) Ordinance No. 1143 approving the City-Initiated Change of Zone (CZ 18-10) from M-S (Manufacturing Service) and R-S (Single Family Residential) to MS-IP (Manufacturing Service – Industrial Park); C-N (Neighborhood Commercial); CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial Planned Development); R-M (Residential, Multi-Family); O-S (Open Space); and OS-PF (Open Space Public Facilities) on approximately 206 acres of partially developed land on the west side of Tyler Street between Avenue 50, and ¼ mile north of Avenue 52. *1<sup>st</sup> Reading.*

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that that the City Council approve the Zona Central – Downtown Expansion project by taking the following actions:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. 2019-57 adopting a Negative Declaration, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, for the Zona Central – Downtown Expansion Project consisting of Change of Zone (CZ 18-10) pursuant with the findings of the attached resolution.
- 2) Introduce for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1143 approving the City-Initiated Change of Zone (CZ 18-10) from M-S (Manufacturing Service) and R-S (Single Family Residential) to MS-IP (Manufacturing Service – Industrial Park); C-N (Neighborhood Commercial); CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial Planned Development); R-M (Residential, Multi-Family); O-S (Open Space); and OS-PF (Open Space Public Facilities) on approximately 206 acres of partially developed land on the west side of Tyler Street between Avenue 50, and ¼ mile north of Avenue 52.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City of Coachella, in cooperation with Peter Rabbit Farms (Property Owner), has initiated a Change of Zone to bring approximately 206-acres of land located south of Avenue 50 and west of Tyler Street into conformance with the City of Coachella General Plan. The current General Plan Land Use designation for the property is an Urban Employment Center land use designation that is more specifically defined under the Subarea 6 – Downtown Expansion policies, which provide for a variety of employment (office/business parks/light industry) with high-density housing opportunities. When approved, this Zone Change will bring 206 acres of land into compliance with the General Plan and provide significant opportunities for a variety of future business park, offices, light industrial, and college campus environments mixed with high-density residential uses.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Pursuant to the City of Coachella, General Plan 2035, the *Zona Central* project is proposed in order to bring the 206-acres (located on the south side of Avenue 50, west of Tyler Street) into full compliance with the General Plan’s “Land Use and Community Character Element”. Sub-Area 6 is a combination district that includes elements of both employment and residential uses. Prior to the approval of this Change of Zone (CZ 18-10), the project site contains only two zoning districts: M-S (Manufacturing Service) and R-S (Single Family Residential). The current zoning fails to provide the variety of employment flexibility and the variety of housing types envisioned by the General Plan. To bring the site into compliance with the General Plan, and to comply with the City’s Housing Element rezoning requirements, the City of Coachella Development Services with the consent of the Property Owner proposes to create the following Zoning Districts:



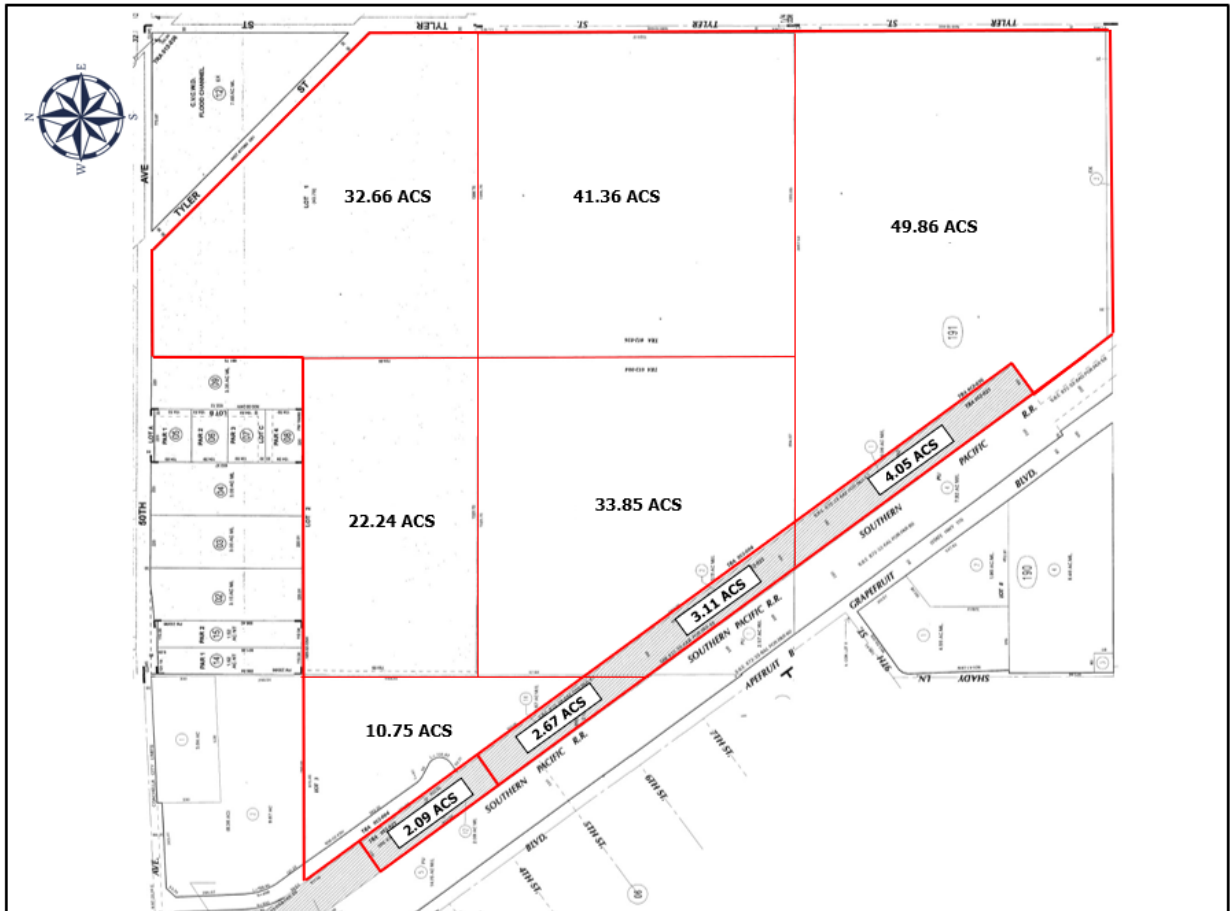
- MS-IP; Manufacturing Service – Industrial Park
- C-N; Neighborhood Commercial
- CN-PD; Neighborhood Commercial Planned Development (Mixed Use, Urban Employment Center)
- R-M; Residential, Multi-Family (General Neighborhood)
- R-M; Residential, Multi-Family (Urban Neighborhood)
- O-S; Open Space
- OS-PF; Open Space Public Facilities

<b>Total Project Area</b>	<b>206.2 acres*</b>
MS-IP Zone	35.6 acres*
C-N Zone	13.5 acres*
CN-PD (Mixed Use) Zone	42.6 acres*
R-M (General) Zone	21.2 acres*
R-M (Urban) Zone	51.4 acres*
O-S Zone	8.0 acres*
OS-PF Zone	10.3 acres*
Interior Streets	23.6 acres*

**\*Note!** Project Area Estimates taken from Riverside County Tax Assessor Maps. Exact acreage may vary.

A total of 10 separate properties are included within the proposed rezoning. **Exhibit B** provides a composite view of the Riverside County Tax Assessor's Maps for this area. The properties being rezoned for consistency with the General Plan are outlined in red.

## EXHIBIT B



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY TAX ASSESSORS MAP - COMPOSITE**

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The City is proposing Change of Zone 18-10 (CZ 18-10) to bring the properties within Subarea 6 into compliance with the General Plan. The approval of CZ 18-10 will fulfill many of the stated goals for employment and housing within Subarea 6 which encourages the development of a wide variety of business, employment, and housing types within a walkable, urban environment.

**Exhibit C** shown below is a Google Earth Image which shows the general vicinity of the Zona Central project in proximity to Pueblo Viejo, Highway 111 and the Union Pacific Railroad, the CVWD Coachella Campus to the south, and the existing homes on the east side of Tyler Street.

**EXHIBIT C**



**Consistency with the Coachella General Plan:**

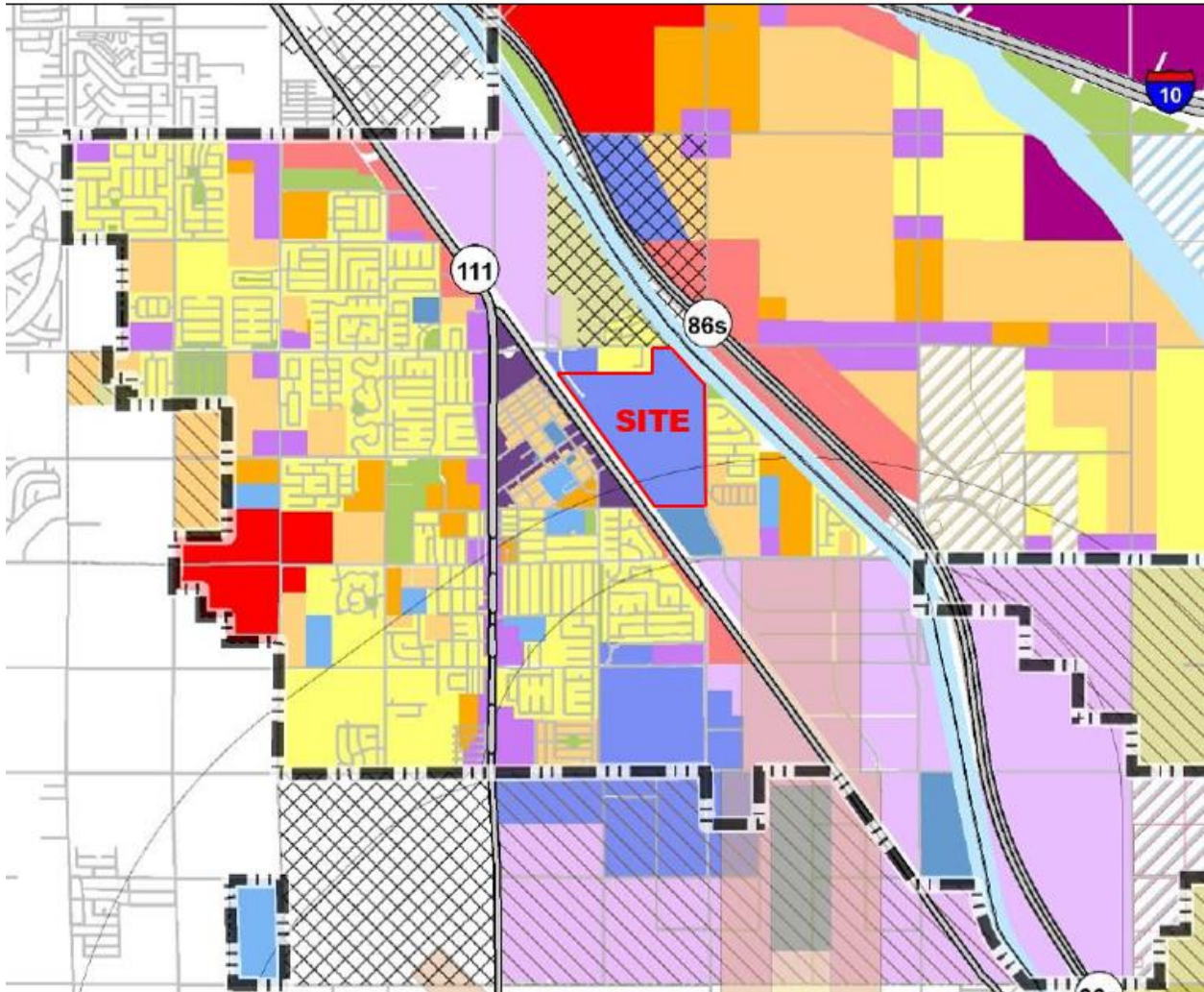
The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and, upon approval by the City Council, the City of Coachella Official Zoning Map. According to the General Plan 2035 Land Use Element, the site is within Sub-Area 6, Downtown Expansion which encourages a mix of



business and employment types, with a variety of housing and residential uses, within a walkable urban environment.

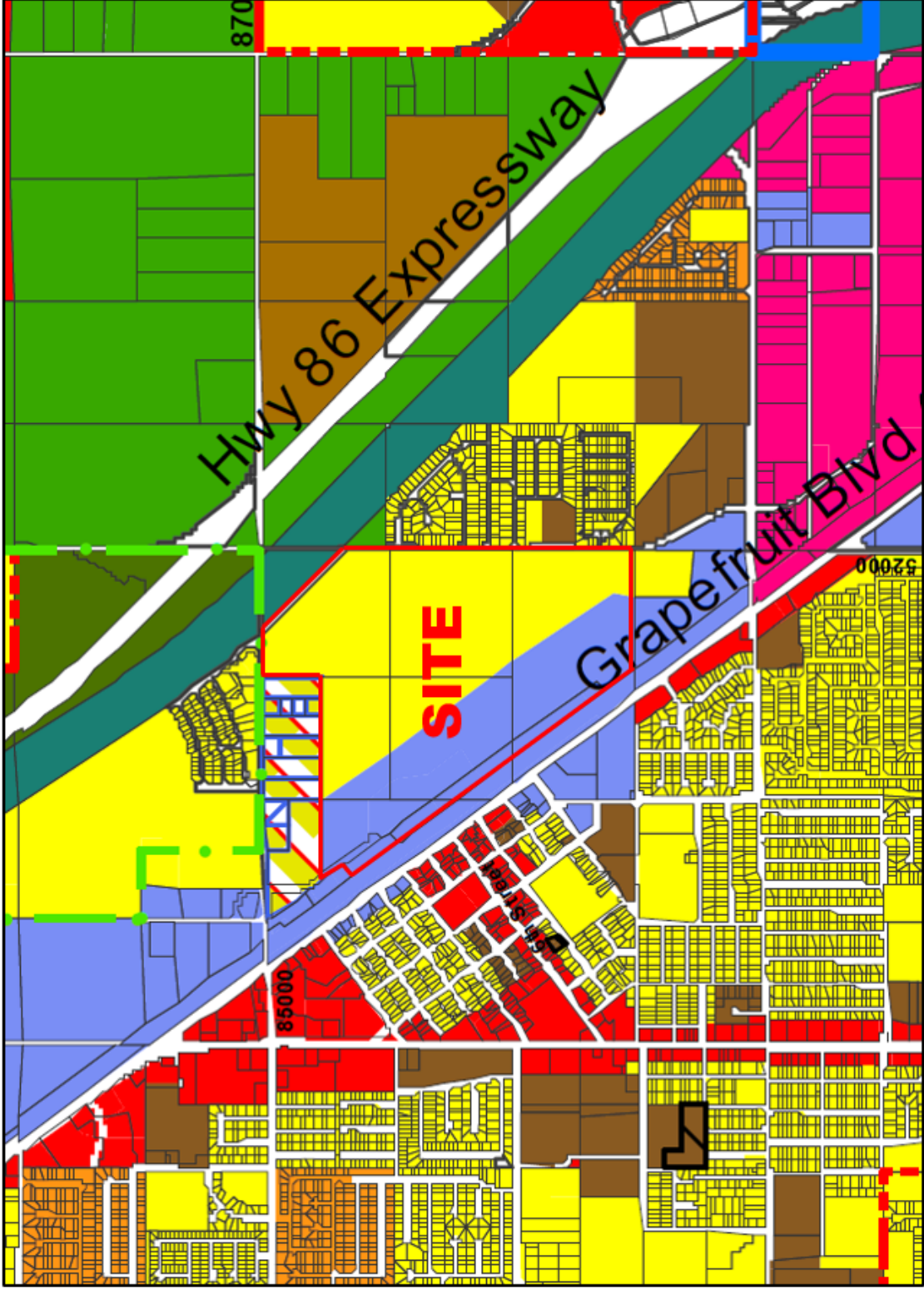
**Exhibit F** is provided to show the current General Plan designation, and **Exhibit G** is provided to show the current Zoning Districts (City of Coachella 2013 Zoning Map) which are inconsistent with the goals and polices of General Plan 2035 and Subarea 6.

## EXHIBIT F



### GENERAL PLAN 2035 – LAND USE ELEMENT

# EXHIBIT G

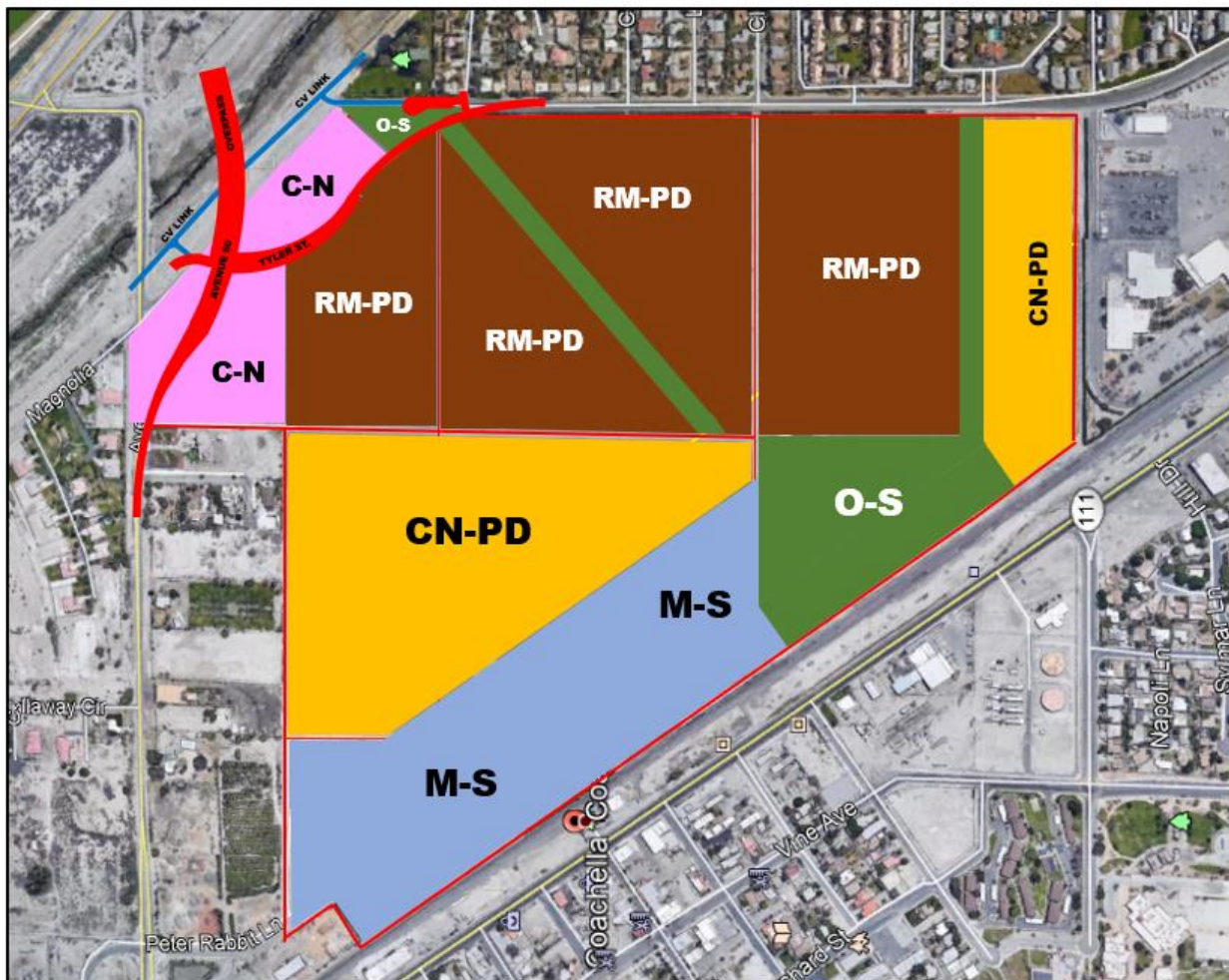


CITY OF COACHELLA – 2013 ZONING MAP



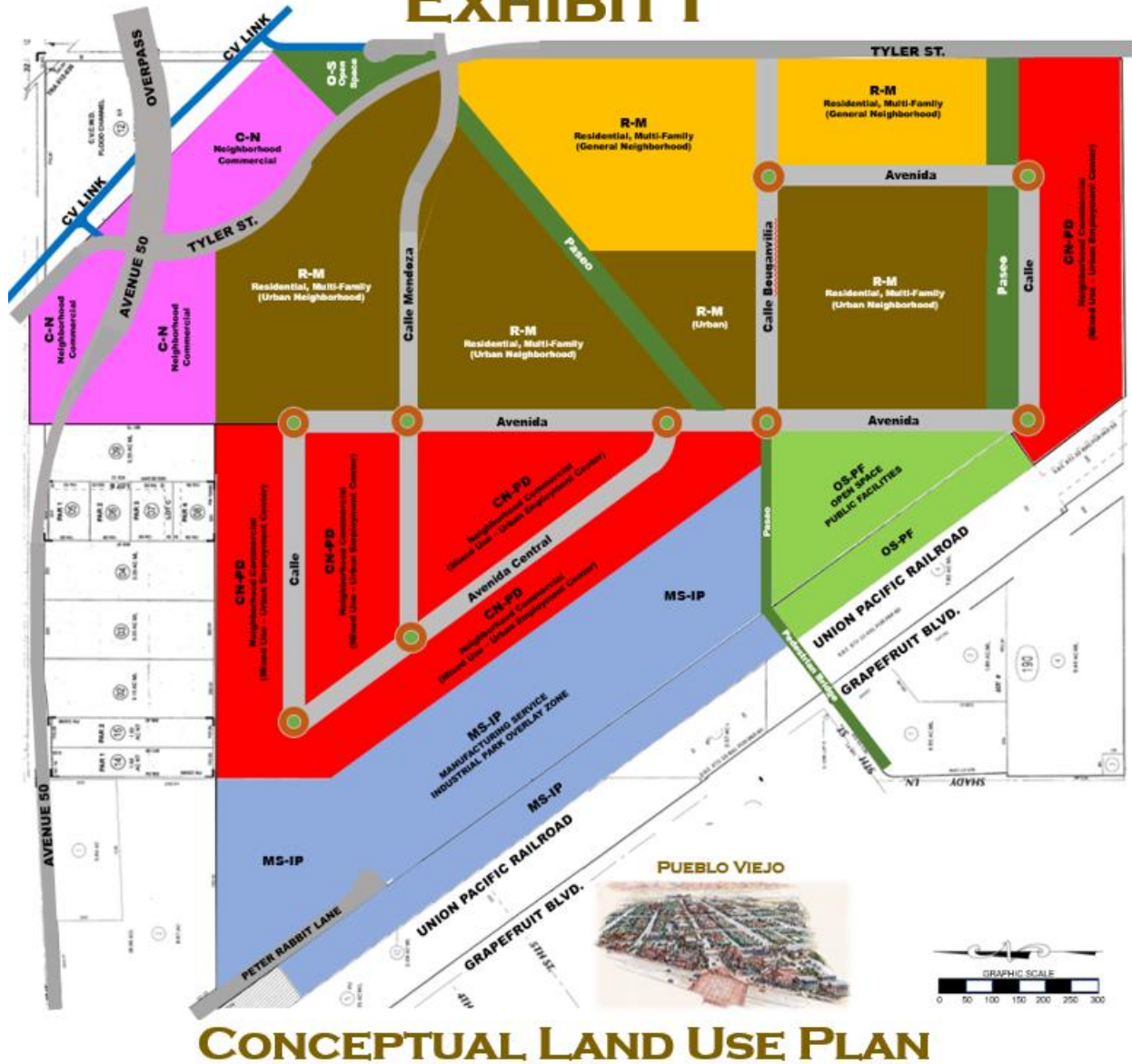
The current General Plan Land Use exhibit shows the entirety of the site to be within the “Urban Employment Center” designation. However, the SubArea 6 – Downtown Expansion policies provide further guidance for the appropriate zoning districts that should be used. Pursuant to these policies, this area will serve as the expansion of Downtown Coachella and it is envisioned to have a wide diversity of employment and civic uses. The area is envisioned as having small, walkable blocks with office, Research & Development, and supporting retail and services. Multi-family residential uses may be located on the edges of this area and adjacent to existing residential development, such as the area east of Tyler Street. This area would also be an ideal location for a college or university that could benefit from the proximity to Downtown and expected office and R&D uses and an orientation towards walkable, university campus-style development. The foregoing is graphically depicted in **Exhibit H – Proposed Zoning** and **Exhibit I – Conceptual Land Use Plan**, respectively.

## EXHIBIT H



**CITY OF COACHELLA – PROPOSED ZONING  
CONSISTENT WITH GENERAL PLAN 2035 LAND USE ELEMENT**

# EXHIBIT I



## Environmental Setting:

As shown in **Exhibit B**, the project site is located south of Avenue 50, west of Tyler Street, approximately ¼ mile north of Avenue 52. The project site comprises Assessor Parcel Numbers 778-030-07, 12, 14; 778-170-10, 11; 778-180-02, 03, 04; and 778-191-01, 02, 03. The western portion of the project site is currently developed with a number of buildings and other facilities dedicated primarily to agriculture production, processing, and packing. The majority of the site is undeveloped and is generally flat due to many years of agricultural use.



### Project Site Characteristics

**Exhibit C** presents the location of the project site from an aerial perspective. Project site photographs are provided. **Exhibit J, Project Site Photo Key** gives the location and direction of the Project Site Photos. **Exhibits J1 through J7, Project Site Photos**, provide a wide variety of locations and angles for viewing the project site.

As can be seen in **Exhibits J through J7**, the western portion of the site is currently occupied by a number of industrial buildings and associated facilities dedicated to agricultural production. However, the majority of the site is vacant as it has been in use as agricultural property. During discussions leading up the approval of General Plan 2035, this property was chosen specifically for its ability to support large, mixed use, urban employment, and residential development projects.

### Project Vicinity Characteristics

The following matrix characterizes land uses in the immediate project vicinity (See Exhibit C).

<b>Direction from Project Site</b>	<b>Land Use</b>
<i>North</i>	Large lot residential uses; Single family Homes (Cabazon Indian Reservation).
<i>South</i>	CVWD Maintenance Yard and Offices
<i>East</i>	Single Family Residential; Multi-Family Residential; Mobile Home Park
<i>West</i>	Union Pacific Railroad; Industrial Development; Grapefruit Blvd.

The trust lands of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, making up territories of the 29 Palms Band of Mission Indians, are located north of the project site along the north side of Avenue 50.

The photographs below show the current conditions of the property, which are largely used for seasonal row crop agriculture, and the agricultural packing plant located nearest the Union Pacific Railroad. The site is traversed by several IID overhead utility line easements and a hedgerow of oleander trees along the east side.

# EXHIBIT J



# SITE PHOTO KEY



**Legend:**  
Indicates Location and  
Direction of Photo

# EXHIBIT J1

1A

View from Northeast  
Corner of Site  
Looking South



1B

View from Northeast Corner  
of Site Looking Southwest



1C

View from Northeast Corner  
of Site Looking Northwest

## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS



# EXHIBIT J2

2A

View from Northernmost Corner of Site Looking West



View from Northernmost Corner of Site Looking South

2B



View from Northernmost Corner of Site Looking Southeast

2C

## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS

# EXHIBIT J3

3A

View from Northwest  
Corner of Site  
Looking East



3B

View from Northwest  
Corner of Site  
Looking Southeast



## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS

# EXHIBIT J4

4A

View from 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Looking Northeast



View from 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Looking Easterly

4B



View from 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Looking Southeast

4C

## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS



# EXHIBIT J5

5A

View from Southwest  
Corner of Site  
Looking Northwest



View from Southwest Corner  
of Site Looking Northeast

5B



View from Southwest Corner  
of Site Looking East

5C

## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS

# EXHIBIT J6

6A

View from Southeast  
Corner of Site  
Looking West



View from Southeast Corner  
of Site Looking Northwest

6B



View from Southeast Corner  
of Site Looking North

6C

## PROJECT SITE PHOTOS



7A

View from Calle Bouganvilia  
Looking South



# EXHIBIT J7

7B

View from Calle Bouganvilia  
Looking Southwest



7C

View from Calle Bouganvilia  
Looking Northwest



7D

View from Calle Bouganvilia  
Looking North



# PROJECT SITE PHOTOS



## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Environmental Assessment/Initial Study No. 18-04 was prepared for the subject project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines and distributed to responsible agencies for review and comment. Based on this Environmental Assessment/Initial Study it has been determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment, and it is appropriate to recommend adoption of a Negative Declaration for this project. A 20-day review period for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration commenced on September 13, 2019 and will end on October 2, 2019 for interested and concerned individuals and public agencies to submit written comments on the project. The Environmental Assessment/Initial Study is attached to this report.

No significant issues were identified as part of the initial study and staff is recommending that the Planning Commission adopt the Negative Declaration prepared for the proposed project.

Staff received 3 written responses from the following agency regarding the proposed project and date received are listed below:

1. Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (September 19, 2019)
2. 29 Palms Band of Cahuilla Indians (September 20, 2019)
3. Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians (October 6, 2019)

The September 19, 2019 letter from Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission is advisory in nature and addresses no specific issue. A small portion of the extreme southern end of *Zona Central* falls within Compatibility Zone E of the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport Influence Area. Compatibility Zone E does not restrict residential density or non-residential intensity but does prohibit certain hazards to flight. Coachella General Plan 2035 incorporates the requirements of the ALUCP and CZ 18-10 is consistent with those requirements. Any deviation from current, approved development requirements will require trigger further discretionary review by the City and possible review by Riverside County ALUC.

The September 20, 2019 letter from the 29 Palms Band of Cahuilla Indians requested information regarding cultural resources investigations for the property. In consultation with the Tribe, staff explained that because no grading or construction is proposed at this time, there were no historic/cultural resources investigations conducted on the subject site. The Tribe understands that subsequent environmental assessments, for individual projects, will include these site investigations.

The October 6, 2019 letter from the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians does not request any clarification or further consultation on the project. The Tribe states in the letter that they are not aware any tribal sensitive cultural resources on the subject site. Therefore, there is no need to augment the public record in light of this letter.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on foregoing analysis of the project proposal, including a thorough review of the City of Coachella General Plan 2035 goals, policies, and recommendations, the proposed *Zona Central – Downtown Expansion* project represents an a significant movement toward creating a sustainable, mixed-use community that will provide a homes, places of employment, gathering spaces, and civic pride to the central core of the City of Coachella. This walkable, family-friendly environment will eventually provide thousands of Coachella residents with a place to live, work, shop, gather, and play within a new, environmentally friendly, and socially conscious atmosphere. *Zona Central* has the potential to meet the sustainability goals of the city by creating a community that achieves all three pillars of sustainable development:

1. Social Responsibility
2. Environmental Stewardship
3. Economic Viability

Accordingly, staff is recommending approval of this project.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the Zona Central – Change of Zone project.
2. Continue the Zona Central – Change of Zone project and provide staff with direction.
3. Take no action.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There are no fiscal impacts associated with the approval of the Zona Central – Change of Zone project alone, in that there is no construction proposed at this time and the new zoning on the properties will be brought into conformity with the General Plan and Housing Element, in response to State of California mandates, based on the Housing Elements required rezoning efforts for complying with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) capacity.

## **RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):**

Staff recommends Alternative #1 above.

Attachments:      Resolution No.2019-57  
                         Ordinance No. 1143  
                         Negative Declaration  
                         Correspondence