



STAFF REPORT
6/23/2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Luis Lopez, Development Services Director
SUBJECT: B-4 Ranch Change of Zone Project

- a) Resolution No. 2021-36, Environmental Assessment (EA 2-04) adopting a Negative Declaration pursuant to the environmental review guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act.
- b) Ordinance No. 1183, Change of Zone (CZ 20-07) to change the zoning from R-S (Single Family Residential) and R-M (Multiple Family Residential) to R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac), R-M General (20-25 du/ac), and Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) on approximately 56.9 acres of vacant, agricultural land located on the north side of Avenue 52, east and west of Education Way (APN: 763-060-048). City-Initiated. (*First Reading*)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2021-36 adopting a Negative Declaration, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, and introduce for first reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1183 approving Change of Zone No. 20-07 for the B-4 Ranch Change of Zone Project.

BACKGROUND:

The B-4 Ranch Change of Zone project (“Project”) is located on approximately 56.9 acres north of Avenue 52, and west and east of Education Way (APN: 763-060-048). The City initiated effort is proposing a Change of Zone from the existing Single Family Residential (R-S) and Multiple Family Residential (R-M) designations to R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac), R-M General (20-25 du/ac), and Neighborhood Commercial (C-N).

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 May 5, 2021. The exhibit below shows the project location.



DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The City of Coachella initiated Change of Zone No. 20-07 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 5th 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 approximately 1,314 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 3 Proposed Change of Zone:

Table 1: Current and Proposed Zoning

Current Zoning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Single Family (R-S) • Residential Multiple Family (R-M)
Proposed Zoning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Multiple Family (R-M) - General: 20-25 Du./Ac. • Residential Multiple Family (R-M) - Urban: 20-38 Du./Ac. • Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)

The proposed Change of Zone will allow for Multi-Family Residential and Commercial Neighborhood uses. The R-M and C-N zones are 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 zones are consistent with the project’s land use designations of Urban Neighborhood and Neighborhood 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 56.9 acres. The project proposes R-M General (20-25 du/ac) on approximately 29.3 acres of the site, R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac) on approximately 22.6 acres of the site, and C-N on approximately 4.1 acres of the site as illustrated in Figure 3 below. R-M General land uses permits 20 to 25 dwelling units per acre; therefore, the R-M General portion of the project site may include an average of 659 dwelling units. The R-M Urban land use permits 20 to 38 du/ac; therefore, this portion of the site could accommodate an average of 655 dwelling units. The project site in total could accommodate an average of approximately 1,314 dwelling units. This is shown in Table 3, Potential Project Units.

The current General Plan Land Use category acreages, 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 Neighborhood	51.9
Neighborhood Center	4.1
Total*	56

*Approximate value

Table 3 Proposed Zoning

Proposed Zoning	Acres
R-M General (20-25 du/ac)	29.3
R-M Urban (20-38 du/ac)	22.6
Neighborhood Commercial	4.1
Total*	56

*Approximate value

Table 4 Potential Project Units

Proposed Zone	Acres	Allowed DU	Mid Density	Total DU/AC
R-M General	29.3	20-25 du/ac	22.5 du/ac	659
R-M Urban	22.6	20-38 du/ac	29 du/ac	655
Total				1,314

Currently, the site has a split-zone (R-S and R-M) consisting of R-S (Residential Single-Family) on the west side of Education Way (north of the IID Powerline Easement) and R-M (Multifamily Residential) zoning on the south of the IID Powerline easement. The territory on the east side of Education Way and the area north of the Valle Del Sol Elementary School consists of R-S zoning, except for the southerly 215 feet of the land which has R-M zoning.

The proposed Change of Zone Exhibit will change the zoning to C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) for the southerly 4.1 acres located west of Education Way. The northerly 3.9 acres west of Education Way will have R-M General (20-25 du/ac) zoning. Similarly the area west of Education Way and north of the elementary school will have R-M Urban (25-38 du/ac) zoning for the southerly 25.6 acres, and R-M General (20-25 du/ac) zoning for the northerly 25.4 acres. These more specific R-M districts 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.

The Change of Zone Exhibit is shown below:

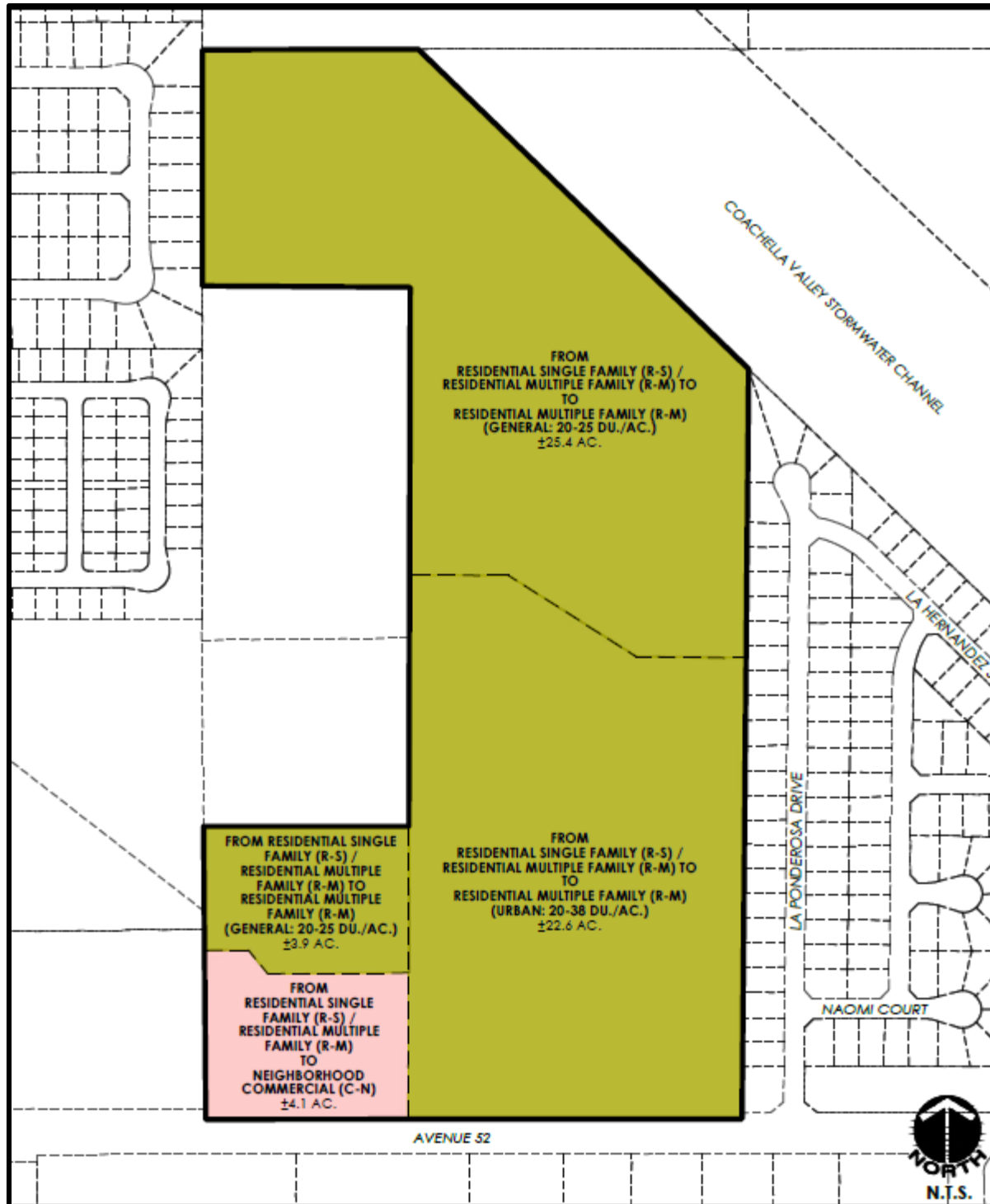


Figure 3: Proposed Change of Zone

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 Resolution No. 2021-36 adopting a Negative Declaration for the project, pursuant to CEQA review guidelines. A copy of the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration and the Initial Study/Negative Declaration document are attached to this report. The City Council must adopt the environmental documents, prior to approving the Change of Zone item.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Adopt the attached Resolution approving EA 20-04 and Introduce for 1st reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1138 approving Change of Zone (CZ 20-07).
2. Take no action.
3. Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1 as noted above.

Attachment: Resolution No. 2021-36
 Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration
 CEQA Initial Study/ Negative Declaration
 Ordinance No. 1138 (1st Reading)