



**STAFF REPORT**  
**7/27/2022**

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Urban Employment Center General Plan Amendment

- a) Addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update EIR.
- b) General Plan Amendment No. 22-01 to change the land use designation of an existing 7.8-acre vacant site from “Industrial District” to “Urban Employment Center” located near the southwest corner of Avenue 52 and Industrial Way.
- c) Change of Zone No. 22-02 to change the zoning designation of the 7.8-acre vacant site from “Heavy Industrial” to “Urban Employment Center” located near the southwest corner of Avenue 52 and Industrial Way. City-Initiated.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council:

- Adopt Resolution No. 2022-78 adopting an Addendum to the City’s General Plan Update EIR and approval of General Plan Amendment No. 22-01 for the 7.8-acre vacant site located near the southwest corner of Avenue 52 and Industrial Way.
- Introduce Ordinance No. 1198 for first reading, by title only, approving Change of Zone No. 22-02 for the 7.8-acre vacant site located near the southwest corner of Avenue 52 and Industrial Way.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Coachella is the property owner of the subject 7.8-acre site, which is comprised of two parcels (APN 763-400-016 - 3.99 acres and 763-400-017 - 3.8 acres). The City is pursuing a land use reclassification of the site from “Heavy Industrial” zoning to “Urban Employment Center” zoning to allow for a mix of uses that may include high-density multi-family housing, retail and professional office uses. The City submitted an application to the California Strategic Growth Council for a Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant in July 2022 that includes a request to construct affordable multi-family housing and offices for a conservation center for the Southern California Mountains Foundation and Urban Conservation Core of the Inland Empire. No plans have been submitted by project proponents or approved for the site by the City, which would occur if the City receives the TCC grant award. The TCC grant identifies any potential housing may occur on 3.6 acres of the 7.8-acre site. A rezone of the site would also allow the site

to be eligible for the Cycle 6 Housing Element Site Inventory, which requires that the City rezone sites with adequate utility services to satisfy the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

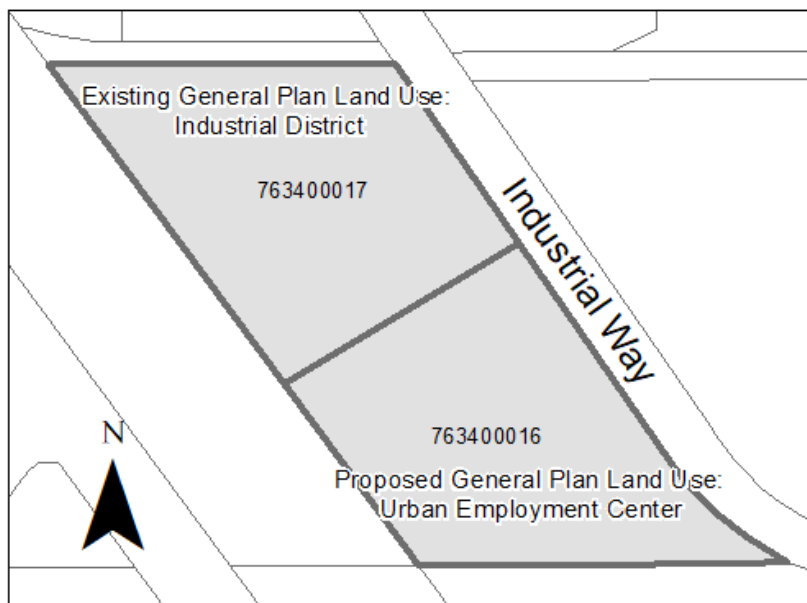
**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The subject site has a current zoning designation of M-H (Heavy Industrial), which allows heavy industrial uses permitted either by right or with approval of a conditional use permit. The site has an Industrial District General Plan land use designation consistent with the M-H zone. Surrounding uses are industrial in nature and include the Union Pacific Railroad to the West, Western Water Works, Jones Brothers Construction, and ATS Stone Corporation to the North, the Sunworld and Woodspur Farms agricultural packing companies to the East and vacant industrial land to the South.

A General Plan Amendment from “Industrial District” to “Urban Employment Center” would accommodate employment uses such as office and research and development rather than industrial uses such as manufacturing, distribution and warehouse. The General Plan recommends that employment uses in this District be supported by retail, service and similar uses. Residential uses are allowed in residential-only buildings or in a mixed-use configuration with ground-floor retail. Also allowed are higher education uses (such as a college or university) designed in urban setting. The maximum height permitted in the Urban Employment General Plan Land Use and Zoning District would be 5-stories with a residential density range of 30-65 units per acre. Water and sewer service infrastructure is available on Industrial Way and therefore the site is a potential candidate for the City’s 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element, which requires sites less than 10 acres with available infrastructure available to serve potential development. As such, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council, approval of this General Plan Amendment.

The exhibit below shows the subject property with its current General Plan designation, and the proposed General Plan designation.

**GPA No. 22-01 General Plan Amendment**



### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff prepared an Addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (CGPU EIR - also identified as State Clearinghouse No. 2009021007) pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which is attached to this staff report. The addendum evaluated the potential to develop up to 507 dwelling units consistent with the density permitted in the Urban Employment Center (30-65 du/acre). The Addendum concludes on the basis of substantial evidence that the proposed Project is not expected to result in impacts beyond those previously identified and mitigated in the CGPU EIR.

The EIR impacts associated with future development, which were previously determined to be significant and unavoidable, would be less with the proposed Project, because potential eligible development under the proposed land use would not change the character of the area in which the site is located. Project impacts associated with the various environmental factors would not exceed those expected under the current Heavy Industrial designation, and thus would be comparable to, or less than those identified in the CGPU EIR. As such, no new environmental review documents are required for this General Plan Amendment.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Adopt:
  - a. Resolution No. 2022-78 adopting the Addendum to the Coachella General Plan Update EIR, and Approval of GPA 22-01.
  - b. Introduce Ordinance No. 1198 for first reading, by title only, approving Change of Zone No. 22-02.
2. Continue this matter and provide staff direction.
3. Take no action.

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

Staff recommends Alternative #1 as shown above.

### **Attachments:**

1. Resolution No. 2022-78  
Exhibit A – General Plan Amendment Exhibit  
Exhibit B - Addendum to General Plan Update EIR
2. Ordinance No. 1198 (first reading)  
Exhibit A – Change of Zone Exhibit
3. Vicinity Map