

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

906B



FROM: TLMA – Planning Department

SUBMITTAL DATE:
March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 771- (Entitlement/Policy and Agricultural Amendment) – Applicant: CNH Investments – Engineer/Representative: T&B Planning Consultants - Fourth Supervisorial District - Lower Coachella Valley Zoning District -Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan: Agriculture: Agriculture (AG) and Community Development: Commercial Retail (CR) (0.20-0.35 Floor Area Ratio) – Location: Northerly of 62nd Avenue, southerly of 60th Avenue, easterly of Pierce Street and westerly of Buchanan Street - 282.9 Gross Acres - Zoning: Heavy Agriculture - 10 Acre Minimum (A-2-10) and General Commercial (C1/CP) - **REQUEST:** The General Plan Amendment proposes to eliminate the land use designation of Agriculture: Agriculture (AG) and Community Development: Commercial Retail (CR) (0.20-0.35 Floor Area Ratio) and would establish a Community Development Specific Plan on the 282.9 gross acre project site. The Specific Plan proposed traditional single-family residential, multi-family residential; other uses include retail commercial, a public school site, and open space land uses. – APN's: 757-320-004-4, 757-320-010-9, 757-320-011-0, 757-341-004-9, 757-342-006-4 Related Cases: SP350, CZ07244, EIR499

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

The Planning Director recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt an order initiating the above referenced general plan amendment based on the attached report. The initiation of proceedings by the Board of Supervisors for the amendment of the General Plan, or any element thereof, shall not imply any such amendment will be approved.

BACKGROUND:

The initiation of proceedings for any General Plan Amendment (GPA) requires the adoption of an order by the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Director is required to prepare a report and recommendation on every GPA application and submit it to the Board of Supervisors. Prior to

Ron Goldman
Planning Director

RG:db

(CONTINUED ON ATTACHED PAGE)

REVIEWED BY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

DATE 3/12/09
Tina Grande
Departmental Concurrence

Policy Policy
Consent Consent
Dept't Recomm.: Per Exec. Ofc.:

15.5

the submittal to the Board, comments on the application are requested from the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission comments are included in the report to the Board. The Board will either approve or disapprove the initiation of proceedings for the GPA requested in the application. The consideration of the initiation of proceedings by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors pursuant to this application does not require a noticed public hearing. However, the applicant was notified by mail of the time, date and place when the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors would consider this GPA initiation request.

If the Board of Supervisors adopts an order initiating proceedings pursuant to this application, the proposed amendment will thereafter be processed, heard and decided in accordance with all the procedures applicable to GPA applications, including noticed public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The adoption of an order initiating proceedings does not imply that any amendment will be approved. If the Board of Supervisors declines to adopt an order initiating proceedings, no further proceedings on this application will occur.

The Board of Supervisors established the procedures for initiation of GPA applications with the adoption of Ordinance No. 348.4573 (effective May 8, 2008), which amended Article II of that ordinance.

Agenda Item No.:
Area Plan: Eastern Coachella Valley
Zoning District: Lower Coachella Valley
Supervisory District: Fourth
Project Planner: Matt Straite
Planning Commission: March 4, 2009

General Plan Amendment No. 00771
Applicant: CNH Investments
Engineer/Rep.: T&B Planning

**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPARTMENT
ADDENDUM DIRECTOR REPORT**

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

Commissioners Roth and Porras had the following comments-

Commissioner Roth contended that the agriculture in the Southern Coachella Valley is being threatened by projects like this. He argued that Specific Plans disconnected from other development are growth inducing. He also argued that these developments are isolated islands of development, most often just residential, in a sea of agriculture. Absent any regional master planning, he is uncomfortable with the proposed development.

The Commissioner went on to discuss the need for jobs in the Southern Coachella Valley and highlighted the fact that the Specific Plans being proposed, this one included, seem to lack the higher paying jobs that this area needs.

Chairman Porras argued that the County should not force an agri-business that is not viable. He also requested that tables be included in the final staff reports that show what percentage of the Agricultural General Plan Land Use designations are being removed by each respective project.

No other Commissioners had any comments.



Agenda Item No.: 8.4
Area Plan: Eastern Coachella Valley
Zoning District: Lower Coachella Valley
Supervisory District: Fourth
Project Planner: Matt Straite
Planning Commission: March 4, 2009

General Plan Amendment No. 00771
Applicant: CNH Investments
Engineer/Rep.: T&B Planning

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

General Plan Amendment No. 771 proposes to amend the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element from Community Development: Commercial Retail (CR) (0.20-0.35 Floor Area Ratio) and Agriculture: Agriculture (AG:AG) (10-Acre Minimum) Land Use Designations would establish a Community Development Specific Plan on the 282.9 acre project site. Specific Plan No. 350, "Coachella 273" has also been filed with the County. The Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report was issued in June of 2006. The Specific Plan proposed traditional single-family residential, multi-family residential; other uses include retail commercial, a public school site, and open space land uses.

The proposed Amendment consists of two non-contiguous areas separated by State Route 86s, State Highway 111 and an active segment of the Union Pacific Railroad. The portion of the project site located northeast of State Route 86s and State Highway 111 is northerly of 60th Avenue, easterly of Buchanan Street, southerly of future Pierce Street and westerly of State Route 86s. The portion of the project site located southwest of State Route 86s and State Highway 111 is southerly of 62nd Avenue, westerly of Pierce Street and easterly of State Highway 111.

BACKGROUND:

The initiation of proceedings for any General Plan Amendment (GPA) requires the adoption of an order by the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Director is required to prepare a report and recommendation on all GPA applications and submit them to the Board of Supervisors. Prior to the submittal to the Board, comments on the applications will be requested from the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission comments will be included in the report to the Board. The Board will either approve or disapprove the initiation of the proceedings for the GPA requested in the applications.

The consideration of the initiation of proceedings pursuant to this application by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will not involve a noticed public hearing. The Planning Department, however, did notify the applicant by mail of the time, date and place when the Planning Commission will consider this GPA initiation request.

If the Board of Supervisors adopts an order initiating proceedings pursuant to this application, the proposed amendment will thereafter be processed, heard and decided in accordance with all the procedures applicable to GPA applications, including noticed public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The adoption of an order initiating proceedings does not imply that any amendment will be approved. If the Board of Supervisors declines to adopt an order initiating proceedings, no further proceedings of this application will occur.

The Board of Supervisors established the procedures for initiation of GPA applications with the adoption of Ordinance No. 348.4573 (effective May 8, 2008), which amended Article II of that ordinance. This particular GPA application is an Agriculture and Entitlement/Policy GPA, under Section 2.4.



Additionally, refer to the attached Worksheets for General Plan Amendment Initiation Consideration Analysis.

GENERAL PLAN ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENT FINDINGS:

In order to support the initiation of a proposed General Plan Amendment it must be established that the proposal could possibly satisfy certain required findings. The Administration Element of the General Plan explains that there are four categories of amendments, Technical, Entitlement/Policy, Foundation, and Agriculture. Each category has distinct required findings.

General Plan Amendment No. 771 falls into two categories, Agriculture and Entitlement/Policy. Each will be addressed separately below.

Agriculture-

The required Agriculture Amendment findings must be made for those sections of the proposal that will be changing from an Agriculture Foundation to a Community Development designation. The required findings for this section of the analysis are-

- 1) The amendment would contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan.
- 2) The amendment would not be detrimental to the purposes of the General Plan.

Additionally, the Agriculture foundation allows up to seven (7) percent of all the land within one of three designated areas to be converted to another Foundation and Land Use designation during a two and a half year cycle. In the event that the seven percent threshold has been exceeded, an Agricultural Task Force would review the project.

The proposed amendment is located in the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan, which is part of the "Palo Verde, Desert Center, and the Eastern Coachella" designated area, one of the three designated areas prescribed by the Administration Element. The seven percent threshold within this designated area is triggered when the project is placed on a Board agenda for an action, not including the General Plan Initiation process. Given the size of the proposed Amendment, it is unlikely that a review by the Agriculture Commission will be required; however, since the threshold is triggered when the project is before the Board, Staff is unable to ascertain if the project is beyond the seven (7) percent threshold.

Consideration Analysis:

First Required Agriculture Finding: Part of this proposal would change the Land Use designation from Agriculture to a Community Development Specific Plan; therefore, it must be established that a Community Development Specific Plan would contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan.

The proposed Amendment does achieve the purposes of the General Plan based on its location within the South Valley Implementation Plan area as reflected in the 2008 General Plan update. The region generally south of the Jackie Cochran Airport is experiencing growth that was not foreseen or accounted for in the 2003 General Plan. On February 7, 2006 the Board of Supervisors directed staff to develop a South Valley Implementation Program (SVIP) and Community Facilities Phasing and Funding Strategy. This program was intended to comprehensively study and ensure desirable land use, transportation and community facilities needs to foster a sustainable, well-planned and livable community in this rapidly

urbanizing area of the County. The program will create an overlay that will contain alternative land uses, employable to the land owner by filling for a General Plan Amendment.

The South Valley Implementation Program planning area covers an area southeast of the City of La Quinta and is bounded on the west by Harrison Street, on the north by the cities of Indio and Coachella, on the south by Avenue 66, and on the east generally by State Route 86 and lands associated with the Specific Plans 350 and 362. The area is characterized by heavy agricultural activity, including date, citrus groves, and row crops in a rural setting.

The proposed Amendment is located within the boundaries of the SVIP. The proposed residential Community Development Specific Plan would place populations near the existing Thermal Community, the City of Coachella to the north and near critical facilities like the airport and the college. The General Plan also identifies areas near the site that are set aside for light industrial and commercial, job generating, uses.

The proposed Amendment is also about one mile west of Tribal native lands and allottee lands of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. This area is designated as "Areas Subject to Indian Jurisdiction" by the Riverside County General Plan. Uses planned for the site include light industrial use which would result in job creation.

Given the existing community, the SVIP, and the Tribal areas to the east, it is possible that the findings can be made that the proposed Amendment is an appropriate outgrowth of the SVIP vision and an opportunity to implement many aspects of the General Plan 2008 update as embodied in the SVIP.

Second Required Agriculture Finding: The Agricultural Foundation changes of the proposed Amendment must not be detrimental to the purposes of the General Plan. This section is looking only at the Agricultural Foundation changes, the Community Development analysis will follow. The intent of the Agricultural Foundation is to protect the Agricultural industry in the County. As previously mentioned, the General Plan uses a seven (7) percent threshold before the Agricultural Commission review is required. The Agriculture Commission is composed of members of the Agriculture industry. The intent is to insure that the industry members themselves help guide the future of their industry.

The seven percent threshold is applied as the project is scheduled for discretionary action by the Board of Supervisors. Several projects are in process in the Eastern Coachella Valley. It is not very likely that the proposed Amendment will exceed the seven percent threshold depending on the sequence of other project approvals. A review by the Agricultural Commission may be required, at the direction of the Board.

Entitlement/Policy-

The Administration Element of the General Plan explains that the first two findings and any one or more of the subsequent findings would justify an **entitlement/policy amendment**. The findings for an Entitlement/Policy Amendment are:

- a. The proposed change does not involve a change in or conflict with:
 - (1) The Riverside County Vision;
 - (2) Any General Plan Principle; or
 - (3) Any Foundation Component designation on the General Plan
- b. The proposed amendment would either contribute to the achievement of the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan or, at a minimum, would not be detrimental to them.

- c. Special circumstances or conditions have emerged that were unanticipated in preparing the General Plan.
- d. A change in policy is required to conform to changes in state or federal law or applicable findings of a court of law.
- e. An amendment is required to comply with an update of the Housing Element or change in State Housing Element law.
- f. An amendment is required to expand basic employment job opportunities (jobs that contribute directly to the County's economic base) and that would improve the ratio of jobs-to-workers in the County.
- g. An amendment is required to address changes in public ownership of land or land not under Board of Supervisors' land use authority.

Consideration Analysis:

First Required Finding: The first required finding explains that the proposed Amendment must not involve a change in or conflict with the Riverside County Vision; any General Plan Principle; or any Foundation Component designation in the General Plan.

A. The proposed change does not conflict with:

(1) The Riverside County Vision.

As previously indicated the proposed Amendment area was originally envisioned to maintain its agricultural uses. However, the efforts of the South Valley Implementation Program (SVIP), and the Board actions taken to implement that vision, changed the character and vision of area. Given that this proposal is within and consistent with the SVIP, this proposal is consistent with the vision of the area as reflected in the SVIP and the General Plan 2008 update.

(2) Any General Plan Principle.

Given staffs review and the extreme flexibility a Specific Plan affords, it is possible that the proposed designation could satisfy each of the General Plan Principals and Policies.

(3) Any Foundation Component designation in the General Plan.

The project designation would be within the same Community Development Foundation. Thus, the proposed Amendment is consistent with the Community Development Foundation.

Second Required Finding: The second General Plan Administrative Element finding explains that the proposed Amendment must either contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan or, at a minimum, not be detrimental to them.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan argues that development should be clustered around community centers and that leapfrog development should be discouraged. The proposed Amendment is contiguous with another approved application for a Specific Plan in an area of the County that has been slated for increased development, clustered around the airport and near a future college site and major transportation infrastructure. Thus, the proposed Amendment is consistent with the General Plan and the proposed general plan 2008 update, as embodied in the SVIP.

Third Required Finding: In addition to the two, the General Plan indicates that an additional finding, from a list of five, must also be made.

The appropriate additional finding for the proposed Amendment is "Special circumstances or conditions have emerged that were unanticipated in preparing the General Plan." The SVIP effort, and its inclusion in the General Plan update illustrate how this area is changing in ways that were not anticipated in the 2003 General Plan. This proposed Amendment is consistent with County efforts to update the uses in this area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. General Plan Land Use (Ex. #5): | Agriculture (AG)(10 Acre Minimum) and Commercial Retail (0.25-0.60 Floor to Area Ratio) |
| 2. Proposed General Plan Land Use (Ex. #5): | Community Development Specific Plan |
| 3. Existing Zoning (Ex. #2): | Heavy Agriculture 20 Acre Minimum (A-2-20) and General Commercial (C-1/C-P) |
| 4. Surrounding Zoning (Ex. #2): | Heavy Agriculture 20 Acre Minimum (A-2-20) to the north, east, south and west. |
| 5. Existing Land Use (Ex. #1): | Vacant and Agriculture |
| 6. Surrounding Land Use (Ex. #1): | Vacant land to the north south, east, and west, and single family residential on large lots to the south. |
| 7. Project Data: | Total Acreage: 282.9 Gross |

RECOMMENDATIONS:

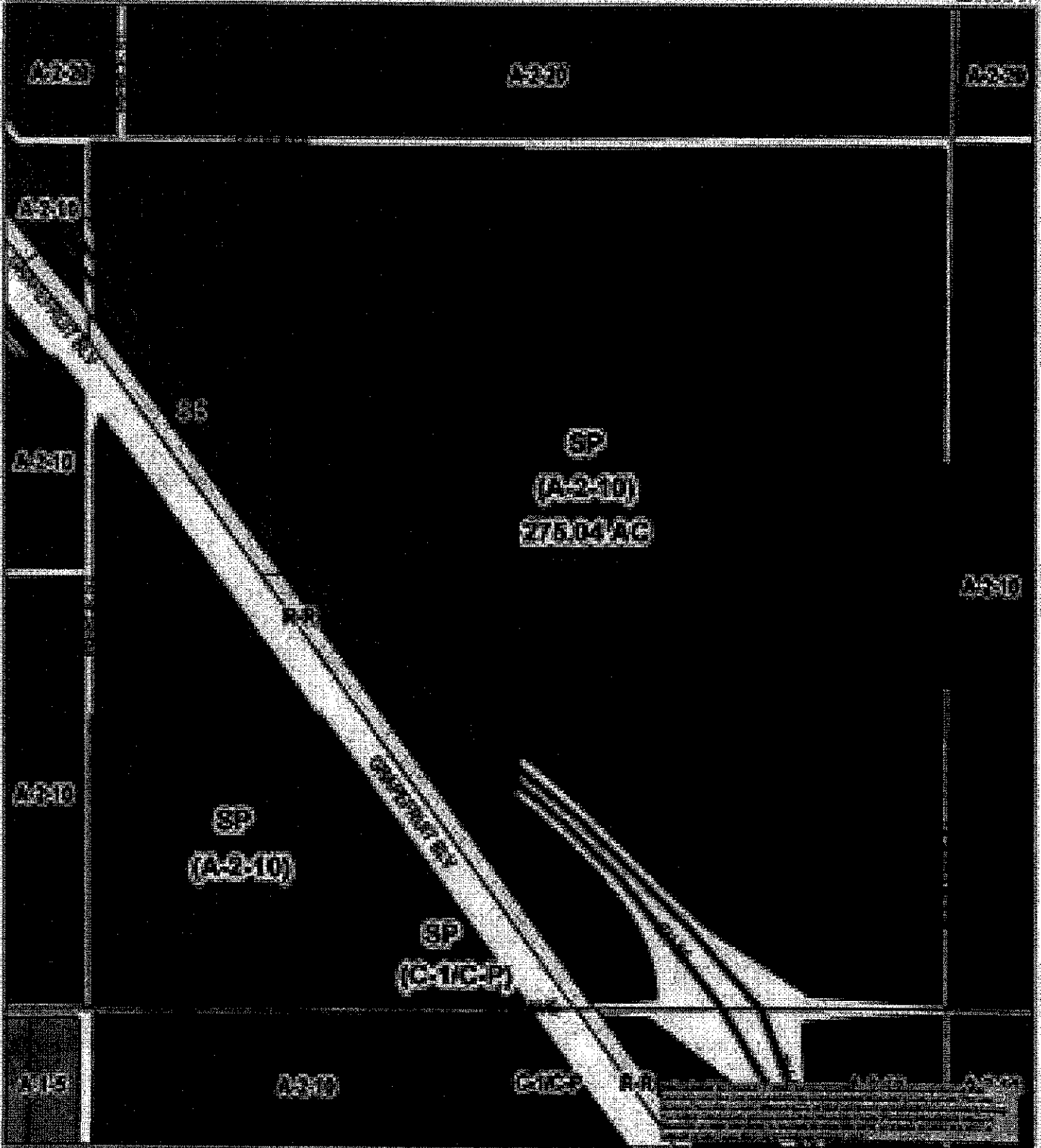
The Planning Director recommends that the appropriate findings per the General Plan Administration Element can be made and that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors to adopt an order initiating proceedings for General Plan Amendment No. 771. The initiation of proceedings by the Board of Supervisors for the amendment of the General Plan, or any element thereof, shall not imply any such amendment will be approved.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. As of this writing, no letters, in support or opposition have been received.
2. The project site is not located within:
 - a. A city sphere of influence;
 - b. The Stephens Kangaroo Rat Fee Area;
 - c. A High Fire Area;
 - d. A Dam Inundation Area,
 - e. A Fringe Toed Lizard Fee Area or Sand Source Preserve;
 - f. The boundaries of a Redevelopment Area; or,
 - g. An area drainage plan.
3. The project site is located within:
 - a. County service area Thermal 125;
 - b. The boundaries of the Coachella Valley Unified;
 - c. The Whitewater Watershed;

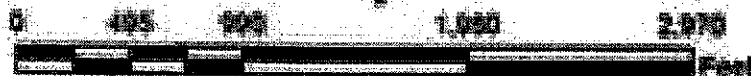
- d. An area of high (high B) paleontological sensitivity;
 - e. An area susceptible to subsidence; and,
 - f. An area of high and very high liquefaction potential.
4. The subject site is currently designated as Assessor Parcel Number's: 757-320-004-4, 757-320-010-9, 757-320-011-0, 757-341-004-9, 757-342-006-4

MS:rf
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Date Prepared: 12/31/08
Date Revised:



RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zone: Lower Coachella Valley
District: T6SR8E
Township Range: T6SR8E
Section: 24

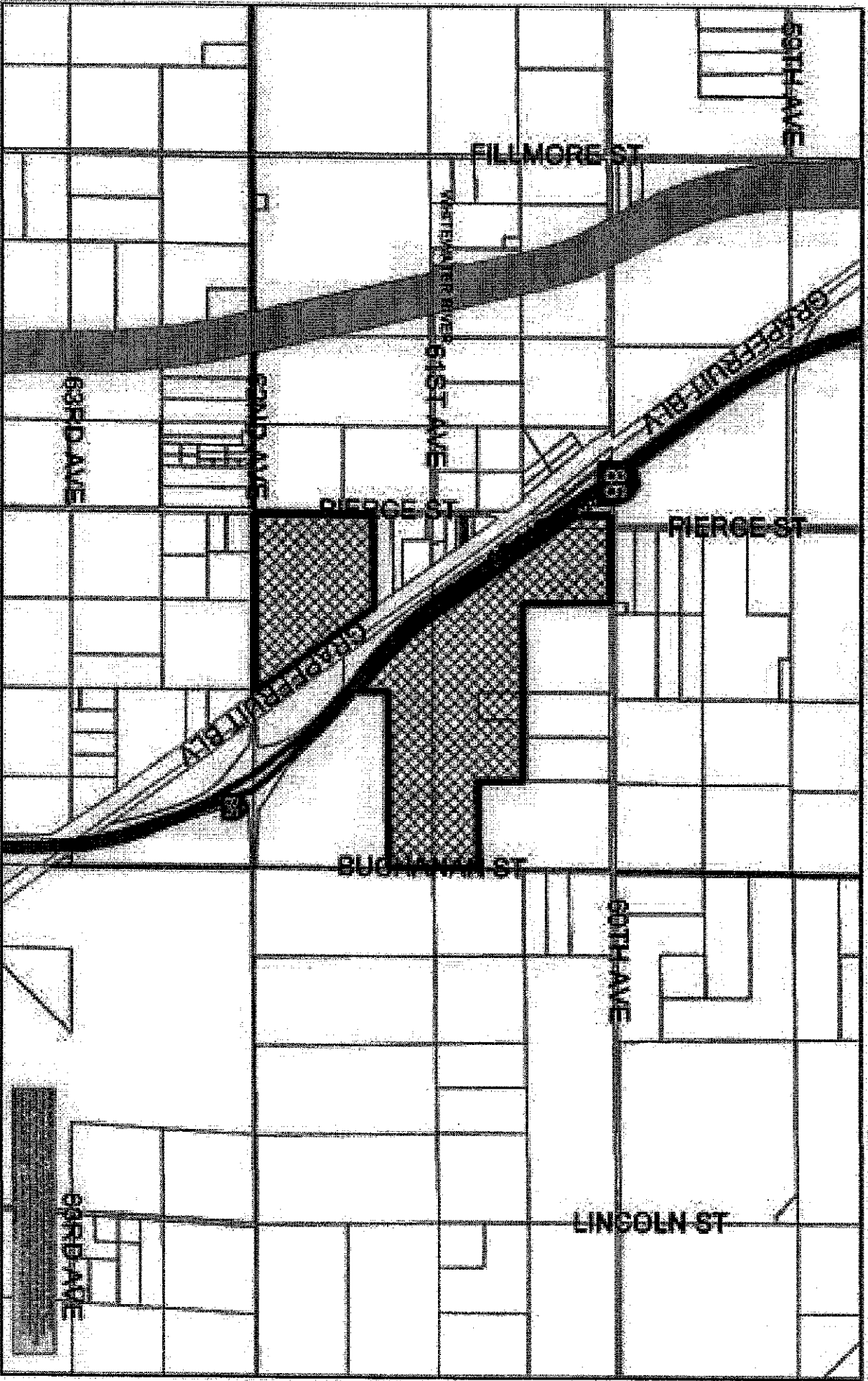


APPROVED
BY PG: 747-32134
THOMAS
BRON PG: 5502 C2

Supervisor William
District 4
April 2005

C207244 SP00350 GPA00771 VICINITY MAP

Planner: Michael Bulfinch
Date: 8/2005
Issue: 2

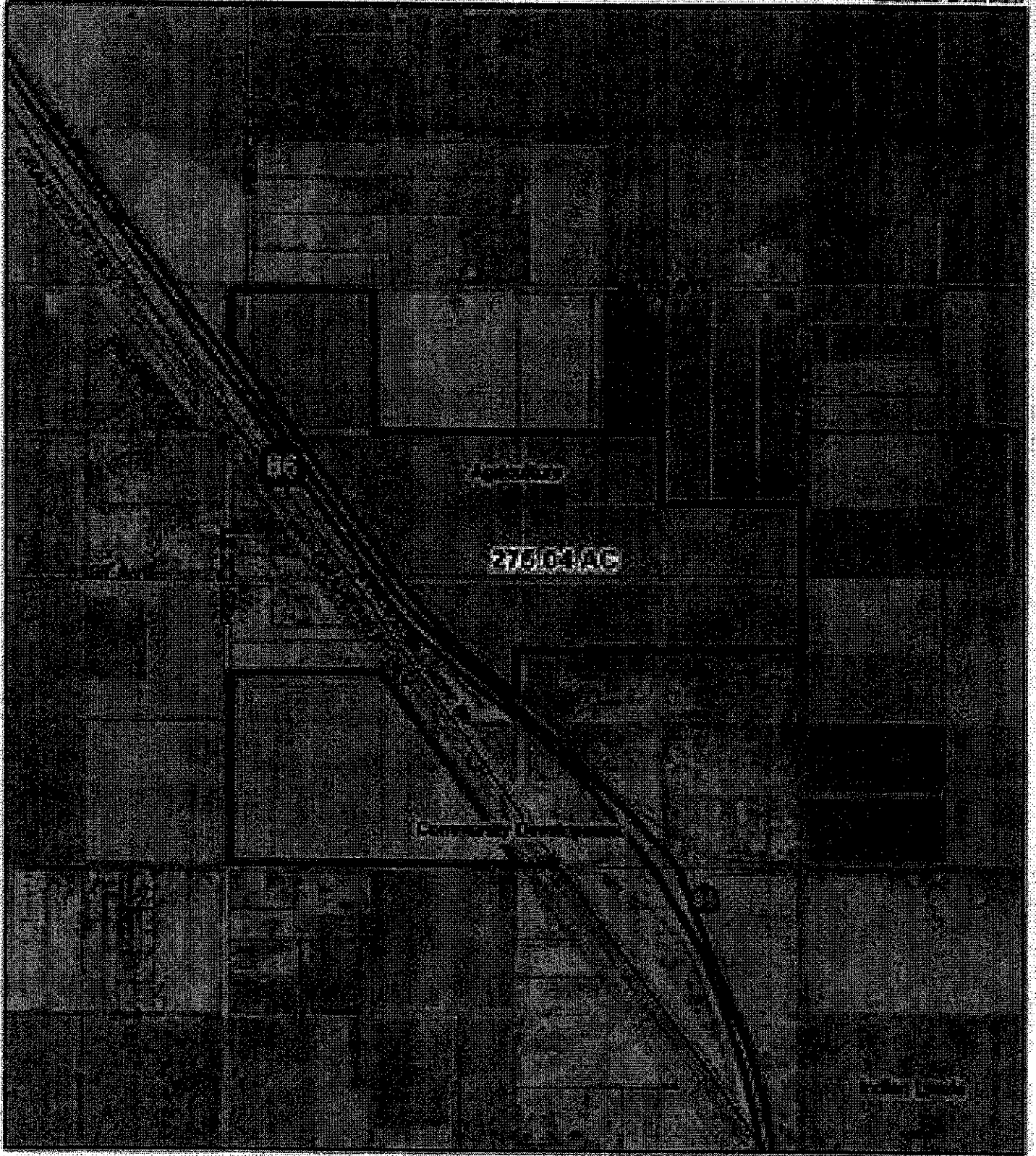


RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Zone
District: Lower Coachella Valley
Township/Range: T08R06E
Section: 36

Assessors: 757-42834
Bk. Pg.
Original
8/20/05
5592 C2



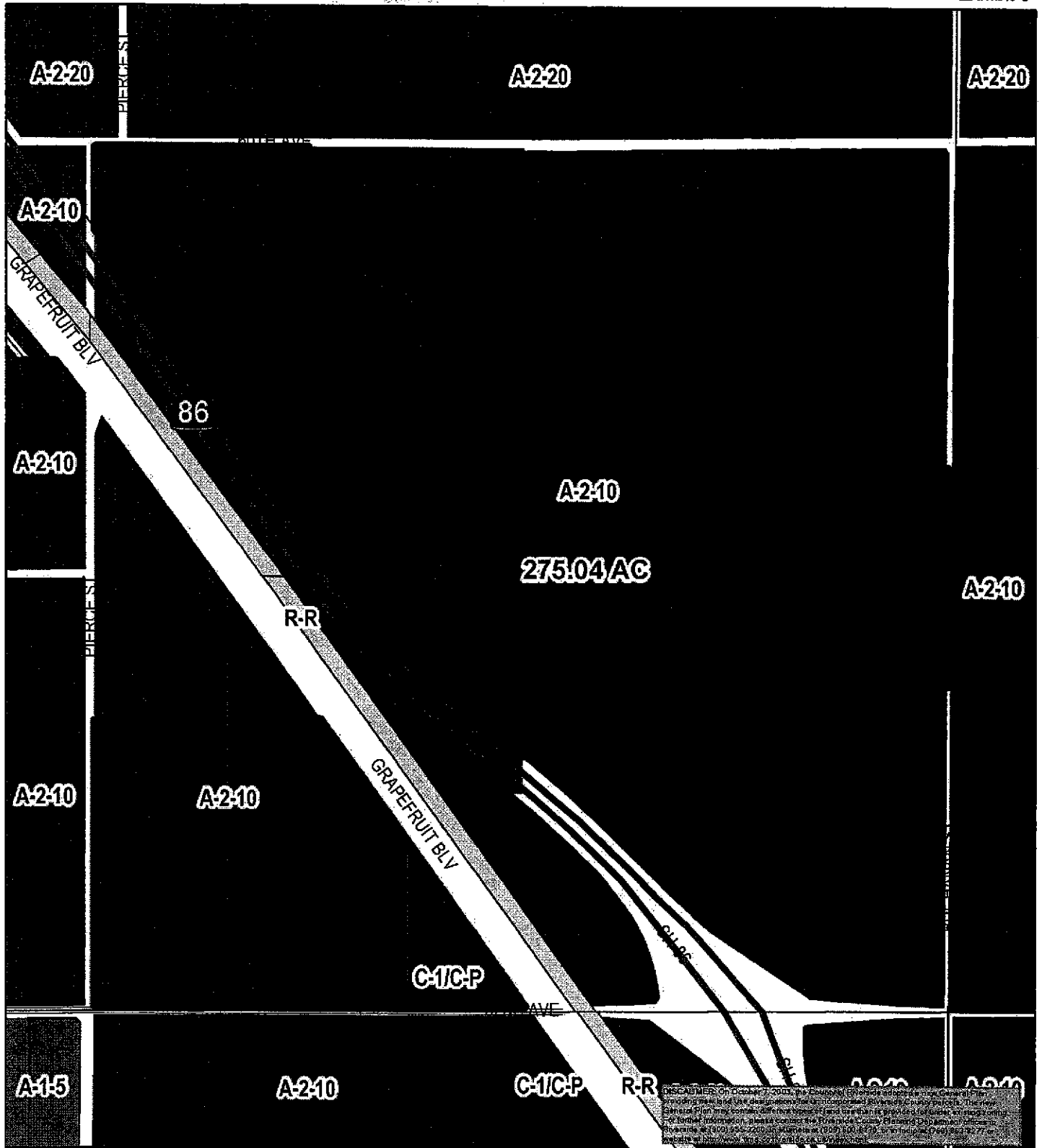
RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

District
Plan: **Lower Coachella Valley**
Township/Range: **T6SR0E**
SECTION: **18**



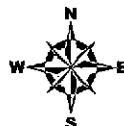
ASSESSOR:
BCL PG. 757-32834
THOMAS
BCL PG. 8882 C2

SP00350
EXISTING ZONING

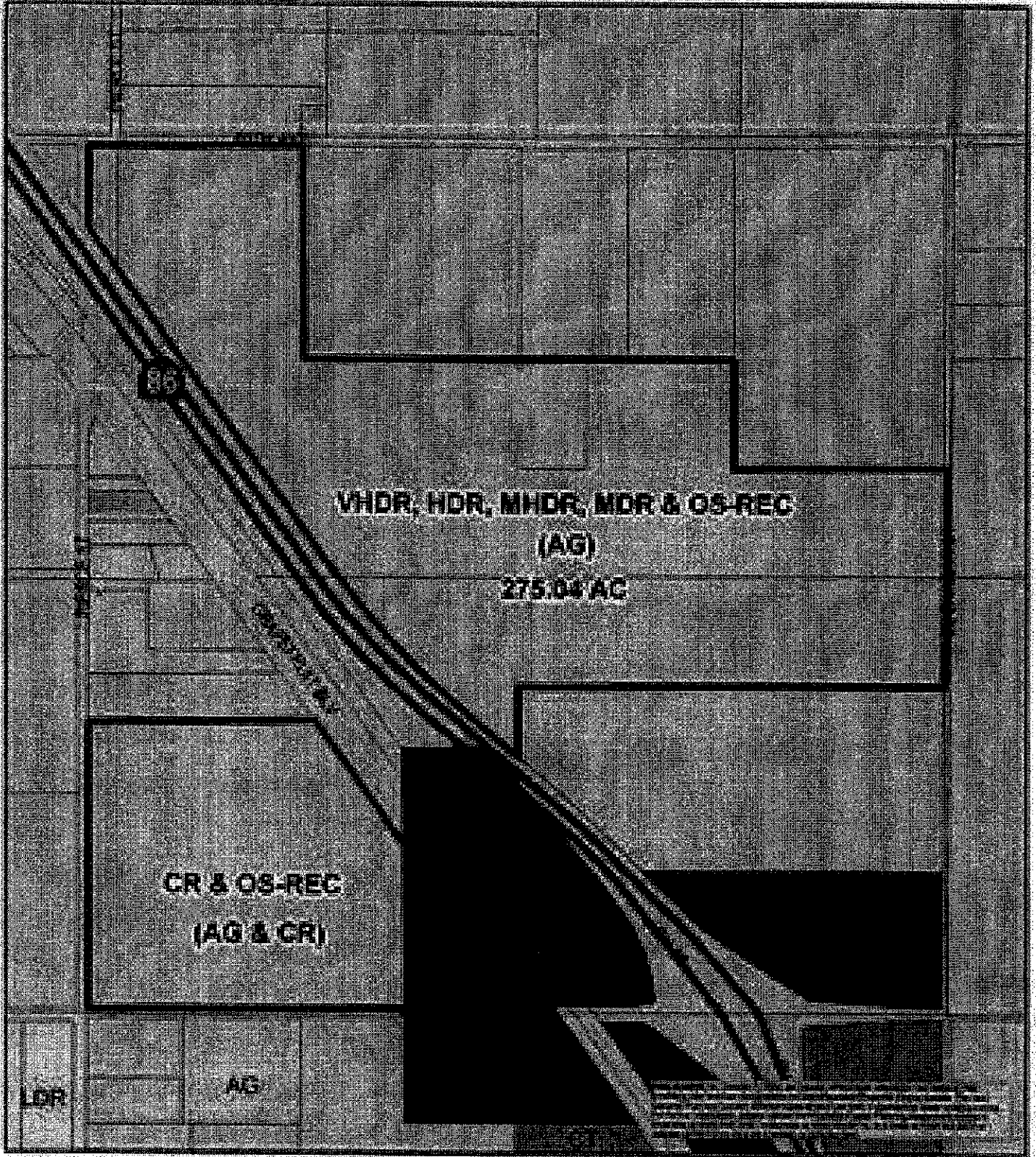


RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zone
District: **Lower Coachella Valley**
Township/Range: T6SR8E
Section : 36



ASSESSORS
BK. PG. 747-32&34
THOMAS
BROS.PG 5592 C2

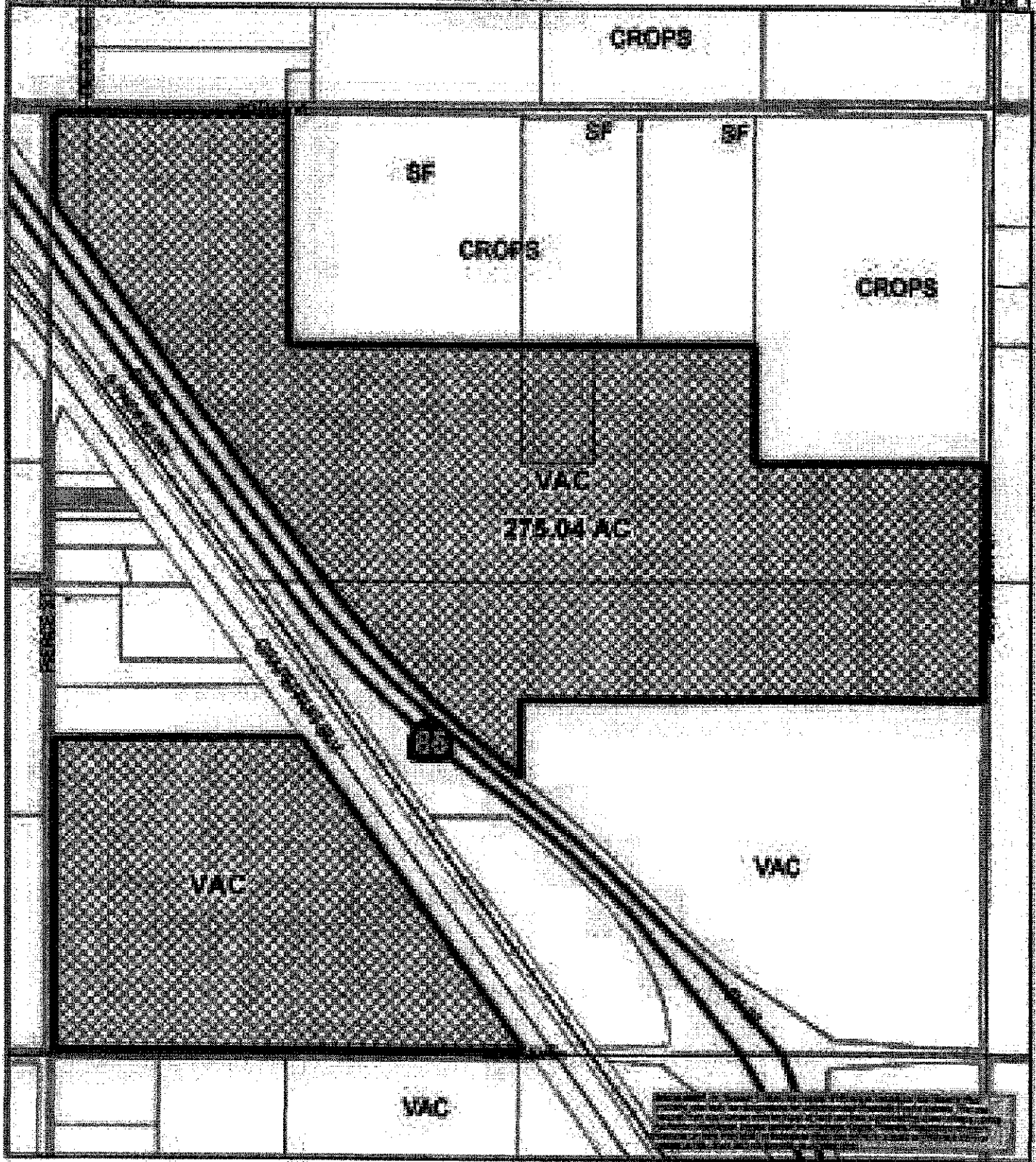


RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zone: Lower Coachella Valley
District:
Township/Range: T6SR8E
Section: 36



ASSESSORS
SIC. PG. 797-32834
THOMAS
ENCL. PG. 6592 C3



RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zone: Lower Coachella Valley
District: Lower Coachella Valley
Township/Range: T6S/R6E
Section: 36



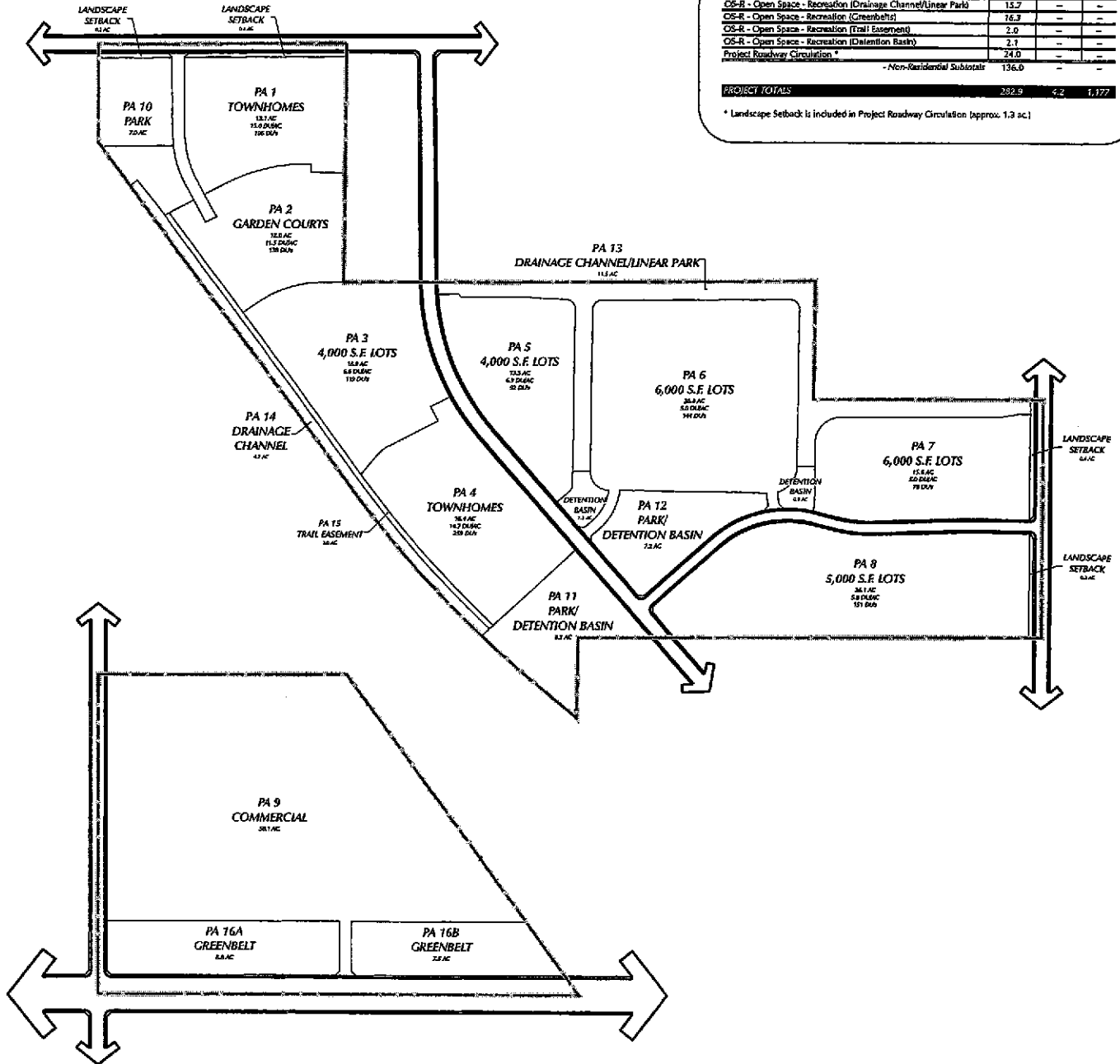
ASSESSORS: T6T-32&34
BK. PG.
THOMAS 6692 G2
BRIDGES



LAND USE SUMMARY

LAND USE	ACRES	DENSITY	DU's
MDR - (2 - 3 du/lot) - 5,000 S.F. Lots	44.0	4.9	219
MHDR - (5 - 8 du/lot) - 5,000 S.F. Lots	26.1	5.4	142
MHDR - (5 - 8 du/lot) - 4,000 S.F. Lots	30.3	5.5	159
HDR - (8 - 14 du/lot) - Garden Courts	72.0	10.2	732
YHDR - (14 - 20 du/lot) - Townhomes	34.1	14.5	495
- Residential Subtotal	746.9	8.0	1,177
CR - Commercial Retail	58.1	--	--
OS-R - Open Space - Recreation (Parks)	17.8	--	--
OS-R - Open Space - Recreation (Drainage Channel/Linear Park)	13.2	--	--
OS-R - Open Space - Recreation (Greenbelts)	16.3	--	--
OS-R - Open Space - Recreation (Trail Easement)	2.0	--	--
OS-R - Open Space - Recreation (Detention Basin)	2.1	--	--
Project Roadway Circulation *	24.0	--	--
- Non-Residential Subtotal	136.0	--	--
PROJECT TOTALS	282.9	4.2	1,177

* Landscape Setback is included in Project Roadway Circulation (approx. 1.3 ac.)



A. Project Location and Setting

Located in an unincorporated portion of the eastern Coachella Valley of Riverside County, the 282.9-acre COACHELLA 273 Specific Plan consists of two parcels; a 200.2-acre (“east”) parcel located east of Highways 111 and 86S, and an 82.7-acre (“west”) parcel located west of Highways 111 and 86S. The “east” parcel is bounded by 60th Avenue to the north, by Buchanan Street to the east, and by State Highways 111 and 86S to the west. The “west” parcel is bounded by Pierce Street to the west, 62nd Avenue to the south, and State Highways 111 and 86S to the east. State Highways 111 and 86S serve as the primary transportation corridors for this part of Riverside County. Additionally, the union Pacific Railroad main line runs between Highways 111 and 86S.

The land surrounding the project sites is primarily in agricultural production. However, directly south of the “east” site, across 62nd Avenue, are tribal lands designated heavy industrial under the General Plan, which includes a power plant. In addition, the approved 2,200-acre Kohl Ranch Specific Plan is located two miles west of the property and includes residential, commercial, office and industrial uses, as well as open space and school uses. The proposed South Valley Parkway Project is planned along 62nd Avenue adjacent to the “west” parcel and will require that the western COACHELLA 273 parcel be consistent with its Master Plan. The “east” parcel is within the boundaries of the approximately 5,000-acre Mecca Area Master Plan, which will require that the “east” parcel be consistent with its Master Plan. The project site also contains an underground irrigation drain system that will be maintained during and after construction.

B. Project Summary

The COACHELLA 273 Specific Plan project consists of concurrent applications for a General Plan Amendment, Change of Zone, Specific Plan and EIR. The Specific Plan is intended to guide development on both parcels consistent with development and housing goals contained within the Eastern Coachella Area Plan, of the County General Plan, as well as the planned South Valley Parkway and Mecca planning efforts. The General Plan Amendment will designate the project area “Community Development- Specific Plan,” rather than its current Agricultural designation. The Change of Zone will zone the property from A-2-10 (Heavy Agriculture) and C-1/C-P (General Commercial) to SP (Specific Plan). Finally, the EIR will disclose potential environmental effects which may result from project development.

The COACHELLA 273 Specific Plan project proposes residential and commercial land uses. The residential uses consist of townhomes and 4,000 to 6,000 square foot single-family homes for more affordable service worker housing on the “east” parcel. The commercial uses consist of a commercial center, including a maximum of approximately 806,513 square feet of retail space and supporting infrastructure, on the “west” parcel. The property will include drainage basins to capture drainage from the north and allow it to collect, settle, and become absorbed into the soil, while preventing salt collection within the soil. There will also be recreational facilities, such as parks, ball fields, and open space both in and around the residential areas on the eastern parcel. Table 1, *Land Use Summary*, sets forth the land uses for COACHELLA 273.

**Table 1
Land Use Summary**

LAND USE	ACRES	DENSITY	DWELLING UNITS
RESIDENTIAL			
6,000 S.F. Lots	51.5	4.5	231
5,000 S.F. Lots	20.3	5.4	109
4,000 S.F. Lots	29.1	6.7	194
Garden Courts	17.7	10.0	177
Townhomes	33.4	14.0	466
Residential Subtotal	152	7.7	1,177
NON-RESIDENTIAL			
Commercial (806,513 ft ² max)	52.9	-	-
300' Development Buffer	16.5	-	-
Parks/Detention Basin	14.6	-	-
Linear Parks/ Channel	21.3	-	-
Roads	25.0	-	-
25' Landscape Setback	0.6	-	-
Non-Residential Subtotal	130.9	0.0	0.0
PROJECT TOTALS	282.9	4.2	1,177

ENTITLEMENT / POLICY AMENDMENT

Case No. GPA00771 Supervisorial District: Fourth Existing Zoning: Heavy
Agriculture 20 Acre minimum (A-2-20) and General Commercial (C-1/C-P)

Area Plan: Southern Coachella Valley Acreage: 282.9

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

Existing General Plan Foundation: Community Development and Agriculture

Existing General Plan Land Use Designation: Commercial retail (CR) and Agriculture (AG)

Existing Policy Area(s) or Overlay(s): N/A

Existing Map(s) of Issue (cite GP figure # and page #): N/A

Existing Text of Issue (cite GP page #, plus policy #, if applicable): N/A

PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN CHANGES (For categories with no proposed change, write "N/A" on applicable line.)

Proposed General Plan Foundation: Community Development

Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation: Specific Plan

Proposed Change to Policy Area or Overlay: N/A

Proposed Change to Map (cite GP map name): N/A

Proposed Revision(s) to GP Text: (Attach redline/strike-out of text): N/A

CHECK LIST

Affected by	Yes	No	Comments
Coachella Valley MSHCP Conservation Area		X	
Western Riverside County MSHCP Cell		X	
Agricultural Preserve		X	
Airport Compatibility Zone	X		Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport Zone E
Flood Plain (Zone A – 100 Year)		X	
FLT Sand Source Area or FLT Preserve		X	
Fault Zone		X	
Faults within ½ Mile		X	
Liquefaction Potential; Subsidence	X		High to Very High
High Fire Area		X	
Code Compliant		X	
MSHCP Conserved Land		X	
Access / Alternate Access Issues		X	
Water / Sewer Issues		X	
City Sphere of Influence		X	
Proposed Annexation/ Incorporation Area		X	
Other Issues* (see below)		X	

ENTITLEMENT/POLICY FINDINGS

(Check all that apply)

Case: **ENTITLEMENT/POLICY GPA00771**

Is there a reasonable possibility that the first two findings listed below and any one or more of the subsequent findings listed below can be made?*

Finding	Yes	No	Comment
The proposed change does not involve a change in or conflict with: the Riverside County Vision; any General Planning Principle set forth in General Plan Appendix B; or any Foundation Component designation in the General Plan.	X		See Staff Report
The proposed amendment would either contribute to the purposes of the General Plan or, at a minimum, would not be detrimental to them.	X		See Staff Report
Special circumstances or conditions have emerged that were unanticipated in preparing the General Plan.	X		See Staff Report
A change in policy is required to conform to changes in state or federal law or applicable findings of a court of law.		X	
An amendment is required to comply with an update of the Housing Element or change in State Housing Element law.		X	
An amendment is required to expand basic employment job opportunities (jobs that contribute directly to the County's economic base) and that would improve the ratio of jobs-to-workers in the County.		X	
An amendment is required to address changes in ownership of land or land not under the land use authority of the Board of Supervisors.		X	

* **THE ADOPTION OF AN ORDER BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INITIATING AMENDMENT PROCEEDINGS SHALL NOT IMPLY ANY SUCH AMENDMENT WILL BE APPROVED.**

STAFF COMMENTS:

Department	Comments
Planning	See Staff Report
Transportation	N/A
EPD	N/A
Fire	N/A
Flood	N/A
Building and Safety	N/A
Geologist	N/A

AGRICULTURAL AMENDMENT

CYCLE: 2 1/2 YEAR

Case No. GPA00771 Supervisorial District: Fourth
Agriculture 20 Acre minimum (A-2-20) and General Commercial (C-1/C-P)

Existing Zoning: Heavy

Area Plan: Southern Coachella Valley Acreage: 282.9

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

Existing General Plan Foundation: Community Development and Agriculture

Existing General Plan Land Use Designation: Commercial retail (CR) and Agriculture (AG)

Existing Policy Area(s) or Overlay(s): N/A

Existing Map(s) of Issue (cite GP figure # and page #): N/A

Existing Text of Issue (cite GP page #, plus policy #, if applicable): N/A

PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN CHANGES

(For categories with no proposed change, write "N/A" on applicable line.)

Proposed General Plan Foundation: Community Development

Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation: Specific Plan

Proposed Change to Policy Area or Overlay: N/A

Proposed Change to Map (cite GP map name): N/A

Proposed Revision(s) to GP Text: (Attach redline/strike-out of text): N/A

CHECK LIST

Affected by	Yes	No	Comments
Coachella Valley MSHCP Conservation Area		X	
Western Riverside County MSHCP Cell		X	
Agricultural Preserve		X	
Airport Compatibility Zone	X		Jackie Cochran Airport Zone E
Flood Plain (Zone A – 100 Year)		X	
FLT Sand Source Area or FLT Preserve		X	
Fault Zone		X	
Faults within ½ Mile		X	
Liquefaction Potential; Subsidence	X		High to Very High
High Fire Area		X	
Code Compliant		X	
MSHCP Conserved Land		X	
Access / Alternate Access Issues		X	
Water / Sewer Issues		X	
City Sphere of Influence		X	
Proposed Annexation/ Incorporation Area		X	
Other Issues* (see below)		X	

*** OTHER ISSUES:**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
N/A		

AGRICULTURAL FINDINGS

(Check all that apply)

Is there a reasonable possibility that the following findings can be made?*

Finding	Yes	No	Comment
The amendment would contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan.	X		See Staff Report
The amendment would not be detrimental to the purposes of the General Plan.	X		See Staff Report

*** THE ADOPTION OF AN ORDER BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INITIATING AMENDMENT PROCEEDINGS SHALL NOT IMPLY ANY SUCH AMENDMENT WILL BE APPROVED.**

STAFF COMMENTS:

Department	Comments
Planning	See Staff Report
Transportation	N/A
EPD	N/A
Fire	N/A
Flood	N/A
Building and Safety	N/A
Geologist	N/A

Applicant/Owner:

CNH Investments
2091 West Florida Ave Suite 140
Hemet CA 92545

Engineer/Representative:

T&B Planning
17542 East 17th Street Suite 100
Tustin CA 92780

Owner:

ENDANGERED HABITATS LEAGUE

DEDICATED TO ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE



March 22, 2009

VIA FACSIMILE AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Hon. Jeff Stone
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
4080 Lemon St. 5th Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

RE: Item 15, General Plan Amendment Initiation Proceedings (March 24, 2009)

Dear Chairman Stone and Members of the Board:

The Endangered Habitats League (EHL) appreciates the opportunity to comment on this set of landowner-initiated GPAs. Once again, many of these items have serious land use implications. It is essential for your Board to take a "hard look" and deny Foundation-change proposals that do not meet the test provided by the General Plan:

- a. The foundation change is based on ample evidence that *new conditions or circumstances* disclosed during the review process justify modifying the General Plan, that the modifications do not conflict with the overall Riverside County Vision, and that they would not create an internal inconsistency among the elements of the General Plan. (Emphasis added.)

Item 15.1, GPA 923 (Mead Valley)

Concur with staff recommendation for denial of initiation due to the community boundary issues described and the surplus of nearby vacant commercial property.

Item 15.2, GPA 920 (Southwest Area Plan) (72 acres)

Item 15.3, GPA 986 (Southwest Area Plan) (19 acres)

Item 15.4, GPA 1026 (Southwest Area Plan) (150 acres)

Disagree with the staff recommendation to initiate the change of a total of 241 acres of Rural, Rural Mountainous, and Agricultural land to Community Development on the basis of a "trend" that is nothing other than the trend of sprawl. No new circumstances are documented that compel these Foundation changes, and indeed, they are contrary to the vision of a greenbelt. At stake is a block of highly intact rural and agricultural land on the eastern border of Highway 79 urbanization. These very lands now form an urban edge that *defines* communities, with urban to the west and rural and open space to the east.

Without planning justification, staff is recommending a series of GPAs that would transform this area and push development further east along the scenic Highway 79 corridor. Current traffic congestion on Highway 79 should alone be enough to deny these

proposals. The "progression of Community Development land use designations" referred to in the staff report is simply a progression of *requests* for GPAs that is being confused with real planning.

What is the vision for this region, and how was it arrived at? What community outreach occurred? What is the City of Temecula's view? What is the absorption capacity (in years of growth) of the current General Plan? Is more urban land needed, and on what basis? What growth accommodation alternatives were considered other than greenfield development? If more urban land is needed, where is it optimally sited given transportation, open space, and greenhouse gas considerations? *These questions are never asked let alone answered.* While adjacency is *one* legitimate factor, it is not *sufficient* to justify land conversion.

This group of GPAs illustrates how the landowner-initiated process has become piecemealed and how it is failing to consider the "big picture" questions posed above. This group of GPAs also typifies the loss of rural, agricultural, and open space without the justification of new planning circumstances. Where will the eastward progression of rural conversion stop? How far behind are requests for the land *adjacent* to these GPAs to follow the "trend" and follow suit? The rigor needed to conduct a successful Five-Year Update is missing from the staff recommendation, and denial is an important step in retaining the integrity of the General Plan Update.

Item 15.5, GPA 771 (Coachella)

Item 15.6, GPA 828 (Coachella)

While EHL is not familiar with the South Valley Implementation Plan (SVIP), of which these proposals are parts, based on the information contained in the staff report, we *disagree* with the recommendations. A total of 641 acres of agriculture would be converted to residential Community Development/Specific Plan absent an analysis of the absorption capacity of existing urban-designated land in the region or of ways to accommodate growth while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than a Community Center, typical sprawl is proposed.

Item 15.7, GPA 990 (Coachella)

Concur with staff recommendation for denial of initiation due to the inconsistency with the rural character and the vision for the area, as well as lack of infrastructure. No new circumstances have been put forward to justify a Foundation change for 808 acres from Open Space-Rural to Community Development.

Item 15.8, GPA 1068 (Coachella)

While EHL is not familiar with the South Valley Implementation Plan (SVIP), of which this proposal is a part, based on the information contained in the staff report, we *disagree* with the recommendation. 165 acres of groves, currently planned for light industrial, in the heart of an agricultural area, would be converted to residential Community Development/Specific Plan absent an analysis of the absorption capacity of existing urban-designated land in the region or of ways to accommodate growth while

minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than a Community Center, typical sprawl is proposed.

Item 15.9, GPA 1071 (Coachella)

No position

Item 15.10, GPA 841 (Lakeview Nuevo)

No position.

Item 15.11, GPA 1012 (San Timoteo/Pass)

Concur with the staff recommendation for denial of initiation. The conversion of 41 acres of Rural and Rural Mountainous land to Rural Community estate lots would be inconsistent with community character and with the surrounding parcels. It would also increase residential intensity in high fire hazard locations, contrary to the recommendation of the Riverside County Fire Hazard Reduction Task Force:


Update the Riverside County General Plan and complete consistency zoning actions to limit residential growth within or adjacent to high fire hazard areas.

Item 15.12, GPA 1069 (Coachella)

No position

In conclusion, many of these GPA proposals present important opportunities to maintain the integrity of the Foundation system, retain community character and agricultural resources, and promote orderly growth. Once again, we appreciate being able to work with you on a successful Fire-Year Update Cycle.

With best regards,



Dan Silver, MD
Executive Director

cc: Clerk of the Board
Board offices

electronic cc: George Johnson Mike Harrod
Ron Goldman Katherine Lind
Damian Meins Interested parties