

**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM**

This form and the descriptive information in the application package constitute the contents of Initial Study pursuant to County Guidelines under Ordinance 3040 and Section 15063 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

PROJECT LABEL: New Fire Station #41 in Yucca Valley, CA

APNs:	05917104 and 05916208	USGS Quad:	Yucca Valley South 7.5-minute USGS Quad
Applicant:	San Bernardino County, Project and Facilities Management Dept. 620 South E Street San Bernardino, CA 92415	T, R, Section:	Township 1 North, Range 5 East, Section 36
Location	Southwest of the intersection of Twentynine Palms Outer Highway South and Joshua Lane South at 7238 Joshua Lane, Yucca Valley, CA 92284	Thomas Bros	Page 4,957; Grid J2; San Bernardino County (2023)
Project No:	10.10.1268	Community Plan:	N/A
Rep	Beville Lloyd	LUZD:	Mixed Use Mixed Use Commercial (C-MU)
Proposal:	Construction of the new 13,230 square-foot Fire Station #41 and associated facilities. The new fire station will house 5 personnel, 1 engine, and 1 paramedic truck.	Overlays:	

PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lead agency: County of San Bernardino
Project and Facilities Management Department
620 South E Street
San Bernardino, CA 92415

Contact person: Beville Lloyd
Phone No: (909) 387-5000 **Fax No:** N/A
E-mail: Beville.Lloyd@pfm.sbcounty.gov

Project Sponsor Beville Lloyd
County of San Bernardino
Project and Facilities Management Department
Capital Improvement Project Manager
620 South E Street
San Bernardino, CA 92415

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Summary

The Project site is comprised of two (2) parcels, Accessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 05917104 and 05916208. The total acreage for the site is 1.72 acres located in the Town of Yucca Valley on parcels owned by San Bernardino County (see Figure 1 – Regional Location). The Project site is located southwest of the intersection of Twentynine Palms Outer Highway South and Joshua Lane South (see Figure 2 – Project Vicinity). The Proponent of the Project and the Lead Agency is San Bernardino County. The Project site is within the incorporated Town of Yucca Valley General Plan with the development code of Mixed Use and is currently designated with the zoning of Mixed-Use Commercial (C-MU).

The County of San Bernardino Facilities and Project Management Department proposes to develop the new Fire Station #41 at 7238 Joshua Lane by constructing a new 13,230 square-foot station and new associated facilities (Project). The new fire station will house 5 personnel, 1 engine, and 1 paramedic truck. The total footprint of the building is 12,993 square feet. The new fire station will be part of the District's Division 4, which will serve the unincorporated area adjacent to the Town of Yucca Valley, and the contract cities of Joshua Tree and 29 Palms.

Improvements to the site would include new security fencing, a hose house, hose rack, generator, fuel tank, trash enclosure, new access road, landscaping, and hardscaping. Parking will consist of seventeen (17) parking spaces. Ingress and egress to the Project site will be via Twentynine Palms Outer Highway and Joshua Lane through two driveways: the southern driveway will be the primary entrance and exit for the emergency vehicles, while the northern driveway will serve as the public entrance and exit.



Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

The Proposed Project is located within the jurisdiction of the Town of Yucca Valley on property owned by San Bernardino County. As shown on the Town of Yucca Valley Zoning map, the Project site is within the Town of Yucca Valley General Plan with the development code of Mixed Use and is currently designated with the zoning Mixed Use Commercial (C-MU). The Project site is located southwest of the intersection of Twentynine Palms Outer Highway South and Joshua Lane South at 7238 Joshua Lane in the Town of Yucca Valley: Accessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 05917104 and 05916208. The Project site is generally depicted in the southern portion of the Yucca Valley North Quadrangle United States Geological Survey's (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic map. The land use designations surrounding the Project site consist of Mixed-Use Commercial. The following table lists the existing adjacent land uses and zoning.

Existing Land Use and Land Use Zoning Districts		
Location	Existing Land Use	Land Use Zoning District
Project Site	Vacant Lot	Mixed Use Commercial, Town of Yucca Valley
North	Commercial – Fast Food Restaurant and Shoe Store	Mixed Use Commercial, Town of Yucca Valley
South	Commercial – Insurance Company and Bank	Mixed Use Commercial, Town of Yucca Valley
East	Commercial – Pool and Spa, Flooring, and Pawn Shop	Mixed Use Commercial, Town of Yucca Valley
West	Public Library	Mixed Use Commercial, Town of Yucca Valley

Statement of Objectives

The proposed development of the new Fire Station #41 addresses the critical need to replace the existing station, which is inadequate for meeting modern operational and safety standards. Constructed in the 1950s and partially renovated in the 1990s, the current facility does not meet present-day requirements for emergency services infrastructure.

To address these deficiencies, state, county, and local officials have collaborated for over a year to identify a suitable location for a replacement facility. Efforts to secure affordable land in Yucca Valley were challenging; however, a parcel on Joshua Lane was ultimately selected for the development of the new fire station.

The proposed Project includes the construction of a modern fire station equipped with updated facilities and a community meeting room, enhancing both emergency response capabilities and public engagement. Additionally, plans are under consideration to repurpose the existing station on Twentynine Palms Highway into an administrative building, ensuring continued utility of the current site.

This Project reflects a commitment to improving fire and emergency services for the Yucca Valley community while addressing longstanding infrastructure challenges.

Project Site Location, Existing Site Land Uses and Conditions

The Project site is located at 7238 Joshua Lane in the Town of Yucca Valley. The site is comprised of vacant, undeveloped land designated for mixed-use commercial purposes. It features two

access points: one on the north side and one on the south side, connected by an informal dirt road. The site is relatively flat, with an elevation of approximately 3,278 feet above sea level.

Site Development

Demolition and Grading

Demolition of the site includes removal of concrete pavement sidewalk, fencing and footings, vegetation including trees, shrubs, and roots along with removal of the subgrade area. The existing site has an average slope of approximately 3% from south to north. The regrading will follow existing grade to minimize earthwork. The Fire Station building will be set on level pads with perimeter slopes. Surface draining is to be conveyed with concrete gutters and underground storm drainpipes. All improvements shall be per San Bernardino County standards.

Buildings and Facilities

The Project consists of a new 12,993 square-foot fire station building and surrounding parking lot for a total of 13,230 square-foot facility. North of the fire station building there will be a generator, hose house, hose rack, and fuel tank. In addition, new fencing and security gates will be installed.

Parking and Circulation

The proposed Project will include a total of 17 parking stalls, with 2 designated as handicap stalls and 5 reserved for EV charging. Ingress and egress to the Project site will be via Twentynine Palms Outer Highway and Joshua Lane through two driveways: the southern driveway will be the primary entrance and exit for the emergency vehicles, while the northern driveway will serve as the public entrance and exit.

Construction

The construction of the new Fire Station #41 will be a design bid build and is anticipated to begin in Summer 2025. The timeline of construction is for completion in Fall of 2026. Construction will follow guidelines of San Bernardino County regarding noise and time of construction.

Utilities

The Project will require utility connections on Twentynine Palms Outerhighway. The Project site would continue to receive water service as well as wastewater service from the Hi-Desert Water District, solid waste disposal from Burrtec Waste Industries, natural gas service from SoCal Gas, and electricity from Southern California Edison.

Additional Project Features

- 11 dormitories
- Decontamination shower room
- Decontamination laundry room
- 4 shower rooms
- 2 offices
- Laundry room
- Chief dorm, office, and shower
- Kitchen & dining room
- Turnout gear room and BC apparatus bay
- Medical storage room
- Equipment room

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- Workshop
- Exercise room

ADDITIONAL APPROVAL REQUIRED BY OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

Federal: None.

State of California: None.

County of San Bernardino: Land Use Services Department-Building and Safety, Public Health-Environmental Health Services, and Public Works.

Regional: Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District.

Local: None.

Site Photographs



Photo 1: View of northeastern corner of the Project site looking west.



Photo 2: View along the northern Project boundary, looking south.



Photo 3: View of the southcentral portion of the Project site, looking east towards the library.



Photo 4: View of southern portion of the Project site looking north.



Photo 5: View of southern portion of the Project site looking west.



Photo 6: View of southern portion of the Project site looking east.

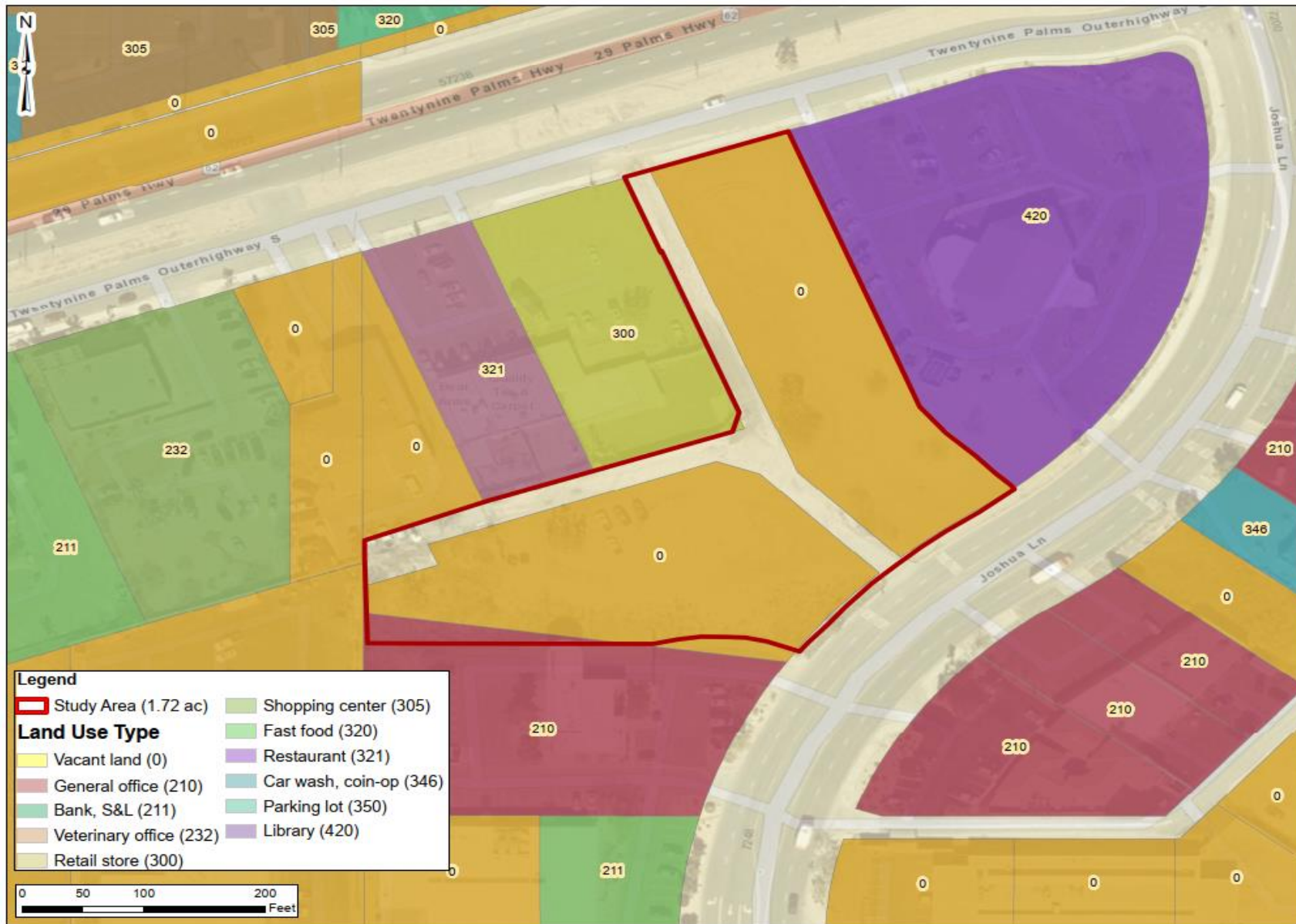


Figure 1 Land Use of the Property



Figure 2 Project Vicinity Map

*Initial Study Project No. 10.10.1268
New Fire Station #41
APNs: 05917104 and 05916208
August 2025*

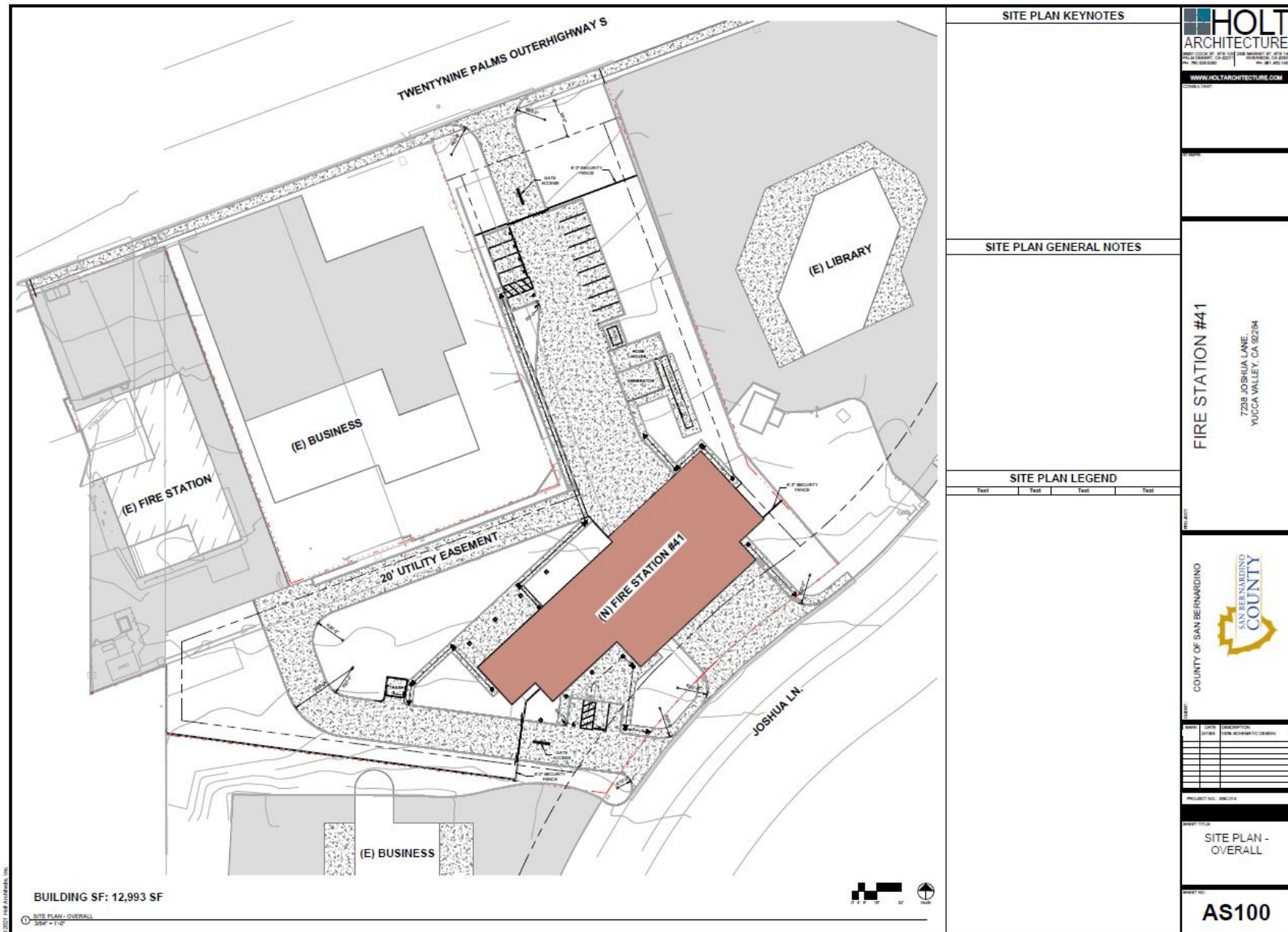
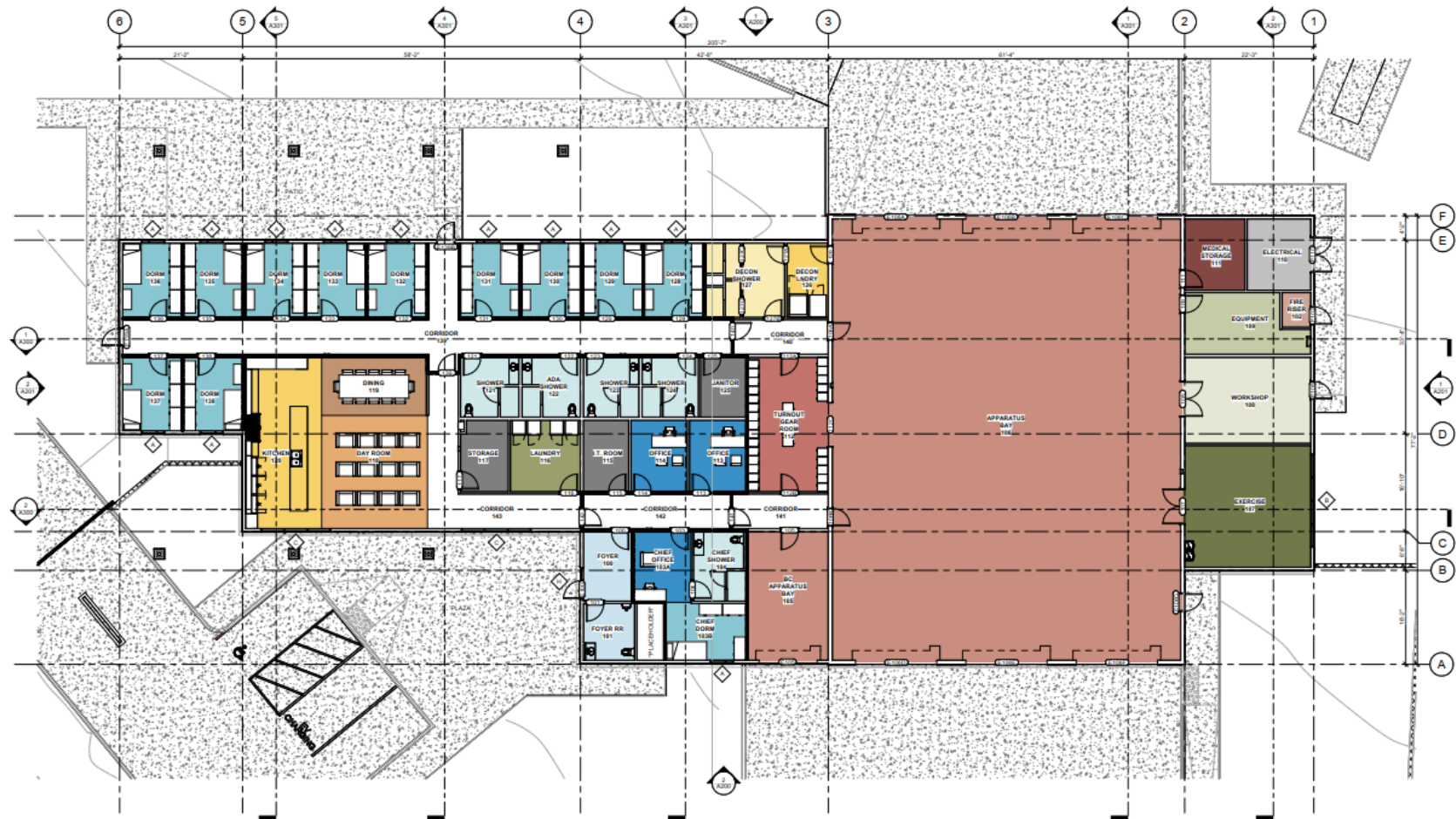


Figure 3 Site Plan



BUILDING SF: 12,993 SF

FLOOR PLAN - OVERALL
 1/8" = 1'-0"



Figure 4 Layout Plan

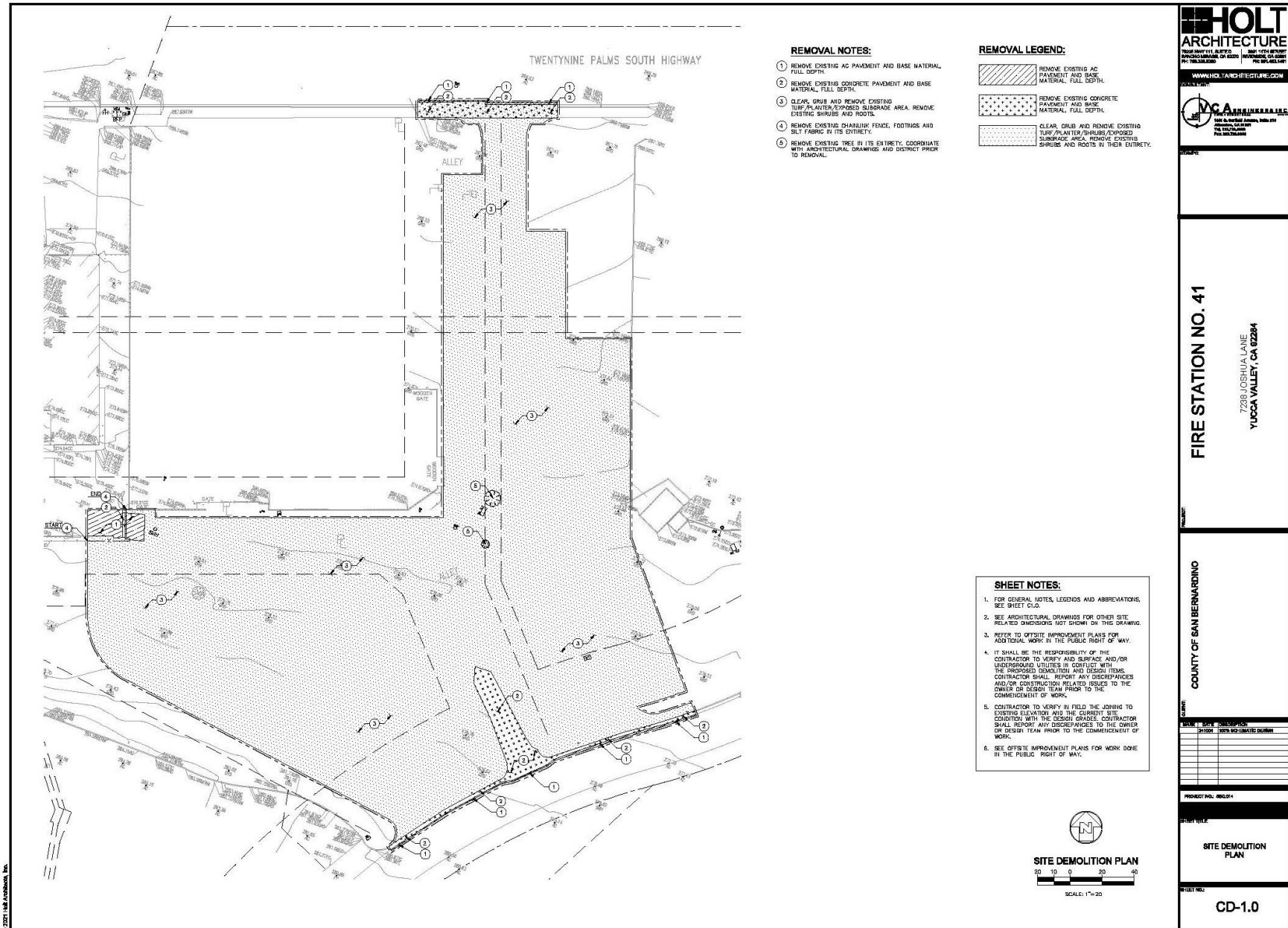


Figure 5 Demolition Plan

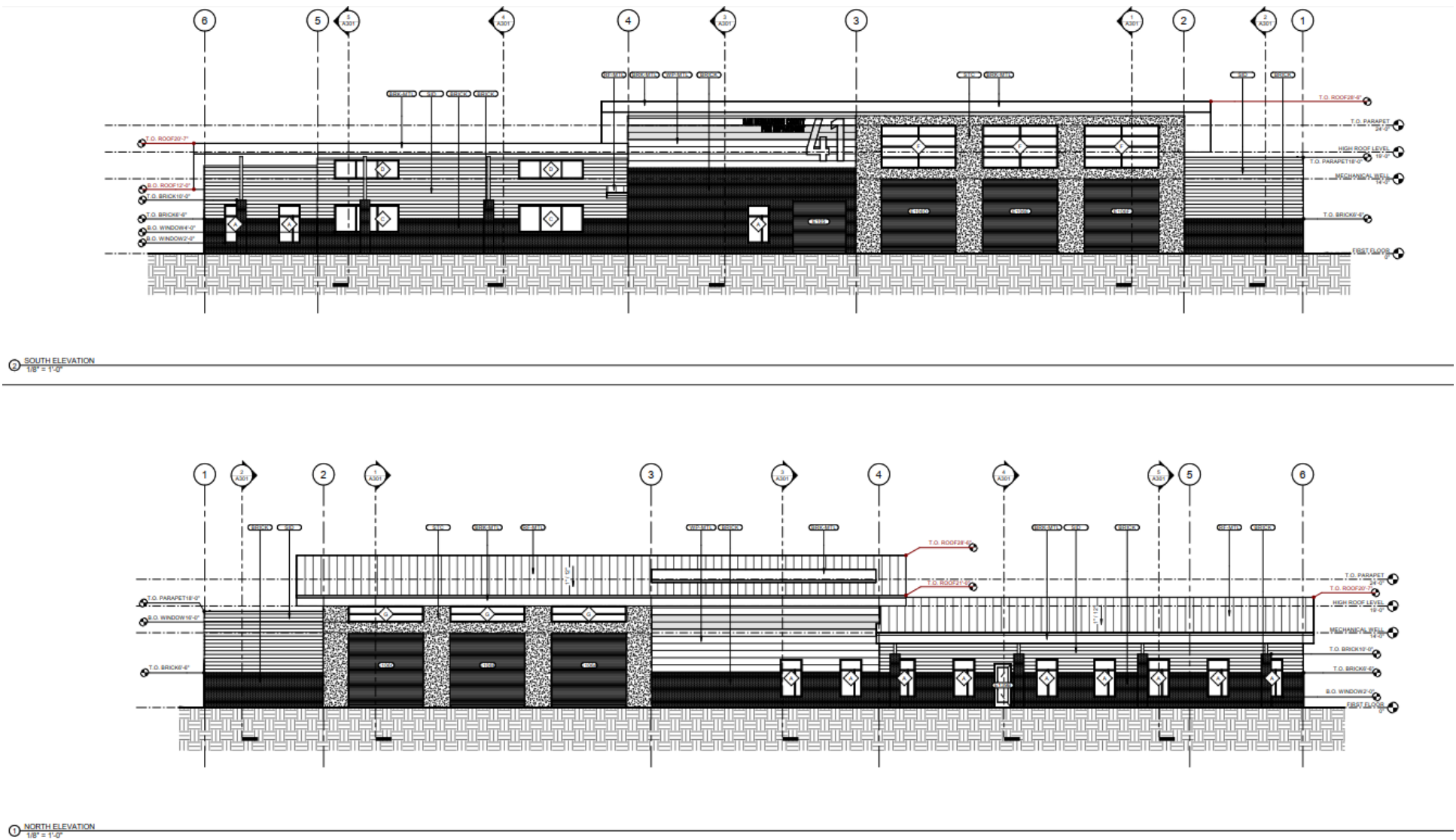


Figure 6 Building Elevations

CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

On December 20, 2024, the County of San Bernardino sent AB 52 notification letters to the following Native American tribal representatives:

- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Cabazon Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Cahuilla Band of Indians
- Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians
- Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation
- Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (currently known as Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation)
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Serrano Nation of Mission Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians
- Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
- Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

The 30-day AB 52 notification period ended on January 20, 2025, and Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation provided mitigation measures included in the Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Tribal Cultural Resource sections of this report.

EVALUATION FORMAT

This Initial Study is prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq. and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000, et seq.). Specifically, the preparation of an Initial Study is guided by Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines. This format of the study is presented as follows. The project is evaluated based on its effect on 20 major categories of environmental factors. Each factor is reviewed by responding to a series of questions regarding the impact of the project on each element of the overall factor. The Initial Study checklist provides a formatted analysis that provides a determination of the effect of the project on the factor and its elements. The effect of the project is categorized into one of the following four categories of possible determinations:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
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Substantiation is then provided to justify each determination. One of the four following conclusions is then provided as a summary of the analysis for each of the major environmental factors.

1. **No Impact:** No impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.
2. **Less than Significant Impact:** No significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.
3. **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** Possible significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated and the following mitigation measures are required as a condition of project approval to reduce these impacts to a level below significant. The required mitigation measures are: (List of mitigation measures)
4. **Potentially Significant Impact:** Significant adverse impacts have been identified or anticipated. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to evaluate these impacts, which are (List of the impacts requiring analysis within the EIR).

At the end of the analysis the required mitigation measures are restated and categorized as being either self- monitoring or as requiring a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below will be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Aesthetics | ☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ☐ Air Quality |
| ☒ Biological Resources | ☒ Cultural Resources | ☐ Energy |
| ☒ Geology/Soils | ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality | ☐ Land Use/Planning | ☐ Mineral Resources |
| ☐ Noise | ☐ Population/Housing | ☐ Public Services |
| ☐ Recreation | ☐ Transportation | ☒ Tribal Cultural Resources |
| ☐ Utilities/Service Systems | ☐ Wildfire | ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the following finding is made:

☐	The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION shall be prepared.
☒	Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there shall not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION shall be prepared.
☐	The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
☐	The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
☐	Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

 Signature: (prepared by Name , Planner)

 Date

 Signature:(Name , Supervising Planner)

 Date

Issues		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:					
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located within the view-shed of any Scenic Route listed in the General Plan):

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact. Scenic vistas are generally defined as viewpoints that offer expansive views of significant landscape features or important historic or architectural landmarks. Examples include mountain ranges, lakes, coastlines, and historic structures. While Yucca Valley's General Plan does not identify specific scenic resources within the town, it does highlight scenic vistas visible from the area, such as the Little San Bernardino Mountains of the Peninsular Ranges, the San Bernardino Mountains to the east in the Transverse Ranges, and the surrounding hillsides.

The proposed Project involves the development of a new Fire Station #41 on land currently owned by the County of San Bernardino. The fire station will cover 13,230 square feet and include additional facilities like a fire hose rack, hose house, generator, and fuel tank, located to the north of the building. The station will accommodate five personnel, a fire engine, and a paramedic truck. The Project site is currently

undeveloped and surrounded by roadways and commercial developments, with pockets of vacant land in various directions.

The fire station's construction will comply with the height regulations set forth in Section 82.05.060 of the County's Development Code for commercial development in the Desert Region. As shown in Figure 6, the maximum building height will be 28.5 feet tall, well below the 35-foot height limit. The other structures on the site will also be under 35 feet in height, ensuring that the development will not obstruct views of the mountain ranges to the south and west. Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to have a substantial adverse impact on scenic vistas.

- b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site does not occur within a County or State-designated scenic highway.¹ The nearest officially designated County Scenic Route is approximately 11.4 miles southwest of the Project site, which includes a segment of State Route 62. This portion spans approximately 9.2 miles, starting at Interstate 10 and extending north to the San Bernardino Countyline near Cottonwood Canyon Ranch. The next closest officially designated scenic route is State Route 38, located approximately 18 miles west of the Project site. The nearest eligible scenic routes are the Twenty-Nine Palms Highway (State Route 62) located approximately 70 feet north of the Project site and State Route 247, located approximately 400 feet northwest of the Project Site.

In accordance with Chapter 83.08 of the San Bernardino County Development Code (Section 83.08.030), significant existing features, such as rock formations and rock outcroppings, are to be protected and incorporated into the Project to the extent feasible. However, no such significant natural features are present within the Project site. The site is currently vacant and does not contain any existing buildings or structures.

Additionally, there are no historic buildings within the Project site that are registered or eligible for registration with the California Register of Historical Resources. As a result, the Project would not adversely impact scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings, within a state scenic highway. Consequently, the Project would have less-than-significant impacts on aesthetics in this regard, and no mitigation measures are required.

- c) *In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is located in a nonurbanized area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Town of Yucca Valley has a population of

¹ Draft Environmental Impact Report Countywide Plan Figure 5.1-1 County Designated Scenic Routes; accessed November 11, 2024

approximately 21,664 (USCB 2023). The Town does not qualify as an urbanized area under the definition provided in the Public Resources Code Section 21071, Urbanized Area. The tallest structure proposed would be 28.5 feet in height, which would not obstruct scenic views. The Project site is zoned for commercial use and aligns with existing land uses and the development guidelines outlined in the San Bernardino County General Plan. Due to the relatively flat topography of the site and surrounding area, views of the nearby mountains would remain unobstructed. The implementation of the proposed Project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The Project's design would comply with the County's Development Code, incorporating appropriate landscaping and energy-efficient features. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality, and impacts would be less than significant.

- d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would introduce new sources of light and glare due to the addition of new uses on the site. However, these new sources are expected to be similar to existing conditions, particularly since the existing Fire Station #41 is located approximately 200 feet west of the Project site. The Project is subject to the County's Development Code, including Chapter 83.07 – Light Trespass, which regulates outdoor lighting to minimize light pollution, glare, light trespass, and the degradation of the nighttime visual environment.

Section 83.07.060 for the Mountain and Desert regions requires that lighting for commercial or industrial uses be fully shielded to prevent light pollution or trespass. The section also mandates the use of automated controls, such as motion sensors and timers, to comply with curfew requirements. The dark sky curfew dictates that all lighting must be turned off by 11:00 p.m. or the close of business, whichever is later, with exceptions for lighting at entry/exit points, driveways, and parking areas.

The proposed Project site will be operated 24/7, 365 days per year, and construction activities will take place between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Compliance with the County's Development Code requirements will ensure that the Project does not create significant light or glare impacts, as the downward-casting lighting will be detailed during the building permit and inspection phases. Therefore, potential impacts related to light and glare will be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
II.	AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES - In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared				

by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) | Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) | Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) | Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) | Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) | Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located in the Important Farmlands Overlay):

Countywide Plan; California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*

No Impact. The Project site is not designated as agricultural, according to the Countywide Plan. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not involve the conversion

of Prime or Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance. Therefore, no impacts associated with the conversion of farmland would occur.

b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*

No Impact. The parcels included in the Project site are zoned as "C-MU" Mixed Use Commercial. The Project site does not contain any parcels that are associated with a Williamson Act contract. Implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?*

No Impact. The parcels included in the Project site are zoned as "C-MU" Mixed Use Commercial. The Project site does not contain any parcels that are associated with timberland or timberland production. Implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with zoning or cause the rezoning of forest land or timberland.

d) *Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

No Impact. The proposed Project is located in an urbanized environment and would not involve forest lands. Implementation of the proposed Project would not have the potential to affect forest lands or convert them to non-forest uses.

e) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

No Impact. The proposed Project is located in an urbanized environment and does not involve farmland, forest or timberland, or other agricultural resources. Implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the direct, nor indirect conversion of agricultural or forest lands to other uses.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
III. AIR QUALITY - Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district might be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:					
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

SUBSTANTIATION: *(Discuss conformity with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management Plan, if applicable):*

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials, Air Quality Study (Appendix A)

- a) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is within the Mojave Desert Air Basin and under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). The Mojave Desert Air Basin encompasses the desert portion of San Bernardino County. The MDAQMD has jurisdiction over air quality issues and regulations within the Mojave Desert Air Basin. To assist local agencies in determining if a Project's emissions could pose a significant threat to air quality, the MDAQMD has adopted the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guideline (February 2020) which is a policy document intended to assist preparers of environmental analysis or review of documents for Projects within the jurisdiction of the MDAQMD by providing background information and guidance on the preferred analysis approach. Additionally, the County of San Bernardino is responsible for the implementation of transportation control measures as outlined in the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan and MDAQMD Attainment Plans. The air and dust emissions from the construction and operational use of the Proposed Project were evaluated and compared to the MDAQMD air quality thresholds to determine significance.

Emissions from the Proposed Project are subject to federal, State, and local rules and regulations implemented through provisions of the federal Clean Air Act, California Clean Air Act, and the rules and regulations of the California Air Resources Board and MDAQMD. The federal Clean Air Act and California Clean Air Act were established in an effort to assure that acceptable levels of air quality are maintained. These levels are based upon health-related exposure limits and are referred to as National Ambient Air Quality Standards, provided in Appendix A, and the California Ambient Air Quality Standards. The ambient air quality standards establish maximum allowable concentrations of specific pollutants in the atmosphere and characterize the amount of exposure deemed safe for the public. Areas that meet the standards are designated attainment and if found to be in violation of primary standards are designated as nonattainment areas.

An evaluation of potential air quality impacts related to a potential development type under the current commercial zoning for the proposed Project was prepared by MD Acoustics

on November 26, 2024 and is included as Appendix A. Construction and operational emissions for the proposed Project were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1.1.29. The MDAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds are shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Pollutant	Annual Thresholds (tons/year)	Daily Thresholds (pounds/day)
NO_x	25	137
VOC	25	137
PM₁₀	15	82
PM_{2.5}	15	82
SO_x	25	137
CO	100	548
Lead	0.6	3
Greenhouse Gases (CO₂e)	100,000	548,000

Air Quality Study (Appendix A)

The proposed Project will be in compliance with the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan and MDAQMD Attainment Plans and Project construction and operation emissions will remain below the MDAQMD air quality significance thresholds. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated regarding confliction or obstruction of the implementation of applicable air quality plan, and impacts will be less than significant.

- b) *Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project's construction and operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod modeling for onsite and offsite construction emissions. According to the Air Quality Study, the construction emissions for the Project would not exceed MDAQMD's daily emissions thresholds for volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and fugitive particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). The results of estimated construction emissions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Construction Emissions (pounds/day)

Construction Year	Pollutant Emissions (pounds/day)					
	VOC	NOx	CO	SO ₂	PM10	PM2.5
2025	1.80	26.00	18.00	0.09	6.61	2.90
2026	8.02	8.67	10.30	0.02	0.39	0.29
Maximum	8.02	26.00	18.00	0.09	6.61	2.90
MDAQMD Thresholds	137	137	548	137	82	65
Exceeds Thresholds	No	No	No	No	No	No
Notes: ¹ Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.29. See Appendix A for full output. ² On-site emissions from equipment operated on-site that is not operated on public roads. On-site grading PM-10 and PM-2.5 emissions show mitigated values for fugitive dust for compliance with MDAQMD Rule 403. ³ Off-site emissions from equipment operated on public roads. ⁴ Construction, architectural coatings and paving phases may overlap.						

Air Quality Study (Appendix A)

Operational Emissions

The operations-related criteria air quality impacts created by the proposed Project have been analyzed through the use of CalEEMod model. The operating emissions were based on year 2025, which is a conservative estimate of the opening year for the Project. The summer and winter emissions created by the proposed Project's long-term operations were calculated and the highest emissions from either summer or winter are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Operational Emissions (tons/year)

Activity	Pollutant Emissions (tons/year) ¹					
	VOC	NOx	CO	SO ₂	PM10	PM2.5
Area Sources ²	0.41	0.00	0.58	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy Usage ³	0.01	0.15	0.13	0.00	0.01	0.01
Mobile Sources ⁴	0.39	0.49	4.27	0.01	0.88	0.23
Stationary ⁵	4.10	11.50	10.50	0.02	0.60	0.60
Total Emissions	4.91	12.14	15.48	0.03	1.49	0.84
MDAQMD Annual Thresholds	25	25	100	25	15	12
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Notes: ¹ Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.29. See full output in Appendix A. ² Area sources consist of emissions from consumer products, architectural coatings, and landscaping equipment. ³ Energy usage consists of emissions from on-site natural gas usage. ⁴ Mobile sources consist of emissions from vehicles and road dust. ⁵ Stationary sources consist of emissions from onsite generator.						

Air Quality Study (Appendix A)

Emissions from operation of the fire station are not anticipated to exceed the MDAQMD regional thresholds and impacts related to operational emissions are considered to be less than significant.

c) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

Less than Significant Impact. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site include a commercial building within 20 feet to the west, the Yucca Valley Library approximately 45 feet to the east, and residences approximately 500 feet southwest of the Project site. Although sensitive receptors are present in the vicinity of the Project site, modeled Project

construction and operational emissions are well within the MDAQMD and NAAQS air quality significance thresholds (Appendix A). Further, the proposed Project involves the construction of a fire station and would not be considered a sensitive receptor. The Project is only anticipated to generate approximately 70 daily vehicle trips per CalEEMod default estimates for the Project (Appendix A). Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated regarding exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, and impacts will be less than significant.

- d) *Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people)?*

Less than Significant Impact. Potential sources that may emit odors during the on-going operations of the proposed Project would include odor emissions from vehicular emissions and trash storage areas. As the Project is that of a fire station, which does not typically involve generation of significant odors, no significant impact related to odors would occur during the on-going operations of the proposed Project.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Have substantial adverse effects, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if project is located in the Biological Resources Overlay or contains habitat for any species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database ☒): WJTs located within the Project site.

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; Biological Resources Assessment (Appendix B)

- a) Have substantial adverse effects, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. A General Biological Assessment, dated November 21, 2024, was prepared for the Project Site by Terracon Consultants, Inc. (Appendix B). The Project Site is referenced in the Biological Assessment as the "Study Area" and comprises a 1.72-acre tract plus an additional 50-foot buffer to total 2.57 acres within the overall Study Area of the assessment. The site is composed of vacant undisturbed land with sparse vegetative cover.

As part of the environmental process, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) data sources were reviewed. Following the data review, surveys were performed on the site on October 15, 2024, during which the biological resources on the site and in the surrounding areas were documented by biologists from Terracon Consultants, Inc. As part of the surveys, the Study Area was evaluated for the presence of habitats which may support populations of sensitive wildlife species. In addition, a Western Joshua tree census survey was completed on the same day.

The vegetation community within the Study Area is Joshua tree woodland (*Yucca brevifolia* Woodland Alliance, CNPS 2023), encompassing primarily native vegetation. Vegetation occurring within the Study Area includes Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), burrobush (*Ambrosia dumosa*), flatspine bursage (*Ambrosia acanthicarpa*), California evening primrose (*Oenothera avita*), blue palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*), prickly Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), brome grasss (*Bromus* sp.), bird of paradise (*Caesalpinia gilliesii*), phlox (*Eriastrum* sp.), prostrate knotweed (*Polygonum aviculare*),

spotted spurge (*Euphorbia maculata*), bindii (*Tribulus terrestris*), compact brome (*Bromus madritensis*), desert baccharis (*Baccharis sergiloides*), hone mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), Texas sage (*Leuchophyllum frutescens*), California fan palm (*Washingtonia californica*), sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*), London rocket (*Sysimbrium irio*), and oleander (*Nerium oleander*).

Federal and State Listed Species

There are sixteen listed species that were evaluated for their potential to occur within the Study Area which include: Coachella valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*), triple-ribbed milk-vetch (*Astragalus tricarlinatus*), slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*), Parish's daisy (*Erigeron parishii*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelson*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Coachella Valley fringed-toed lizard (*Uma inornata*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), American avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*), California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Lawrence's goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*), and pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*).

Three species have been assessed as having low potential to occur within the Study Area: Parish's Daisy, Monarch butterfly, and Desert tortoise.

One special status plant species (a California Endangered Species Act Candidate), western Joshua tree, was observed on the Study Area. Thirteen species have been assessed as not expected to occur within the Study Area: Coachella valley milk-vetch, triple-ribbed milk-vetch, slender-horned spineflower, Crotch's bumble bee, peninsular bighorn sheep, Coachella Valley fringed-toed lizard, least Bell's vireo, American avocet, California thrasher, Costa's hummingbird, golden eagle, Lawrence's goldfinch, and pinyon jay. These species are not expected to occur within the Study Area for the following reasons, the species were not observed during the biological assessment, no suitable habitat exists within the Study Area, and/or the Study Area is outside the known species range and elevation. Additional analysis for these species is included in Appendix B.

Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-4 shall be implemented to ensure that no impacts to individuals of Parish's Daisy, Monarch butterfly, and Desert tortoise will occur.

Species of Special Concern

There are twenty wildlife species that are species of special concern in the Study Area: Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*), Palm Springs pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris bangsi*), Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus*), desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelson*), american badger (*Taxidea taxus*), Southern California legless lizard (*Anniella stebbinsi*), red-diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), summer tanager (*Piranga rubra*), yellow warbler

(*Toxostoma lecontei*), Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Burrowing owl, pallid bat, and western yellow bat have low potential to occur, while the rest of the species of special concern are not expected to occur within the Study Area (Appendix B).

Burrowing Owl

The species inhabits arid, open regions with sparse vegetation in the western part of North America. Its preferred environments encompass grasslands, rangelands, agricultural areas and open shrub stages of pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine habitats, but it can also be found in fallow fields or vacant lots within urbanized areas. The Study Area contains moderately suitable habitat for burrowing owl and multiple burrows were observed during the site visit that may be large enough to support nesting burrowing owls, therefore the likelihood of the burrowing owl being present is low. A desktop review of CNDDDB maps and eBird documented occurrences of burrowing owl at or near the survey site returned zero results of any historical burrowing owl use or occupancy on or within 150 meters of the site. Additionally, no evidence of the species (such as excrement, prey pellets, or feather marks at burrow entrances) was found during the October 15, 2024, biological assessment.

Pallid bat

The pallid bat occupies a wide range of habitats including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests, and most commonly found in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting (Harris 1998). Roosting habitat for this species typically consists of caves, crevices, mines, hollow trees, and buildings, however, trees with exfoliating bark, cracks, and other crevices, along with palm trees have been known to be used as roosting habitat (Byrnes 2018). The CNDDDB contains one recorded occurrence of this species approximately 10.5 miles to the southwest of the Study Area (Occurrence No. 241, 1939). Although there are no recent occurrences of this species within proximity, the Study Area contains California fan palms, which have a low potential to support roosting pallid bats. Additionally, the desert scrub vegetation within the Study Area may provide suitable foraging habitat. Therefore, the pallid bat has a low potential to occur within the Study Area.

Western yellow bat

The western yellow bat is uncommon in California, known to occur only in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. This species has been recorded below 2,000 feet in elevation in valley foothill riparian, desert riparian, desert wash, and palm oasis habitats. This species roosts in trees and under palm trees and feeds near palm oases and riparian habitats. The CNDDDB contains one recorded occurrence approximately 1.1 miles to the southwest of the Study Area (Occurrence No. 42, 1985). The Study Area contains California fan palms, which have a low potential to support roosting western yellow bats.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1 shall be implemented to ensure that no impacts to individuals of burrowing owl, pallid bat, or western yellow bat will occur.

Protected Plants

Western Joshua trees were observed throughout the Study Area during the Biological Assessment conducted on October 15, 2024, and no other County protected desert

plants were identified at the time of the survey. During the western Joshua tree survey, a census was created to evaluate the number of western Joshua trees located within the Study Area, including their size, condition, and other factors per the CDFW WJT Census Data Sheet and CDFW Census Instructions. A 50 ft buffer was used for all potential work which extended across the road onto the adjacent parcels to the north, south, and west where no work is expected to occur. A site visit was conducted by CDFW on June 4, 2025. The buffered trees were determined not to be required under the permit. Field investigations and subsequent site visit by CDFW resulted in the findings of ten (10) Joshua trees within the Project site that cannot be avoided and will therefore be removed, four (4) of the ten (10) are already dead. Six (6) live trees are expected to be removed in the Project area. The trees fall into the following class sizes: A - 4, B - 3, C - 3. There are four (4) mature (branched) trees. The average mean height of the mature (branched) trees is 6.4 meters, with the smallest tree at 4.01 meters and the tallest at 7.65 meters. Western Joshua trees outside of the Project area will be avoided.

An application for an Incidental Take Permit has been submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. An Incidental Take Permit establishes a performance standard requiring that the impacts be “minimized and fully mitigated” with “measures that are roughly proportional in extent to the impact of the authorized taking on the species.”² The Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act has established mitigation fees for the removal of western Joshua tree individuals. The Applicant will pay the fees as calculated according to **Mitigation Measure BIO-5. Mitigation Measure BIO-5** shall be implemented to ensure no net impacts to western Joshua trees occur.

Birds

Nesting birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Codes 3503, 3503.5, 3513. Avian species observed during the field investigations included common raven (*Corvus corax*) and mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*). **Mitigation Measure BIO-6** shall be implemented to ensure no impacts to nesting birds occur.

- b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?*

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project Site is primarily characterized by the vegetation community Joshua Tree Woodland (*Yucca brevifolia* Woodland Alliance). This vegetation community is considered a sensitive natural community and has a state plant rarity ranking of S3.2 or threatened. As stated above, an application for an Incidental Take Permit has been submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding western Joshua trees. This Incidental Take Permit will require impacts to individuals of this species be minimized and fully mitigated. **Mitigation Measure BIO-5** shall be implemented to ensure no net impacts to western Joshua tree woodland occurs. Therefore, the Project’s impact on existing vegetation would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

² Fish & G. Code § 2081(b); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 783.2-783.8

- c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

No Impact. The majority of the plant species present within the Project Site have an indicator status of *Facultative Upland* or *Upland* and no hydrology indicators were observed during the field reconnaissance survey. (Appendix B). Additionally, the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) does not contain wetland features within or near the Project Site. Therefore, the site does not contain any state or federally protected wetlands, and the Project will result in no impact.

- d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

No Impact. The Project Site is not located in a California Essential Habitat Connectivity (CEHC) area. The nearest CEHC area to the Project site is approximately 4 miles to the west (Appendix B). Additionally, the Project site is surrounded by urban development, and therefore the Project will result in no impact.

- e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project has been designed with consideration for the policies and ordinances of San Bernardino County, and the Project is consistent with these policies and ordinances. However, in some instances, these ordinances may impose additional requirements on the Project. The Project assumes that the County ordinances outlined in the Biological Assessment Report (Appendix B) will be adhered to. In the event that a protected tree or desert native plant is to be removed, the appropriate permit or measure will be acquired or followed. The San Bernardino County Biotic Resources Overlay shows that the Study Area is in a BLM designated area of low desert tortoise population density, however, the Study Area is not located in a Federal, State, or local species-specific Biotic Resources Area. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated regarding conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and impacts will be less than significant.

- f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan?*

No Impact. The Study Area is located within the West Mojave Plan (WMP) area. The Study Area occurs on land owned and managed by the County of San Bernardino. Through the WMP, the County of San Bernardino has integrated conservation measures into its land-use planning and permitting processes for Projects within the plan area. This partnership allows the county to streamline environmental compliance for Projects in accordance with the plan's goals, ensuring both habitat conservation and responsible development. Therefore, the Project will be in compliance with the local policies and ordinances described above and will subsequently be in compliance with the WMP. Therefore, the Project would result in no impact.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-construction Surveys

Burrowing Owl

Within 14 days preceding vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist will conduct comprehensive surveys for signs of occupancy by the burrowing owl. These surveys must encompass the entire area designated for disturbance and should involve the biologist walking along parallel transects. The focus of these surveys is to identify evidence of live owls or indications of their presence, which may include feathers, burrows, pellets, tracks, and scat.

If signs suggesting the presence of the burrowing are detected, vegetation clearing and ground disturbing activities will be prohibited in the area where the signs were found. Instead, CDFW shall be contacted to formulate a strategy for avoidance.

The results of these surveys, including graphical representations pinpointing the locations of burrowing owl sign, along with documentation detailing avoidance measures implemented, must be submitted to CDFW within 14 days following the conclusion of the pre-construction surveys or construction monitoring. This submission serves as evidence of compliance with pertinent state regulations pertaining to the protection of the burrowing owl.

Parish's Daisy

Prior to Project activities, a qualified biologist will conduct focused vegetation surveys for Parish's daisy. Survey techniques will include pedestrian transect surveys spaced approximately 30 feet apart within areas of suitable habitat in the Project impact areas and a 100-foot buffer. Survey techniques will be consistent with the accepted methodologies outlined by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2018), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2000), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS 2000).

Monarch Butterfly, Pallid Bat, Western Yellow Bat, and Desert Tortoise

Prior to Project activities, a qualified biologist will conduct focused surveys for potential special-status species. In the event of an observation or signs of a special-status species are detected, including but not limited to monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), and desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), the biologist will halt all Project activities and the appropriate agency (CDFW, USFWS, County of San Bernardino, etc.) shall be contacted to formulate a strategy for avoidance. The results of these surveys, including graphical representations pinpointing the locations of detected special-status species or their sign, along with documentation detailing avoidance measures implemented, must be submitted to the USFWS and CDFW within 14 days following the conclusion of the take-avoidance surveys or construction monitoring. This submission serves as evidence of compliance with pertinent federal and state regulations pertaining to the protection of special-status species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Exclusion Fencing for Vegetation

In the event of an observation of Parish's Daisy, individuals identified will be protected behind exclusion fencing. For impacts regarding individual plants, the affected plants will be relocated under supervision of a qualified biologist. Coordination with CDFW and USFWS will occur before the implementation of these measures.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Worker Environmental Awareness Program

Prior to Project ground disturbing construction activities or vegetation clearance, a qualified biologist will initiate a biological training program designed to educate on-site workers about six (6) critical environmental concerns associated with the Project. This training will be mandatory for all on-site personnel involved in ground disturbing/demolition or vegetation clearance. It will be administered on the first day of work, before Project activities commence. This training will place particular emphasis on educating participants about the protected species that may potentially be present within the Project Site, including, but not limited to burrowing owl, Parish's daisy, Monarch butterfly, pallid bat, Western yellow bat, and desert tortoise.

The program will include the following elements:

- A presentation, either developed by a qualified biologist or in consultation with one, which will address the sensitive biological resources that may be present within the Project site. It will also elucidate the rationale behind safeguarding these resources and the consequences of non-compliance.
- Brochures or booklets that contain written descriptions, photographs of protected species, and a comprehensive list of site rules related to the protection of biological resources. These materials will be distributed to all participants in the biological training program.
- Contact information for the Project's biological monitor, along with clear instructions for participants to contact the monitor with inquiries concerning the biological training program presentation or booklets.
- An acknowledgement form that each worker is required to sign, confirming their receipt of biological training program training and their commitment to adhere to the rules aimed at preserving biological resources.

The client will bear the responsibility for ensuring all on-site personnel receive the appropriate training throughout the entire Project. A training log will be maintained within the Project Site and signed by all on-site personnel immediately after training to document compliance with this requirement.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Biological Monitor

In the event of an observation of burrowing owl, Parish's daisy, Monarch butterfly, pallid bat, Western yellow bat, or desert tortoise, a qualified biologist will be designated as the biological monitor. This monitor is required to be on-site at all times during activities involving vegetation clearance or ground disturbance. Their primary responsibility is to observe and educate construction teams so that potential impacts to biological resources are either avoided or minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Once the Project approaches a phase where it is determined by the biological monitor that biological resources are no longer present, as determined by their expertise, they may request a reduction or discontinuation of biological monitoring in that specific area.

The biological monitor is vested with the authority to halt specific Project activities if they suspect violations of avoidance or minimization measures or if there are concerns about compliance with local, state, or federal laws. This authority is essential for the protection of biological resources and adherence to regulatory requirements.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Western Joshua Tree

A mitigation fee shall be paid for Western Joshua trees requiring removal as a result of the Project according to the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act. The fees are based on the "Standard" western Joshua tree removal fees as determined by the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act as follows:

- Trees 5 meters (16.4 feet) or greater - \$2,500
- Trees 1 meter (3.28 feet) or greater but less than 5 meters - \$500
- Trees less than 1 meter - \$340

Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Pre-construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Avoidance

Within 30 days prior to the commencement of vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities during the nesting season (typically February through August, unless otherwise determined by a qualified biologist based on local observations), a qualified biologist will determine the presence of active nests belonging to species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and California Fish and Game Codes 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 with full Project site coverage including visual surveys extending to surrounding lands (up to 300 ft for raptors).

These nest surveys must be carried out no more than seven days before the initiation of disturbance work. In cases where ground disturbance activities are delayed, additional pre-disturbance must be conducted to ensure that no more than seven days have passed between the survey and the onset of ground disturbance activities.

If active nests are identified, disturbance activities within 100 feet of the nest (or lesser distance if approved by USFWS) must be postponed or halted until the nest is vacated

and the juveniles have successfully fledged, as determined by the biologist. To establish avoidance buffers in the field, highly visible construction fencing, or flagging must be used, and on-site personnel must be educated about the sensitivity of these nest areas. During periods when Project activities are scheduled to occur near active nests, a qualified biologist must be present as a biological monitor to ensure that inadvertent impacts on these nests are prevented.

With the implementation of the above mitigation measures in addition to compliance with the law, the proposed Project would have a less than significant potential to impact biological resources.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c)	Disturb any human remains, including those outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if the project is located in the Cultural ☐ or Palaeontologic ☐ Resources overlays or cite results of cultural resource review):
San

Countywide Plan; Cultural Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), South Central Coast Information Center, California State University, Fullerton; Submitted Project Materials; Cultural Resources Assessment (Appendix C)

- a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?*

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. A Cultural Resources Assessment was conducted by BCR Consulting LLC on November 19, 2024, and is included in Appendix C of this Initial Study. The key findings are summarized below:

A records search was obtained from the South-Central Coastal Information Center to identify any previously recorded archaeological or historic-era resources within the Project site and to assess the potential types of resources that might occur. The records

search revealed that 24 cultural resource studies had been conducted within a one-mile radius of the Project site. However, none of these studies included the Project site itself.

The field survey conducted as part of the assessment found no evidence of cultural resources, including prehistoric or historic-period archaeological sites or historic architectural resources, within the Project site. Additionally, the records search identified 2 historic-period cultural resources within a one-mile radius of the site, but none within the site boundaries.

Based on the findings of the Cultural Resources Assessment, no additional cultural resource investigations or monitoring are recommended for the Project. The assessment confirmed that no historical resources as defined under CEQA exist within the Project site.

Although no sensitivity for cultural resources (historical or archaeological) was identified within the Project boundaries, ground-disturbing activities could potentially uncover buried deposits not visible during the previous surveys. To address this possibility, **Mitigation Measures CR-1** and **CR-2** have been included. With the implementation of these measures, any potential impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant.

- b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?*

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. A Cultural Resources Records Search was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center at California State University, Fullerton that concluded that there have been 24 cultural resources studies completed resulting in 2 cultural resources (historic-period) within a mile of the Project site. Tasks completed within the scope of the records search included additional research, intensive-level pedestrian cultural resources survey, Sacred Lands File Search with the Native American Heritage Commission, and a paleontological resources overview, performed in partial fulfillment of CEQA requirements.

Mitigation measures would be required upon risk of disturbing unique archaeological resources. Non-unique archaeological resources that qualify as tribal cultural resources would additionally require further consideration into significant impacts. Impacts to tribal cultural resources are discussed in Section XVIII: Tribal Cultural Resources. Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; and/or
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The geologic units underlying the Project site consist of a combination of alluvial fan and valley fill deposits from the Holocene and Pleistocene epochs. Pleistocene alluvial deposits are considered to have high paleontological sensitivity. While the Western Science Center does not have records of fossil localities within the Project site or a one-mile radius, similar geologic units across Southern California have yielded significant fossil discoveries. Any fossil specimens uncovered at the Yucca Valley Fire Station Project site would be considered scientifically significant.³

Excavation activities associated with Project development could impact these paleontologically sensitive Pleistocene deposits. Therefore, the Western Science Center recommends implementing a paleontological resource mitigation program. This program would include monitoring excavation activities, salvaging fossils, and curating any specimens recovered within the study area

To address these potential impacts, **Mitigation Measure CR-3** has been included. With the implementation of this measure including **Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2**, any potential impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant.

- c) *Disturb any human remains, including those outside of formal cemeteries?*

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The Cultural Resources Record Search and Cultural Resources Assessment did not indicate that the Project Site has been utilized in the past as a formal or informal cemetery. However, this does not insinuate that there is no possibility of the discovery of human remains on the Project site. In the unexpected event human remains are encountered during Project implementation, pursuant to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Project activities shall cease, and steps taken to ensure the integrity of the area so that no further disturbance would occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must determine if the remains are Native American and, in confirming so, would have to notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours so that the Native American Heritage Commission can determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant. Impacts to human remains would be less than significant with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure CR-4**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Cultural Resource Discovery and Coordination with Tribes

In the event that cultural resources are discovered during Project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot buffer) shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of Interior standards shall be hired to assess the find. Work on the other portions of the Project outside of the buffered area may continue during this assessment period. Additionally, the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation Cultural Resources Department (YSMN) shall be contacted, as detailed within **Mitigation Measure TCR-1**, regarding any pre-contact and/or historic-era finds and be

³ Cultural Resources Assessment. BCR Consulting

provided information after the archaeologist makes his/her initial assessment of the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Monitoring and Treatment Plan

If significant pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan, the drafts of which shall be provided to YSMN for review and comment, as detailed within TCR-1. The archaeologist shall monitor the remainder of the Project and implement the Plan accordingly.

Mitigation Measure CR-3: Paleontological Resource Mitigation Program

Prior to the initiation of ground-disturbing activities, a Paleontological Resource Mitigation Program (PRMP) shall be developed and implemented to address potential impacts to paleontological resources. The PRMP shall include the following components:

1. Preconstruction Preparation:

- A qualified professional paleontologist shall prepare a PRMP outlining monitoring protocols, fossil recovery methods, and reporting requirements.
- Construction personnel shall receive training on the recognition of paleontological resources and the procedures to follow if resources are encountered.

2. Monitoring:

- Paleontological monitoring would take place based on requirements of the PRMP

3. Fossil Salvage and Documentation:

- If fossils are discovered, the paleontological monitor shall halt work in the immediate area, recover and document the specimens consistent with the PRMP.

4. Curation and Reporting:

- All recovered fossils shall be cleaned, stabilized, identified, and curated at an accredited institution, such as a natural history museum or university repository, for permanent preservation and scientific study.
- A final mitigation report shall be prepared and submitted to the lead agency and repository institution consistent with the PRMP. The report shall summarize all paleontological activities, findings, and methods.

5. Unanticipated Discoveries:

- If unanticipated paleontological resources are discovered outside of identified sensitive areas, work shall stop in the vicinity of the discovery until the paleontologist evaluates the significance of the find and determines the appropriate course of action.

Mitigation Measure CR-4: Unplanned Discovery of Remains

If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any activities associated with the Project, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant. The most likely descendant shall complete the inspection of the site and provide recommendations for treatment to the landowner within 48 hours of being granted access.

Implementation of **Mitigation Measures CR-1, CR-2, CR-3, and CR-4** would reduce potentially significant impacts of the Proposed Project associated with Cultural Resources to less than significant.

With the implementation of the above mitigation measures in addition to compliance with the law, the proposed Project would have a less than significant potential to disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
VI. ENERGY – Would the project:					
a)	Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒
SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Materials; Energy Analysis (Appendix A)					

- a) *Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a new Fire Station #41. Energy consumption associated with the Project is anticipated to be similar to that of surrounding commercial developments. An Energy Analysis conducted by MD Acoustics, included in Appendix A, evaluated the construction and operational energy demand of the Project. The analysis concluded that the Project does not have any unusual characteristics or processes that would require energy-intensive equipment beyond what is typically used for comparable activities, nor would it involve equipment that fails to comply with current emissions standards. Construction activities for the Project would not lead to inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption.

The Projected electricity demand for the proposed Project is approximately 184,227 kWh per year, and the estimated natural gas consumption is approximately 571,243 kBtu per year. Compared to the overall electricity and natural gas consumption in San Bernardino County's non-residential sectors, the Project's energy consumption is negligible.

Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to result in significant environmental impacts related to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy use. Impacts are determined to be less than significant.

- b) *Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

No impact. The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a fire station to support firefighting activities. The development will comply with the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6), ensuring adherence to energy efficiency requirements for insulation, HVAC systems, lighting, and other energy-related building features.

As part of the permitting process, the Project will undergo review by local jurisdictions and inspections as necessary to confirm compliance with applicable energy efficiency standards. By following these regulations, the Project aligns with state and local plans for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with or obstruct any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
VII.	GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:				
a)	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i.	Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map Issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii.	Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☒	☐	☐
iii.	Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv.	Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located in the Geologic Hazards Overlay District): **Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials, Geotechnical Report (Appendix D)**

a) *Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map Issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project site is situated in the Mojave Desert region of California's high desert, bordered by significant geologic features including the San Andreas Fault and Transverse Ranges to the south, and the Garlock Fault, Tehachapi Mountains, and Basin Ranges to the north and northwest. A Geotechnical Report prepared by Landmark Consultants, Inc. dated July 2024 (Appendix D) determined that the nearest mapped Earthquake Fault Zones are:

- The Burnt Mountain Fault, approximately 0.1 miles east of the Project site.
- The Pinto Mountain Fault, approximately 0.6 miles north of the Project site.

The Project site is located west of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone for the Burnt Mountain Fault. It is not within the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and the likelihood of surface fault rupture is low due to the well-delineated fault lines in the area. The Geotechnical Report recommends specific design standards to mitigate potential seismic risks associated with the site's proximity to these faults. Furthermore, all development will comply with the California Building Code (CBC), which mandates rigorous seismic safety standards to minimize fault rupture risks.

With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure GEO-1**, which ensures adherence to these geotechnical and structural design recommendations, potential impacts related to the rupture of a known earthquake fault would be reduced to less than significant levels.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project site is located in a region of high seismic activity and is in close proximity to the Burnt Mountain and Pinto Mountain Faults. As a result, the site is expected to experience strong ground shaking (Appendix D). Ground shaking from other regional active faults is anticipated to induce lower horizontal accelerations due to smaller expected earthquakes or greater distances to those faults.

The Geotechnical Report determined that the peak ground acceleration (PGA_M) at the Project site is expected to be 1.04 g. To mitigate potential impacts in this seismically active area, development must incorporate engineered design and earthquake-resistant construction standards. Per the Geotechnical Report, construction at the Project site

should comply with the latest edition of the California Building Code (CBC) for Site Class D, utilizing the seismic coefficients outlined in Section 3.6 and Table 2 of the report. These standards are designed to reduce risks associated with seismic ground shaking. The report concludes that the site is suitable for the proposed Project, provided that **Mitigation Measure GEO-1** is implemented. This measure requires adherence to the Geotechnical Report's recommendations, including compliance with all applicable CBC requirements to minimize seismic hazards. By following these design standards and implementing **Mitigation Measure GEO-1**, impacts related to seismic ground shaking would be reduced to less than significant levels.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. The San Bernardino County Geologic Hazard Overlay Map⁴ does not include the Project site within a liquefaction susceptibility area. Additionally, the subsurface conditions at the site are not conducive to liquefaction. The geologic units underlying the Project site are comprised of a mix of alluvial fan and valley fill deposits from the Pleistocene epoch. Generally, Pleistocene deposits are less prone to liquefaction due to their older age resulting in them to be more compacted and cemented. Furthermore, the site is comprised of dense granular soil and groundwater was not encountered within the upper 50 feet of the subsurface, therefore liquefaction is not expected to occur at the Project site (Appendix D). Based on the mapping performed by San Bernardino County and the conditions encountered at the site during the sub-surface investigation, adverse impacts due to the risk of liquefaction are not anticipated.

iv) Landslides?

Less than Significant Impact. Landslides and slope failure can result from ground motion generated by earthquakes; however, the Project site is not mapped within a Landslide Zone. The Project site is located in a generally flat area surrounded by existing development and vacant land, with no steep slopes in the vicinity. Furthermore, the San Bernardino Countywide Policy Plan Map HZ-2⁵, does not identify the Project site and surrounding area as susceptible to landslides. Therefore, there would be no impact from landslides on the Project and no mitigation is required.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is located on relatively flat terrain, minimizing the potential for substantial soil erosion. Construction activities such as demolition, grading, and paving could temporarily expose soil; however, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed for the Project. The SWPPP will incorporate standard construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) to effectively control soil erosion and prevent the loss of topsoil during construction.

⁴ San Bernardino County. San Bernardino County Land Use Plan Geologic Hazards Overlays. Website: [www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeoHaz Maps/CDIC.pdf](http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeoHaz%20Maps/CDIC.pdf). Accessed January 2, 2025.

⁵ San Bernardino County. San Bernardino County Countywide Plan Policy Maps, Hazards HZ-2 Liquefaction and Landslides. Website: <https://countywideplan.sbcounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/125/2021/02/HZ-2-Liquefaction-Landslide-Hazards-Valley-Mountain-201027.pdf?x23421>. Accessed January 2, 2025.

In addition, the Project will comply with San Bernardino County Development Code Chapter 85.11.30, which mandates the implementation of standard erosion control measures for all construction activities. Upon completion, the Project will include impervious surfaces and landscaped areas, reducing the exposure of soil to erosion.

Given these measures, substantial soil erosion or significant loss of topsoil is not anticipated during construction or operation. Therefore, impacts related to soil erosion and topsoil loss would be less than significant.

- c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed above, the Geotechnical report concluded that the Project site has low potential for liquefaction. Further, the Geotechnical report found that the relative density of the soils at the Project site were medium dense and estimated that the total seismic settlement would be approximately 0.5 to 1 inch or it could be less than 0.25 inches, given that removal and recompaction of the existing surface soils to a depth of 10 feet occurs. The Project site is located in a generally flat area with no steep slopes on or near the site, therefore the likelihood of on or off-site landslide is low.

The proposed Project site is underlain by Pleistocene alluvial fan and valley fill deposits, which are not considered unstable. The Project site is not within an area prone to liquefaction, subsidence, or expansive soils (Appendix D). Development of the Project would not destabilize the underlying geology or create geologic hazards. As such, the Project would not result in impacts related to geologic instability, and no impacts are anticipated.

- d) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

No Impact. The Countywide Plan Draft EIR identifies the Desert Regions as having low to moderately expansive soils. The Project site is underlain by Pleistocene alluvium, mapped as Qa (alluvium) and Qoa (older alluvium)⁶. According to the Geotechnical Report, the near-surface soils at the site consist of sandy silts, silty sands, and sands, which are classified as non-expansive.

Given the minimal presence of clay materials in the site's soil composition, it is reasonable to conclude that expansive soils are not a concern, and no impacts are anticipated.

- e) *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?*

⁶ USGS National Geologic Map Database, 2024, Map View (<https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/mapview/?center=-116.415,34.123&zoom=15>) Accessed January 3, 2024.

No Impact. The proposed Project would be supported by a sewer system and would not involve the use of septic tanks or other alternative wastewater disposal systems. There would be no impacts.

- f) *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed Project site is located on Pleistocene alluvium and valley fill deposits, which are considered to be highly paleontologically sensitive. To address the possibility of encountering a paleontological resource, **Mitigation Measures CR-3** has been included in the Cultural Resources Section V and includes the preparation of Paleontological Resource Mitigation Program. With the implementation of these measures, any potential impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Adherence to Geotechnical Engineering Report Recommendations

The Project applicant shall ensure that all construction practices follow all recommendations listed in the Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared by Landmark Consultants, Inc. dated July 2024. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall incorporate all recommendations from the Geotechnical Report into the Project plans, which will be submitted to San Bernardino County for review and approval.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated with the implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 and Mitigation Measure CR-3.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials, GHG Analysis (Appendix A)

- a) *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

Less than significant impact. The Project will involve construction and operation of the Project site as the new Fire Station #41 for emergency services. A Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis was prepared by MD Acoustics on November 26, 2024, which is included in Appendix A. Greenhouse gas emissions from all phases of construction was modeled and it was estimated that a total of 7.05 metric tons of CO₂e per year is anticipated. Operational greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to result in annual emissions of 355.29 metric tons of CO₂e, which would not exceed the MDAQMD annual threshold of 100,000 metric tons of CO₂e and would also not exceed the San Bernardino County screening threshold of 3,000 metric tons per year of CO₂e. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated regarding the generation of greenhouse gas emissions that may have a significant impact on the environment, and impacts will be less than significant.

- b) *Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

No Impact. San Bernardino County adopted the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan in 2021, which establishes measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (San Bernardino County 2021). Under this plan, Projects that are exempt from CEQA or that do not exceed 3,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e) annually are deemed consistent with the Plan and determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed Project's total net operational greenhouse gas emissions are below the County's screening threshold of 3,000 MTCO₂e per year. Consequently, the Project does not need to accrue points using the screening tables and is consistent with the greenhouse gas Reduction Plan pursuant to Section 15183.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines. As such, the proposed Project would result in no impact related to conflicts with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) | Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) | Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

release of hazardous materials into the environment?

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials, Phase I ESA (Appendix E)

- a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project involves constructing and operating a fire station on a 1.72-acre parcel of undeveloped, vacant land located between commercial buildings. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Appendix E), prepared by Ninyo and Moore on May 9, 2023, found no Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs) associated with the site. The site has remained undeveloped since 1948.

Construction activities for the Project would involve the routine transport, use, and disposal of common construction-related hazardous materials such as hydraulic fluids, adhesives, paints, lubricants, fuel, solvents, asphalt products, and cleaners. Hazardous waste generated during construction may include welding materials, fuel and lubricant containers, paint and solvent containers, and cement products containing strong basic or acidic chemicals. These materials would be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and applicable local, state, and

federal regulations. The Project does not pose risks related to asbestos, lead-based paint, or other hazardous materials, as the site is currently vacant.

The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (SBCFPD) serves as the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Yucca Valley. The SBCFPD enforces hazardous materials regulations under Chapters 6.5, 6.7, 6.11, and 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code. As CUPA, SBCFPD oversees hazardous materials business plans, chemical inventories, tiered permitting, risk management plans, and underground storage tanks. A Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) is required for facilities handling hazardous materials, which includes information on material types, quantities, health risks, and emergency response procedures to mitigate potential releases.

Compliance with these stringent regulations ensures the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment during its construction or operation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

Less Than Significant Impact. While accidents during transportation to and from the Project site and construction activities are possible, they are unlikely to result in the release of hazardous materials at a level that would pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Construction activities at the Project site may involve the use and temporary storage of common construction-related hazardous substances such as hydraulic fluids, adhesives, paints, lubricants, fuel, solvents, and cleaners. Construction is also expected to generate debris or waste for offsite disposal or recycling, with regulated waste handled and disposed of in compliance with applicable regulations.

The Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. Neither the construction nor operation phases of the Project are anticipated to involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of substantial quantities of hazardous materials. Standard construction safety measures and controls would be implemented throughout the Project, adhering to all local, state, and federal regulations to minimize the potential for accidental releases.

Additionally, the Project would not involve the on-site storage of significant quantities of hazardous materials, reducing the risk of accidental release. Any hazardous materials present would be in small volumes and managed according to applicable hazardous substance and waste regulations. Compliance with these regulations ensures that the potential for accidents or upsets to create a significant hazard to the public or environment is minimal. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

No Impact. The Project site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The nearest school, Yucca Valley High School, is approximately 0.7 miles southwest of the Project site. As the Project would not involve the emission of

hazardous substances or the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials or waste within one-quarter mile of a school, no impact would occur.

- d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

No Impact. Review of the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC's) list of hazardous waste and substances (Cortese) sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 via the EnviroStor database did not reveal listings at the Project Site. In addition, review of the EnviroStor database indicates no Federal Superfund, State Response, Voluntary Cleanup, School Cleanup, Tiered Permit, or Corrective Action cases are mapped at the Project Site. Review of the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker database indicates no LUST Cleanup, Cleanup Program, Military Cleanup, Military UST, Permitted UST, or Land Disposal cases are mapped at the Project Site. Further, review of the 2024 Phase I prepared by Ninyo and Moore, which included a review of standard regulatory agency databases, indicates Recognized Environmental Conditions were not identified at the Project Site at the time of the assessment. Based on the aforementioned information, the Project Site was not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

- e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is approximately 0.42 miles southwest of the Yucca Valley Airport and is within the boundaries of the airport land use plan. The site is located in Airport Safety Review Area 3, as identified on the Safety Review Areas Map⁷.

The proposed Project will comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulation Part 77, which requires notification for objects that may affect navigable airspace. The Project does not include features such as distracting lights, smoke, or other visual or physical hazards that could interfere with aircraft instruments or communications. Additionally, the proposed structures will not exceed 30 feet in height, consistent with the general height of structures in the vicinity. Given these considerations, the proposed construction and operation of the Project are not anticipated to create safety hazards or generate excessive noise for individuals residing or working in the area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- f) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

Less than Significant. The proposed Project involves constructing and operating a new fire station to serve Yucca Valley and its surrounding areas. This new facility will replace

⁷ San Bernardino County. Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Yucca Valley Airport. (<https://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/YuccaValley.pdf>) Accessed December 20, 2024.

the existing fire station, which is approximately 175 feet west of the proposed Project site. During construction, the existing fire station will remain fully operational, ensuring uninterrupted emergency response services until the new station is complete and functional.

The Project will not result in substantial changes to Twentynine Palms Highway, Twentynine Palms Outerhighway, or Joshua Lane, except for the addition of two curb cuts and driveway installations for site access. Importantly, Twentynine Palms Outerhighway, a primary route for emergency responders and public evacuation, will remain unaffected by these developments.

Given the continued operation of the existing fire station during construction and the minimal impact on nearby roadways, the Project is not expected to impede emergency response or evacuation plans. Therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

- g) *Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?*

Less than Significant Impact. Terracon reviewed the California Public Utility Commission's Fire Threat Map via their GIS web app viewer. The map depicts data from the United States Forest Service and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection joint map of Tree Mortality High Hazard Zones as well as areas identified by California Public Utility Commission to have elevated or extreme risk from wildfires associated with overhead utility lines. None of the three elevated fire threat tiers were mapped at the Project site. The site is currently surrounded by commercial development, asphalt paved parking areas and driveways, and landscaping. The proposed development Project will be required to comply with city and/or county building, planning, and fire codes including but not limited to fire access, fire suppression, and weed abatement. Therefore, the Project's potential to expose people or structures to significant loss, injury or death from wildfire is considered less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐

- | | | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| c) | Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: | | | | |
| i. | result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| ii. | substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite; | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| iii. | create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of runoff; or | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| iv. | impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) | In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| e) | Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

SUBSTANTIATION: **Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials**

- a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

Less than Significant Impact. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes national water quality standards and regulates stormwater discharges through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act. The Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRRWQCB) administers the NPDES program for the Town of Yucca Valley, developing waste discharge requirements that include the preparation and implementation of a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). These requirements aim to control pollutants entering storm drain systems, educate the public about stormwater impacts, eliminate illicit discharges, and implement site-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The Project site is currently undeveloped and undisturbed. Construction activities, including clearing, grading, paving, utility installation, building construction, and landscaping, may generate potential water quality pollutants such as silt, debris, chemicals, and paints. Without proper controls, these activities could result in short-term water quality impacts. To mitigate these risks, the Construction General Permit, required for construction Projects exceeding one acre of disturbance in San Bernardino County, mandates the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

This plan will outline erosion and sediment controls and pollution prevention measures to minimize construction-related water quality impacts.

Once constructed, the majority of the Project site will be covered with impervious surfaces, reducing potential erosion and soil siltation during operation. Stormwater will either percolate into the ground or be directed to onsite stormwater infrastructure and public rights-of-way. Additionally, the Project's stormwater infrastructure will comply with Town Code Section 9.32.110, which promotes stormwater runoff minimization and increased infiltration through BMPs in landscape and grading designs. With adherence to these regulatory requirements and BMPs, the Project will not violate water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or degrade surface or groundwater quality. Therefore, impacts on water quality would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces compared to the existing conditions with the construction of the fire station on the currently undeveloped land. The increase in impervious surfaces due to the proposed Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge as the Project site is not used for groundwater recharge activities nor extraction. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially interfere with rainwater percolating into the groundwater.

Water for the Project site is provided by the Hi Desert Water District (HDWD). The district's sole supply source is groundwater that is supplied by the Warren Valley Basin and the Ames Basin⁸. The annual recharge of the Warren Valley Basin is 900 acre-feet per year. The Yucca Valley area also receives water from the State Water Project (SWP). Water usage from the proposed Project would be minimal and would consist of irrigation for landscaping and water for the restroom building. Additionally, the Proposed Project does not include new groundwater wells that would extract groundwater from the aquifer. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not lower the groundwater table or deplete groundwater supplies. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not interfere with groundwater recharge and impacts would be less than significant.

- c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:*
- i. *Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;*
Less than Significant Impact. No streams or rivers traverse the Project site, which is currently undeveloped and undisturbed. Construction of the proposed Project would require grading activities that could lead to potential erosion and

⁸ Warren Valley Basin Watermaster (WVBW). 1991, January 30. Warren Valley Basin Management Plan. <https://www.hdwd.com/DocumentCenter/View/274/1991-Basin-Management-Plan-PDF>

siltation impacts. During construction, soil on the Project site would be disturbed, which could lead to an increased potential for wind and water erosion. If not controlled, the transport of these materials to local waterways may temporarily increase suspended sediment concentrations and release pollutants attached to sediment particles into local waterways. However, as discussed above, the Project will obtain a NPDES Construction General permit and prepare a SWPPP that will outline and include BMPs to reduce to control on-site erosion, reduce sediment flows into stormwater and wind erosion; reduce tracking of soil and debris into adjacent roadways and off-site areas and other site conditions to prevent pollutants from entering the storm drain system.

- ii. *Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite;*
- iii. *Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of runoff; or*
- iv. *Impede or redirect flood flows?*

(ii-iv) Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is located within Flood Hazard Zone X, an area designated as having minimal flood risk and lying outside the 500-year floodplain. While construction and operation of the Project would increase impervious surfaces on the site, this increase is not substantial and is not expected to exacerbate flood risk or runoff issues.

Potential erosion and sedimentation during construction would be addressed through the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which includes erosion control measures and BMPs. The SWPPP would also ensure that stormwater runoff is effectively managed, preventing exceedance of the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems and minimizing pollution risks.

With these measures in place, the Project would not significantly impact flood risk, stormwater drainage, or water quality. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- d) *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

Less than Significant Impact. As mentioned above, the Project site is located outside of the 500-year floodplain. The Project is not subject to the potential effects of a seiche, tsunami, or mudflows caused by such due to lack of upstream waterbodies. The Project site is located over 85 miles northeast of the Pacific Ocean. As such, the Project is not under threat of a tsunami, otherwise known as a seismic sea wave. Similarly, the potential threat for a seiche to occur is remote, given the limited number of large water bodies within the Project vicinity. Therefore, the Project would result in a less than significant impact.

- e) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

Less than Significant Impact. Surface and groundwater quality are influenced by land uses within a watershed and the characteristics of subsurface geologic materials. The State Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) oversee water quality in these resources. The Town of Yucca Valley falls under the jurisdiction of the CRRWQCB, which enforces state and federal water quality standards and implements the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin (Basin Plan), a key policy document for regional water quality management.

Additionally, the Project site is located within the Warren Valley Basin, which is managed in accordance with the Warren Valley Basin Management Plan. The Proposed Project would not interfere with the implementation of this management plan or any related water quality control strategies. During construction, the Project would adhere to a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to mitigate potential surface water impacts and comply with the Town's NPDES standards and municipal code requirements.

Given these measures, the Project is not expected to adversely affect surface or groundwater quality or obstruct any water quality control or sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XI. LAND USE & PLANNING – Would the Project:					
a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Physically divide an established community?*

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of the construction and operation of a new fire station in a commercially developed area. The proposed Project would not establish a barrier between segments of an established community, or otherwise negatively impact the community in the City of Yucca Valley and the surrounding areas.

- b) *Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

No Impact. The proposed Project site is zoned **Mixed Use Commercial (C-MU)** and has a general plan land use designation of **Mixed Use**, both of which permit commercial uses, including fire stations. The Project entails constructing a new fire station approximately 175 feet from the existing fire station, which complied with applicable land use policies and regulations at the time of its development.

The Project aligns with the site's existing zoning and land use designations, and no zoning changes or general plan amendments are required. As such, no conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation would occur, and no impacts are anticipated.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
SUBSTANTIATION: (Check ☐ if project is located within the Mineral Resource Zone Overlay):					
Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials					

- a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

No Impact. The proposed Project site is not located within any designated Mineral Resource Zone, as identified by the California Department of Conservation, the California Geologic Survey Mineral Land Classification Mapper, or the county's Mineral Resource Zones map (Figure NR-4). Additionally, the site has never been used for mineral extraction activities. As such, no impacts related to mineral resources are anticipated.

- b) *Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?*

No Impact. The proposed Project area is not in an area delineated on a local plan, specific plan, or other land use plan as a mineral resource recovery site. Implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, no impacts related to mineral resources are anticipated.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XIII. NOISE - Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
SUBSTANTIATION: (Check if the project is located in the Noise Hazard Overlay District ☐ or is subject to severe noise levels according to the General Plan Noise Element ☐):				
Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; Noise Study (Appendix F)				

- a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards

Less than Significant Impact. A Noise Impact Study, dated November 26, 2024, was prepared for the proposed Project by MD Acoustics, LLC, attached as Appendix F. The Noise Impact Study evaluates the potential proposed Project traffic noise impacts, the potential Project-related long-term stationary-source noise impacts, and short-term construction noise and vibration impacts. Noise is measured on a logarithmic scale of sound pressure level known as decibel (dB). A-weighted decibels (dBA) approximate the

subjective response of the human ear to broad frequency noise sources by discriminating against very low and very high frequencies of the audible spectrum of sound. The equivalent sound level (Leq) represents a steady sound level containing the same total energy as a time varying signal over a given period of time. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is the weighted average of the intensity of a sound, with corrections for time of day, and averaged over a 24-hour day.

Construction Noise and Vibration (Temporary)

Worst-case construction noise levels were estimated using SoundPLAN, an acoustical modeling software and from CalEEMod for construction equipment noise levels. These estimates assumed construction equipment operating at the nearest sensitive receptor, the Yucca Valley Library, which is located approximately 145 feet from the average construction activities and as close as 45 feet from construction activities on the east side of the proposed Project site. Lmax levels represent maximum levels when construction occurs adjacent to the residential receptors and Leq levels represent the average construction noise level. As outlined in the Noise Impact Study, construction noise from the Project is anticipated to range from 60 to 71 dBA Leq and 79 to 91 dBA Lmax at the nearest sensitive receptor. The Project will comply with the allowable construction hours specified in Section 83.01.080(g)(3) of the San Bernardino County Municipal Code, which permits construction activities between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM. The County recognizes that construction noise is temporary in nature and permissible during these hours. Since Project construction activities will occur exclusively within the allowable timeframe, the Project is expected to result in a less-than-significant impact related to construction noise, and no mitigation measures are required.

Transportation Noise Impacts

Transportation noise impacts would be considered significant if the existing plus Project levels are expected to increase by more than 3 dB. Compared to existing traffic noise levels, future traffic volumes are not expected to increase due to the Project. As detailed in the Project Description section of this study, the proposed Project would replace the existing Fire Station #41, which is located approximately 200 feet west of the Project site. Therefore, trips already generated by existing fire station personnel are anticipated to remain the same once the new fire station is operational. Additionally, it is expected that the amount of personnel would be on duty at one time, consistent with existing fire station operations. Therefore, traffic generated by the proposed Project would be minimal (i.e., daily staff work-commute trips) plus emergency response trips, as needed.

Traffic noise along Twentynine Palms Highway is the primary source of noise affecting the Project site and surrounding areas. To evaluate existing and future traffic noise levels, modeling was conducted using the FHWA-RD-77-108 model. According to the Noise Impact Study, Twentynine Palms Highway has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 32,000, and Joshua Lane has an ADT of 11,700. The Project itself is estimated to generate 14 daily trips, as outlined in the Trip Generation Assessment in Section XVII. Traffic noise impacts were assessed at the nearest sensitive receptor, the Yucca Valley Library, where noise levels with and without Project-generated vehicle traffic were compared. As shown in Table 8 of the Noise Impact Study, the analysis determined no measurable change in noise levels at the library. Notably, a change of 3 dB or greater is required to perceive an audible difference in noise levels. Further, on-site traffic noise levels were assessed, and it was concluded that the Project is currently within the

normally acceptable range for commercial uses at 61.2 dBA CNEL, which would not change due to the increase in traffic levels from the Project. Given the minimal increase in traffic resulting from the Project, off-site and on-site traffic noise impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

Operational Noise (Permanent) Stationary Noise

Worst-case operational noise was modeled using SoundPLAN acoustical modeling software. Four (4) receptors representative of the adjacent library and commercial uses were modeled using the SoundPLAN noise model to evaluate the proposed Project's operational impact. Receptors 1 and 2 represent the noise level at Yucca Valley Library, while receptors 3 and 4 represent the noise levels at the adjacent commercial uses. The results are summarized in Table 9 of the Noise Impact Analysis (Appendix F) and show that the total combined noise level (existing ambient noise, plus Project noise level) equals 58 dBA Leq, which is below the normally acceptable commercial noise level of 60 dBA Leq. Therefore, Project generated operational noise level is not expected to result in an increase in ambient noise levels at the four nearby receptors.

Fire Truck Noise

Noise associated with the use of emergency vehicle sirens is often a concern as it relates to the quality of life of nearby residents. The concern is related to the perception that fire stations would typically respond to many emergencies leaving the site daily and that emergency sirens are intentionally loud and that such loud noise could disrupt the surrounding community. Although fire trucks could generate noise levels that are disruptive, noise events from fire trucks would be infrequent and individual events would be short in duration, fire truck noise would not result in long-term effects to any single sensitive receptor that could result in substantial increases in noise leading to adverse health effects. Furthermore, as outlined in the Project Description, the service area for the fire station would remain unchanged from the existing Fire Station #41. Relocating the fire station would not alter the frequency of emergency calls, meaning the overall community noise levels would remain consistent with current conditions. Further, section 83.01.080(g)(2) if the County municipal code exempts noise from emergency equipment, vehicles, and devices. Therefore, the Project would not result in a significant increase in community noise related to emergency vehicle sirens.

b) *Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The peak particle velocity is defined as the maximum instantaneous peak of the vibration signal. Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment and methods used, distance to affected structures, and soil type. It is expected that ground-borne vibration from the proposed Project construction activities would cause only intermittent, localized vibrational intrusion. The proposed Project would not require the use of a pile driver, which is known to generate substantial construction vibration levels. The nearest existing commercial building is 20 feet west of the Project site. At this distance, worst-case vibrational impacts would yield 0.268 peak particle velocity (in/sec) which may be perceptible but is below the threshold of any risk of damage for commercial buildings. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact regarding vibration or ground-borne noise levels, and no mitigation is required.

- c) *For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project is located within 2 miles of an existing airport runway. The Yucca Valley Airport is located approximately 0.35-mile northeast of the Project site. The proposed Project would not increase existing airport noise or result in changes to existing airport operations. Thus, the proposed Project would not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive airport related noise. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING - Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project site is a 1.72-acre parcel of undeveloped land in Yucca Valley. While the Project involves constructing a new fire station to replace the existing Fire Station #41, it does not include new residential or commercial development, nor would it require the extension of utilities such as water or sewer lines that could spur population growth. Therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth or remove barriers to growth.

Although a temporary labor force would be needed for construction, the short-term nature of this workforce would not lead to significant population growth. The Project does not propose off-site infrastructure improvements like road extensions, further minimizing

potential population impacts. As a result, the Project would have a less than significant impact on population and housing.

- b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No Impact. The proposed Project is situated on undisturbed, vacant land, with no existing housing units that would be displaced. Additionally, the new fire station will include up to 12 dormitory rooms (11 for firefighters and 1 for the Chief) to accommodate staff on duty during each shift. As a result, the Project would not generate demand for housing in the surrounding area or cause displacement of existing residents. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XV. PUBLIC SERVICES					
a)	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
	Fire Protection?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	Police Protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Other Public Facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:*

Fire Protection?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a new fire station on a 1.72-acre portion of a currently undeveloped property which would replace the existing fire station currently serving the community and surrounding area. Once Project construction is complete,

the existing fire station would cease to operate and is planned for future use as an administrative building for the county. Potential impacts associated with construction of the new fire station have been analyzed throughout this IS/MND. As detailed in Sections I through XX of this IS/MND, construction of the proposed Project would have the potential to result in significant impacts on biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and tribal cultural resources. However, as discussed in those sections, the implementation of mitigation measures **BIO-1 through BIO-6, CUL-1 through CUL-4, GEO-1, and TCR-1 and TCR-2** would reduce impacts on biological resources, cultural resources, geologic resources, and tribal cultural resources to less than significant. Please refer to Sections IV, V, VII, and XVIII for more information.

Police Protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is served by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, operating out of the Morongo Basin Station located at 63665 Twentynine Palms Highway, Joshua Tree, California, approximately 8.6 miles east of the Project site. The average travel time between the station and the Project site is approximately 14 minutes. The proposed redevelopment of the Project site is not anticipated to adversely affect the surrounding transportation network or increase congestion on nearby roadways.

The County actively manages police staffing levels to ensure effective protection and response times are maintained, both in response to new development Projects and through the annual budgeting process led by the County's Board of Supervisors. These proactive measures ensure that the proposed Project will not result in a significant decrease in police response times.

The Morongo Basin Station employs a community-focused approach to law enforcement, supported by approximately 200 members of its Volunteer Forces organizations. These volunteer units include Uniformed Patrol Reserves, Search and Rescue, Mounted Equestrian Search and Rescue, Explorer Scouts, and seven Citizen Patrol Units. These groups work alongside patrol deputies to enhance public safety. The station also addresses the unique needs of the area through specialized programs, such as the Off-Highway Vehicle Enforcement Team. This team consists of deputies trained to operate dual-sport motorcycles, enforcing laws related to off-roading while promoting public awareness⁹.

Given these resources and operational practices, the proposed Project would not necessitate the construction of new or altered police protection facilities, which could otherwise cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Schools?

No Impact. The addition of a new fire station to the existing Yucca Valley community would not increase the demand for schools such that new or expanded school facilities

⁹ County of San Bernardino (2024) County Sheriff's Department, Yucca Valley Patrol Station. (<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/patrol-stations/yucca-valley/>). Accessed December 20, 2024.

would be required. The proposed fire station would replace the existing fire station that currently serves the community and the surrounding area. As such, the new fire station would not be considered new infrastructure that could induce population growth and increase the demand for school services. Therefore, the proposed Project would not have an adverse physical effect on the environment from the construction of new or significantly altered school services or facilities. No impact would occur.

Parks?

No Impact. The proposed Project would not induce unplanned residential development or significantly increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks and recreational facilities in a way that would lead to their substantial physical deterioration. The Project includes the construction of 12 single-occupancy dorms within the fire station to accommodate on-duty firefighters and staff. This modest addition is not expected to generate a significant demand for recreational facilities in the area.

Furthermore, the proposed fire station will feature an exercise room designed to meet the fitness and recreational needs of its staff, reducing the likelihood that firefighters and other personnel will need to utilize local parks for such activities. These onsite amenities are intended to address recreational needs within the fire station itself, thereby alleviating any potential pressure on nearby recreational facilities.

Given these considerations, the Project is not anticipated to result in any significant impacts on local or regional recreational facilities, and no mitigation measures are required.

Other Public Facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would not result in a significant, unplanned, increase in residential population. Implementation of the proposed Project would not adversely affect other public facilities or require the construction of new or modified facilities. Therefore, no impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XVI. RECREATION				

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) | Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility will occur or be accelerated? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility will occur or be accelerated?*

No Impact. As discussed in Section XV, the proposed Project would not significantly increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks and recreational facilities in a manner that could result in their substantial physical deterioration. The Project includes the construction of 12 single-occupancy dorms within the fire station to accommodate on-duty firefighters and staff. This limited addition is not anticipated to generate a substantial demand for recreational facilities in the surrounding area.

The fire station will feature an exercise room specifically designed to meet the fitness and recreational needs of its staff. Additionally, staff members who do not stay overnight or for extended durations are unlikely to rely on recreational facilities either onsite or offsite during their shifts. These factors ensure that the Project would not cause significant impacts to neighborhood or regional parks or lead to their physical deterioration.

- b) *Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

No Impact. As mentioned above the Project includes onsite recreational amenities and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities to accommodate future staff at the new fire station and would therefore not have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant	No Impact
XVII. TRANSPORTATION – Would the project:				

- a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| b) | Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 subdivision (b)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) | Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) | Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials; VMT Assessment (Appendix G); Trip Generation Assessment (Appendix H)

- a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is situated south of Twentynine Palms Outerhighway and east of Joshua Lane in the City of Yucca Valley. Twentynine Palms Outerhighway Road is a two-lane local road that extends from Dumosa Avenue to Airway Avenue, spanning approximately 2,375 feet. Twentynine Palms Outerhighway is not designated as a transit route and the Project site is not within the vicinity of bike routes and contains nominal pedestrian facilities. The proposed Project would add additional traffic along Twentynine Palms Outerhighway during the construction phase; however, this traffic will be minimal and temporary in nature. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Thus, a less than significant impact would occur.

- b) *Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 subdivision (b)?*

Less than Significant Impact. A Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Assessment was prepared for the proposed Project by Integrated Engineering Group (IEG) dated November 2024, in coordination with the County of San Bernardino and a Trip Generation Assessment was also prepared by IEG for the Project site. A complete copy of the VMT Assessment is included in this report as Appendix G and the Trip Generation Assessment is included as Appendix H and are summarized herein. The VMT Study concluded that because the Project is the construction of a fire station, it qualifies as a community institution and is therefore presumed to have less than significant VMT impact per Recommended Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled and Level of service Assessment¹⁰. The Trip Generation Assessment concluded that the Project is anticipated to generate 7 AM peak hour trips and 7 PM peak hour trips for a total of 14 peak hour trips, therefore the Project can be presumed to cause less than significant VMT Impact.

¹⁰ San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (February 2020). TIA Guidelines. (Sample-TIA-Guidelines.pdf). Accessed January 3, 2024.

- c) *Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would occur entirely within the Project site boundaries. Construction activities would not occur within the adjacent roadways to the Project site. There are no uses that would be impacted by construction equipment or construction trips on the adjacent roadways. Large trucks delivering equipment, fill material, or removing small quantities of excavated dirt or debris can access the site without significantly disrupting traffic flow on the surrounding roadways. Additionally, the Project will comply with all applicable fire codes and ordinance requirements for construction and site access. Emergency response and evacuation procedures will be coordinated with the County, local police, and fire departments. Consequently, the proposed Project is expected to have a less than significant potential for increasing hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. No mitigation is required.

- d) *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

No Impact. The Project site is undeveloped and would be accessible from Twentynine Palms Outerhighway to the north and from Joshua Lane to the south. Twentynine Palms Outerhighway and Joshua Lane are not evacuation routes within the County and implementation of the Project is not anticipated to impede emergency response from accessing the site or surrounding area in the event of an emergency.¹¹ Adequate on-site access for emergency vehicles would be verified during the County's plan review process. During construction, the contractor would be required to maintain adequate emergency access for emergency vehicles as required by the County. Because the Project is located within a moderate fire hazard severity zone, impacts to emergency response and/or emergency evacuation plans are considered less than significant, especially given the low density of vegetation on and adjacent to the Project site. Therefore, the Project is not expected to have significant impacts on emergency access and local circulation during construction or operation, and no mitigation is required.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
- i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

¹¹<https://countywideplan.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/68/2021/02/PP-2-Evacuation-Routes-201027.pdf?x23421>

- register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
- ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe? ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Cultural Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), South Central Coast Information Center, California State University, Fullerton; Submitted Project Materials; Cultural Resources Assessment (Appendix C)

- a) *Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:*
- i. *Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or*

Less than Significant Impact. As of July 2015, California AB 52 was enacted and expands CEQA by defining a new resource category, "Tribal Cultural Resources." AB 52 requires Lead Agencies to evaluate a Project's potential to impact tribal cultural resources. Such resources include "sites, features, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe and is 1) listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources. AB 52 also gives Lead Agencies the discretion to determine, supported by substantial evidence, whether a resource qualifies as a "tribal cultural resource." As discussed in Section V above, as part of the Cultural Resources Assessment prepared by BCR Consulting on November 19, 2024, archaeologists did not record any cultural resources within the subject property boundaries. Additionally, a cultural resources review was conducted to determine the eligibility of potential historical resources on the Project site (refer to Appendix C). However, all potential resources were determined to be ineligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Furthermore, findings were negative during the Sacred Lands File search with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). Therefore, there would be no anticipated impacts to listed or eligible for listing historical resources, and no mitigation is required.

- ii. *A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?*

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project site, while currently undisturbed and not listed on any historical resource register, is underlain by geologic units comprised of alluvial fan and valley fill deposits from the Holocene and Pleistocene epochs. Pleistocene alluvial deposits are recognized for their high paleontological sensitivity. Although the Western Science Center has no records of fossil localities within the Project site or a one-mile radius, similar deposits throughout Southern California have produced significant fossil discoveries. Any fossil specimens uncovered during the Yucca Valley Fire Station Project's excavation activities would hold scientific significance. Development-related excavation could therefore potentially impact these sensitive Pleistocene deposits. To address this, **Mitigation Measure CR-3** has been incorporated and is further detailed in Section V.

In addition to the unplanned discovery of paleontological resources, the presence of remains or unanticipated cultural resources under the ground surface of the Project site is possible. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures CR-1, CR-2, CR-3, and CR-4** would ensure that impacts due to discovery of unanticipated cultural resources during excavation would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. In addition, pursuant to AB52 tribal consultation, the YSMN have requested **Mitigation Measures TCR-1 and TCR-2** in order to mitigate potential significant impacts to tribal cultural resources.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Tribal Coordination

The YSMN shall be contacted, as detailed in **CR-1**, of any pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources discovered during Project implementation and be provided information regarding the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment. Should the find be deemed significant, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall be created by the archaeologist, in coordination with YSMN and all subsequent finds shall be subject to this Plan. This Plan shall allow for a monitor to be present that represents the YSMN for the remainder of the Project, should they elect to place a monitor on-site.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2: Review of Archaeological & Cultural Documents

Any and all archaeological/cultural documents created as a part of the Project (isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be supplied to the applicant and Lead Agency for dissemination to the YSMN. The Lead Agency and/or applicant shall, in good faith, consult with YSMN throughout the life of the Project.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures TCR-1, TCR-2, and Mitigation Measures CR-1 – CR-4 (Section V) would reduce potentially significant impacts of the Proposed Project associated with Tribal Cultural Resources to less than significant.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:					
a)	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

SUBSTANTIATION:

Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a) *Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

Less than Significant Impact. The Project involves the construction of a new fire station on a 1.72-acre portion of currently undeveloped land. Although the site is vacant, utility plans prepared by Ultra Engineering dated July 18, 2024 (Appendix I), show that the Project site contains facilities water, wastewater/sewer system, storm water drainage, electrical power, natural gas, and telecommunication facilities. An analysis of impacts is provided below.

Water Supplies

The Hi-Desert Water District (HDWD) provides water services to the Town of Yucca Valley, including the Project site. HDWD's primary water supply sources include imported State Water Project water from the Mojave Water Agency for recharging the Warren Valley Groundwater Basin, groundwater from the Ames Valley and Warren Valley basins, and septic return flows. According to HDWD's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan, total water supplies (existing and planned) are Projected to increase from 19,751 acre-feet per year (afy) in 2020 to 28,913 afy in 2040 (HDWD 2016). The Town of Yucca Valley's total Projected water demand is estimated at 2,754 afy in 2020, 3,040 afy in 2035, and 7,989 afy at post-2035 General Plan buildout (The Planning Center 2013)¹².

The Proposed Project is not anticipated to significantly increase water demand. It involves constructing a new fire station to replace the existing facility located west of the Project site. Additional water usage would primarily result from restrooms, showers, laundry room, kitchen, planters, and newly planted vegetation, representing minimal new demand. As such, the Project would not necessitate the expansion of water facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Wastewater

The Hi-Desert Water District (HDWD) provides wastewater collection and conveyance services to the Project site. The HDWD operates and maintains the HDWD Water Reclamation Facility, which serves the Project site and has a treatment capacity of up to 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD) in annual average daily flow (AADF)¹³.

The Proposed Project would generate wastewater from several sources, including a laundry room, six bathrooms with showers and toilets, and kitchen dishwashing

¹² Hi-Desert Water District. 2016, JULY. 2015 Urban Water Management Plan.
<https://www.hdwd.com/archivecenter/viewfile/ite/47>

¹³ Hi-Desert Water District. 2022, January 24. Water Reclamation Facility.
<https://www.hdwd.com/DocumentCenter/View/823/2021-WRF-Annual-Monitoring-Report>

activities. These sources are expected to produce minimal wastewater. All wastewater generated by the Project would be conveyed to the existing sewer infrastructure at the site. Given the low volume of wastewater expected, the Project would not necessitate the construction of new or expanded wastewater facilities that could result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Stormwater

The Project area currently has undeveloped (unpaved) surfaces. Rainwater currently percolates into the ground or leaves the Project area as runoff. Construction of the proposed Project would implement new paving and landscaping, along with ground disturbance activities. Under Project conditions, stormwater would percolate into the ground or be directed to stormwater infrastructure onsite and in the public rights-of-way. The Proposed Project would include stormwater infrastructure that would be designed consistent with Town Code Section 9.32.110, Stormwater Management, which is intended to minimize stormwater runoff and increase infiltration through the implementation of BMPs in landscape and grading design plans. This would ensure that the operation of the Proposed Project would not significantly increase or change the stormwater volume, rate, or pattern beyond connecting to existing stormwater system. Impacts would be less than significant

Electric and Natural Gas

Electricity for the Yucca Valley region, including the businesses surrounding the Project site, is provided by Southern California Edison. Power lines are present within the proposed Project boundary, including a pole-mounted transformer. Additionally, a large electrical transformer is located in the eastern portion of the Project site. Natural gas service is provided by the SoCal Gas Company.

The Proposed Project would connect to the existing electrical and natural gas infrastructure and include the construction of an additional electrical transformer in the southern portion of the Project site to support the new fire station. Since the area is already serviced by established electricity and natural gas infrastructure, the Project would not require the expansion of these facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Telecommunications

Telephone services are provided by Frontier Communications and Spectrum provides cable services¹⁴. The Proposed Project would connect to the existing telecommunication facilities on-site. As telecommunication infrastructure already exists in the area, the Proposed Project does not require the construction of new or expanded facilities. Impact would be less than significant.

- b) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?*

¹⁴ Town of Yucca Valley Website. Services-Utilities. <https://www.yucca-valley.org/services/utilities>

Less than Significant Impact. The Hi-Desert Water District (HDWD) has sufficient water supplies to meet the demands of the proposed Project, as outlined above. The 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) evaluated water supply Projections for normal, dry, and multiple dry years and determined that there is adequate capacity to meet daily regional water demands (HDWD 2016). The proposed Project aligns with the town-wide growth and buildout assumptions considered in the UWMP. As a result, the Project is not expected to create water system capacity issues, and reliable water supplies would be available to meet its demands. Impacts related to the availability of adequate water supplies from existing entitlements and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years are therefore considered less than significant.

- c) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's Projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*

Less than Significant Impact. As stated above, the proposed Project is not expected to substantially increase wastewater generation. The proposed Project would be adequately served by existing wastewater infrastructure. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

- d) *Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?*

Less than Significant Impact. The implementation of the Proposed Project would generate solid waste during both construction and ongoing operations. Solid waste collection services for the Town of Yucca Valley, including the Project site, are provided by Burrtec Waste Industries. During construction, activities such as demolition would produce a limited amount of construction waste especially because there are no existing structures to be demolished. Once operational, the fire station would generate minimal daily waste from the activities of on-duty firefighters and paramedics. All solid waste from both construction and operations would be transported to the Landers Sanitary Landfill, located approximately 10.7 miles north of the Project site. Landers Sanitary Landfill has a permitted throughput of 1,200 tons per day, a remaining capacity of 11,148,100 cubic yards, and an estimated closure date of January 2072¹⁵. The Proposed Project is not expected to significantly increase solid waste generation, as staff from the existing fire station would shift to the new facility, resulting in a negligible net gain in waste production. Additionally, the Project would comply with Assembly Bill (AB) 939, which requires the diversion of at least 50% of the solid waste generated away from the landfill.

Given that the Project would not substantially increase solid waste generation and would adhere to solid waste reduction requirements, it would not impair the attainment of solid

¹⁵ California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). 2024, December 16 (accessed). SWIS/Facility Site Search. <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search><https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>

waste reduction goals. Therefore, the solid waste impacts resulting from the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

- e) *Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

No Impact. The Proposed Project would adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements regarding solid waste management, including compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 341, which mandates that at least 75% of solid waste generated be reduced, recycled, or composted by 2020 (CalRecycle 2024). During construction, the Project would comply with CALGreen Section 5.408, which requires that at least 65% of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from nonresidential Projects be recycled or salvaged for reuse. In addition, operational solid waste management would align with the requirements and services provided by the County of San Bernardino Solid Waste Management Division and the County's Development Code. As the Proposed Project would fully comply with all applicable solid waste management statutes and regulations, no potential impacts associated with noncompliance are anticipated.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
XX.	WILDFIRE: If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a)	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water resources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or	☐	☐	☐	☒

landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

SUBSTANTIATION: Countywide Plan; Submitted Project Materials

- a-d) *Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

No Impact. The Proposed Project site is not located within a very high fire hazard severity zone according to City General Plan maps or Local Responsibility and State Responsibility Area maps. Therefore, no impacts associated with wildfire would occur and no mitigation is required.

Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

<i>Issues</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact or Does Not Apply</i>
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:					

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

- a) *Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or*

wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section IV, Biological Resources, the proposed Project site, WJTs are present on the Project site. WJTs are listed as a sensitive species candidate on the California Natural Diversity Database. The Proposed Project would include the removal of 7 WJTs on the Project site, two of which are dead. To satisfy state requirements, **Mitigation Measure BIO-5** would be implemented. BIO-5 consists of mitigating for “take” of WJTs by paying into the Western Joshua Tree Mitigation Fund (WJTMF). Payment of impact fees to the WJTMF would mitigate the potential loss of the Western Joshua Trees. Payment of mitigation fees to the WJTMF would fund biological monitoring, infrastructure, short- and long-term habitat maintenance, and reporting activities. The Proposed Project would also implement **Mitigation Measure BIO-4**, which would require the presence of a qualified biological monitor during the transplantation or removal of WJTs as well as implementing a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for all Project personnel (**Mitigation Measure BIO-3**). Additionally, the measure requires a designated biologist to monitor activities and have the authority to halt work or implement measures to prevent unauthorized take of Joshua Trees.

The Project site is located in an area where nesting birds may be present during the nesting bird season. **Mitigation Measure BIO-6** would be implemented. **BIO-6** would consist of avoiding impacts on migratory birds, by removing vegetation outside the nesting season (February 1 to September 15); however, if removal is necessary during nesting season, pre-construction surveys must be conducted within three days prior, and any active nests found must be flagged and protected with appropriate buffers (250 feet for song birds, 500 feet for raptors). Through the implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-6**, the Project would not substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a sensitive plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. As discussed in Section V, Cultural Resources, the Proposed Project is currently undisturbed. No examples of California history exist on the Project site. However, as part of the proposed Project, groundwork and grading is proposed during construction activities at the Project site and has the potential to impact prehistorical resources. To mitigate any potential impacts to prehistorical resources, the Proposed Project would incorporate **Mitigation Measures CUL-4 and TCR-1**, which provides procedures in the event of an accidental archaeological find. Adherence with **CUL-4 and TCR-1** would ensure that impacts related to prehistorical resources are less than significant. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and no additional mitigation measures are required.

- b) *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?*

No Impact. Construction of the Project in conjunction with other approved or pending Projects in the region would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to the physical environment. As concluded throughout the analysis above, the proposed Project would include both operation- and construction-related Project components whose adherence to applicable regulations would ensure that the proposed Project's incremental contribution would be less than cumulatively considerable.

- c) *Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

No Impact. All potential impacts have been thoroughly evaluated and have been deemed to be neither individually significant nor cumulatively considerable in terms of any adverse effects upon the region, the local community or its inhabitants. At a minimum, the Project will be required to meet the conditions of approval for the Project to be implemented. It is anticipated that all such conditions of approval will further support that no potential for adverse impacts will be introduced by construction activities, initial or future land uses authorized by the Project approval.

XXII. MITIGATION MEASURES

(Any mitigation measures, which are not 'self-monitoring' shall have a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared and adopted at time of project approval)

SELF MONITORING MITIGATION MEASURES: (Compliance monitoring will be verified by existing procedures for condition compliance)

Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-construction Surveys

Burrowing Owl

Within 14 days preceding vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist will conduct comprehensive surveys for signs of occupancy by the burrowing owl. These surveys must encompass the entire area designated for disturbance and should involve the biologist walking along parallel transects. The focus of these surveys is to identify evidence of live owls or indications of their presence, which may include feathers, burrows, pellets, tracks, and scat.

If signs suggesting the presence of the burrowing are detected, vegetation clearing and ground disturbing activities will be prohibited in the area where the signs were found. Instead, CDFW shall be contacted to formulate a strategy for avoidance.

The results of these surveys, including graphical representations pinpointing the locations of burrowing owl sign, along with documentation detailing avoidance measures implemented, must be submitted to CDFW within 14 days following the conclusion of the pre-construction surveys or construction monitoring. This submission serves as evidence

of compliance with pertinent state regulations pertaining to the protection of the burrowing owl.

Parish's Daisy

Prior to Project activities, a qualified biologist will conduct focused vegetation surveys for Parish's daisy. Survey techniques will include pedestrian transect surveys spaced approximately 30 feet apart within areas of suitable habitat in the Project impact areas and a 100-foot buffer. Survey techniques will be consistent with the accepted methodologies outlined by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2018), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2000), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS 2000).

Monarch Butterfly, Pallid Bat, Western Yellow Bat, and Desert Tortoise

Prior to Project activities, a qualified biologist will conduct focused surveys for potential special-status species. In the event of an observation or signs of a special-status species are detected, including but not limited to monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), and desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), the biologist will halt all Project activities and the appropriate agency (CDFW, USFWS, County of San Bernardino, etc.) shall be contacted to formulate a strategy for avoidance. The results of these surveys, including graphical representations pinpointing the locations of detected special-status species or their sign, along with documentation detailing avoidance measures implemented, must be submitted to the USFWS and CDFW within 14 days following the conclusion of the take-avoidance surveys or construction monitoring. This submission serves as evidence of compliance with pertinent federal and state regulations pertaining to the protection of special status species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Exclusion Fencing for Vegetation

In the event of an observation of Parish's Daisy, individuals identified will be protected behind exclusion fencing. For impacts regarding individual plants, the affected plants will be relocated under supervision of a qualified biologist. Coordination with CDFW and USFWS will occur before the implementation of these measures.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Worker Environmental Awareness Program

Prior to Project ground disturbing construction activities or vegetation clearance, a qualified biologist will initiate a biological training program designed to educate on-site workers about six (6) critical environmental concerns associated with the Project. This training will be mandatory for all on-site personnel involved in ground disturbing/demolition or vegetation clearance. It will be administered on the first day of work, before Project activities commence. This training will place particular emphasis on educating participants about the protected species that may potentially be present within the Project Site, including, but not limited to burrowing owl, Parish's daisy, Monarch butterfly, pallid bat, Western yellow bat, and desert tortoise.

The program will include the following elements:

- A presentation, either developed by a qualified biologist or in consultation with one, which will address the sensitive biological resources that may be present within the Project site. It will also elucidate the rationale behind safeguarding these resources and the consequences of non-compliance.
- Brochures or booklets that contain written descriptions, photographs of protected species, and a comprehensive list of site rules related to the protection of biological resources. These materials will be distributed to all participants in the biological training program.
- Contact information for the Project's biological monitor, along with clear instructions for participants to contact the monitor with inquiries concerning the biological training program presentation or booklets.
- An acknowledgement form that each worker is required to sign, confirming their receipt of biological training program training and their commitment to adhere to the rules aimed at preserving biological resources.

The client will bear the responsibility for ensuring all on-site personnel receive the appropriate training throughout the entire Project. A training log will be maintained within the Project Site and signed by all on-site personnel immediately after training to document compliance with this requirement.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Biological Monitor

In the event of an observation of burrowing owl, Parish's daisy, Monarch butterfly, pallid bat, Western yellow bat, or desert tortoise, a qualified biologist will be designated as the biological monitor. This monitor is required to be on-site at all times during activities involving vegetation clearance or ground disturbance. Their primary responsibility is to observe and educate construction teams so that potential impacts to biological resources are either avoided or minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Once the Project approaches a phase where it is determined by the biological monitor that biological resources are no longer present, as determined by their expertise, they may request a reduction or discontinuation of biological monitoring in that specific area.

The biological monitor is vested with the authority to halt specific Project activities if they suspect violations of avoidance or minimization measures or if there are concerns about compliance with local, state, or federal laws. This authority is essential for the protection of biological resources and adherence to regulatory requirements.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Western Joshua Tree

A mitigation fee shall be paid for Western Joshua trees requiring removal as a result of the Project according to the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act. The fees are based on the "Standard" western Joshua tree removal fees as determined by the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act as follows:

- Trees 5 meters (16.4 feet) or greater - \$2,500

- Trees 1 meter (3.28 feet) or greater but less than 5 meters - \$500
- Trees less than 1 meter - \$340

Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Pre-construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Avoidance

Within 30 days prior to the commencement of vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities during the nesting season (typically February through August, unless otherwise determined by a qualified biologist based on local observations), a qualified biologist will determine the presence of active nests belonging to species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and California Fish and Game Codes 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 with full Project site coverage including visual surveys extending to surrounding lands (up to 300 ft for raptors).

These nest surveys must be carried out no more than seven days before the initiation of disturbance work. In cases where ground disturbance activities are delayed, additional pre-disturbance must be conducted to ensure that no more than seven days have passed between the survey and the onset of ground disturbance activities.

If active nests are identified, disturbance activities within 100 feet of the nest (or lesser distance if approved by USFWS) must be postponed or halted until the nest is vacated and the juveniles have successfully fledged, as determined by the biologist. To establish avoidance buffers in the field, highly visible construction fencing, or flagging must be used, and on-site personnel must be educated about the sensitivity of these nest areas. During periods when Project activities are scheduled to occur near active nests, a qualified biologist must be present as a biological monitor to ensure that inadvertent impacts on these nests are prevented.

Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Cultural Resource Discovery and Coordination with Tribes

In the event that cultural resources are discovered during Project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot buffer) shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of Interior standards shall be hired to assess the find. Work on the other portions of the Project outside of the buffered area may continue during this assessment period. Additionally, the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation Cultural Resources Department (YSMN) shall be contacted, as detailed within **Mitigation Measure TCR-1**, regarding any pre-contact and/or historic-era finds and be provided information after the archaeologist makes his/her initial assessment of the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Monitoring and Treatment Plan

If significant pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan, the drafts of which shall be provided to YSMN for review and comment, as detailed within TCR-1. The archaeologist shall monitor the remainder of the Project and implement the Plan accordingly.

Mitigation Measure CR-3: Paleontological Resource Mitigation Program

Prior to the initiation of ground-disturbing activities, a Paleontological Resource Mitigation Program (PRMP) shall be developed and implemented to address potential impacts to paleontological resources. The PRMP shall include the following components:

1. Preconstruction Preparation:

- A qualified professional paleontologist shall prepare a PRMP outlining monitoring protocols, fossil recovery methods, and reporting requirements.
- Construction personnel shall receive training on the recognition of paleontological resources and the procedures to follow if resources are encountered.

2. Monitoring:

- Paleontological monitoring would take place based on requirements of the PRMP

3. Fossil Salvage and Documentation:

- If fossils are discovered, the paleontological monitor shall halt work in the immediate area, recover and document the specimens consistent with the PRMP.

4. Curation and Reporting:

- All recovered fossils shall be cleaned, stabilized, identified, and curated at an accredited institution, such as a natural history museum or university repository, for permanent preservation and scientific study.
- A final mitigation report shall be prepared and submitted to the lead agency and repository institution consistent with the PRMP. The report shall summarize all paleontological activities, findings, and methods.

5. Unanticipated Discoveries:

- If unanticipated paleontological resources are discovered outside of identified sensitive areas, work shall stop in the vicinity of the discovery until the paleontologist evaluates the significance of the find and determines the appropriate course of action.

Mitigation Measure CR-4: Unplanned Discovery of Remains

If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any activities associated with the Project, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be notified

immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant. The most likely descendant shall complete the inspection of the site and provide recommendations for treatment to the landowner within 48 hours of being granted access.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Adherence to Geotechnical Engineering Report Recommendations

The Project applicant shall ensure that all construction practices follow all recommendations listed in the Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared by Landmark Consultants, Inc. dated July 2024. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall incorporate all recommendations from the Geotechnical Report into the Project plans, which will be submitted to San Bernardino County for review and approval.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Tribal Coordination

The YSMN shall be contacted, as detailed in **CR-1**, of any pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources discovered during Project implementation and be provided information regarding the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment. Should the find be deemed significant, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall be created by the archaeologist, in coordination with YSMN and all subsequent finds shall be subject to this Plan. This Plan shall allow for a monitor to be present that represents the YSMN for the remainder of the Project, should they elect to place a monitor on-site.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2: Review of Archaeological & Cultural Documents

Any and all archaeological/cultural documents created as a part of the Project (isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be supplied to the applicant and Lead Agency for dissemination to the YSMN. The Lead Agency and/or applicant shall, in good faith, consult with YSMN throughout the life of the Project.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Impact Study

Appendix B – Biological Resources Assessment

Appendix C – Cultural Resources Assessment

Appendix D – Geotechnical Report

Appendix E – Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Appendix F – Noise Impact Study

Appendix G – Vehicle Miles Traveled Screening Assessment

Appendix H – Trip Generation Assessment

Appendix I – Utility Plan