



Land Use Services Department

Lovemore Ranch Subdivision Appeal Tentative Tract Map

Appellant: Morongo Basin Conservation
Association

Mark Wardlaw, Director
Land Use Services Department
April 8, 2025

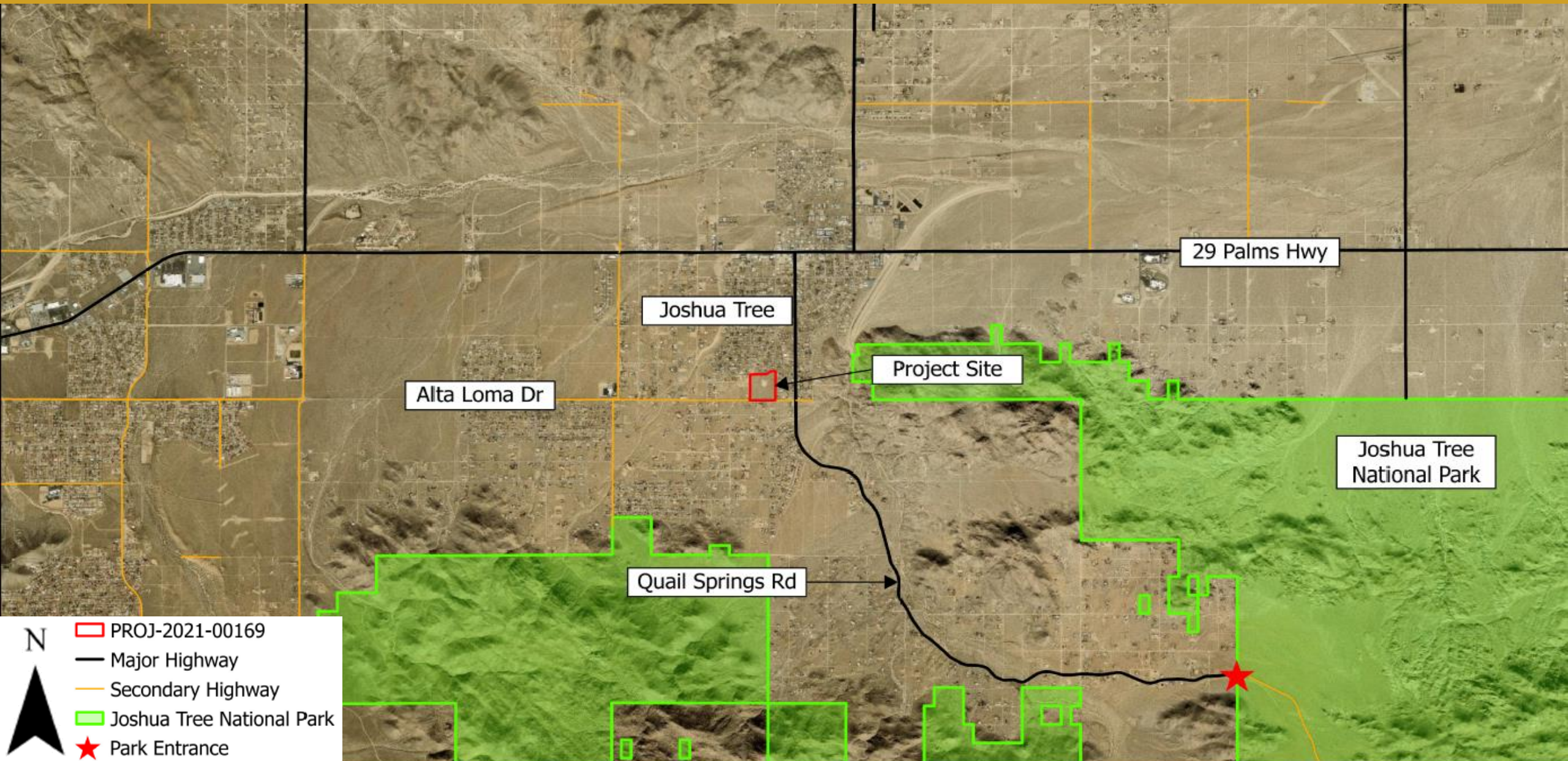


The Lovemore Ranch Tentative Tract Map is a proposed subdivision in the East Desert Region within the Joshua Tree Community (Project). The Project was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on January 23, 2025, and consists of the following:

- Mitigated Negative Declaration/Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Tentative Tract Map (TTM) No. 20443, to subdivide an 18.49-acre parcel into 64 single-family residential lots, ranging in size from approximately 7,200 to 13,068 square feet, and three letter lots (A, B, and C).

The Commission's action is being appealed by the Morongo Basin Conservation Association.

Project Location Map



Joshua Tree

29 Palms Hwy

Alta Loma Dr

Project Site

Joshua Tree National Park

Quail Springs Rd

N

PROJ-2021-00169

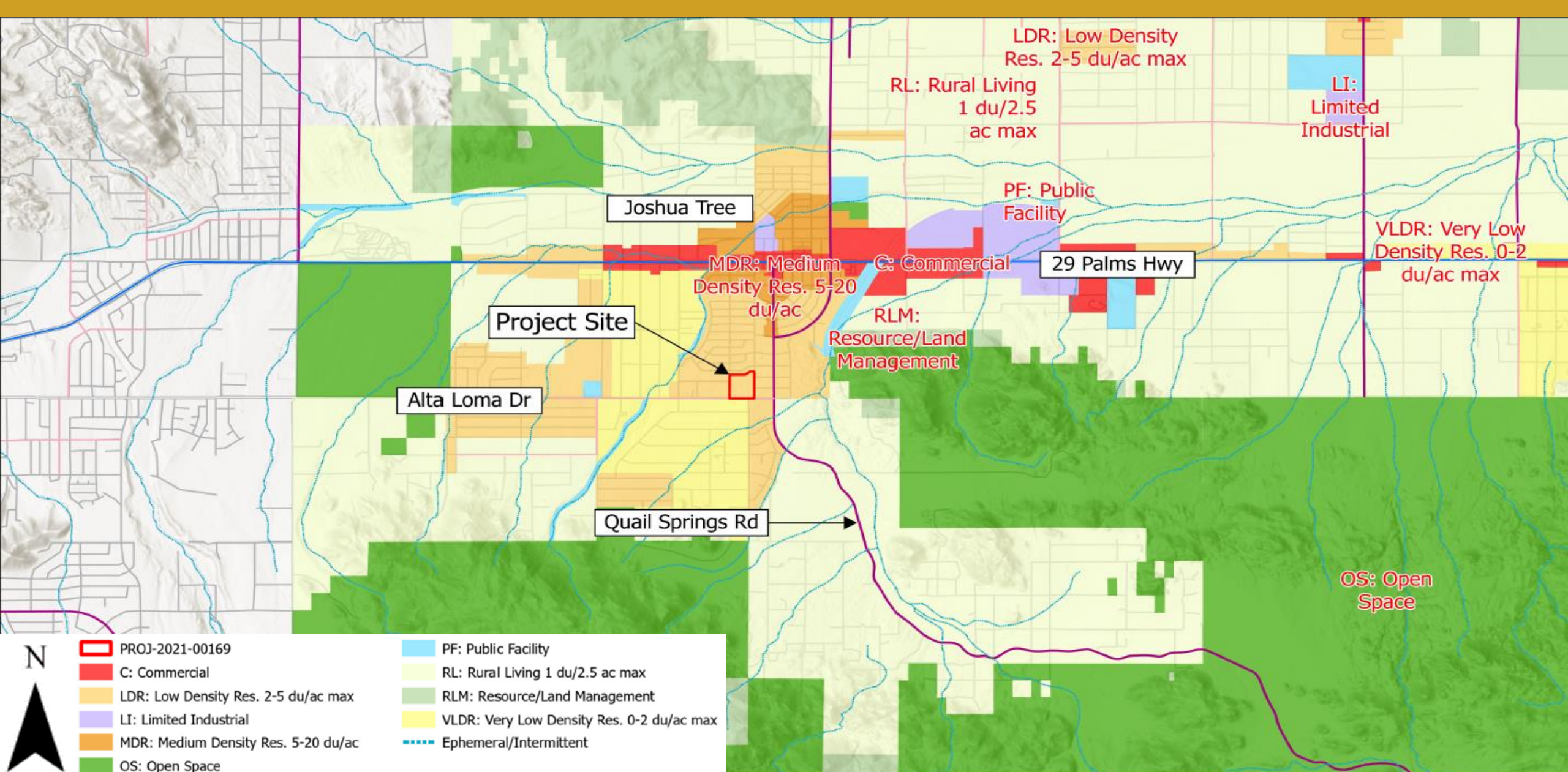
Major Highway

Secondary Highway

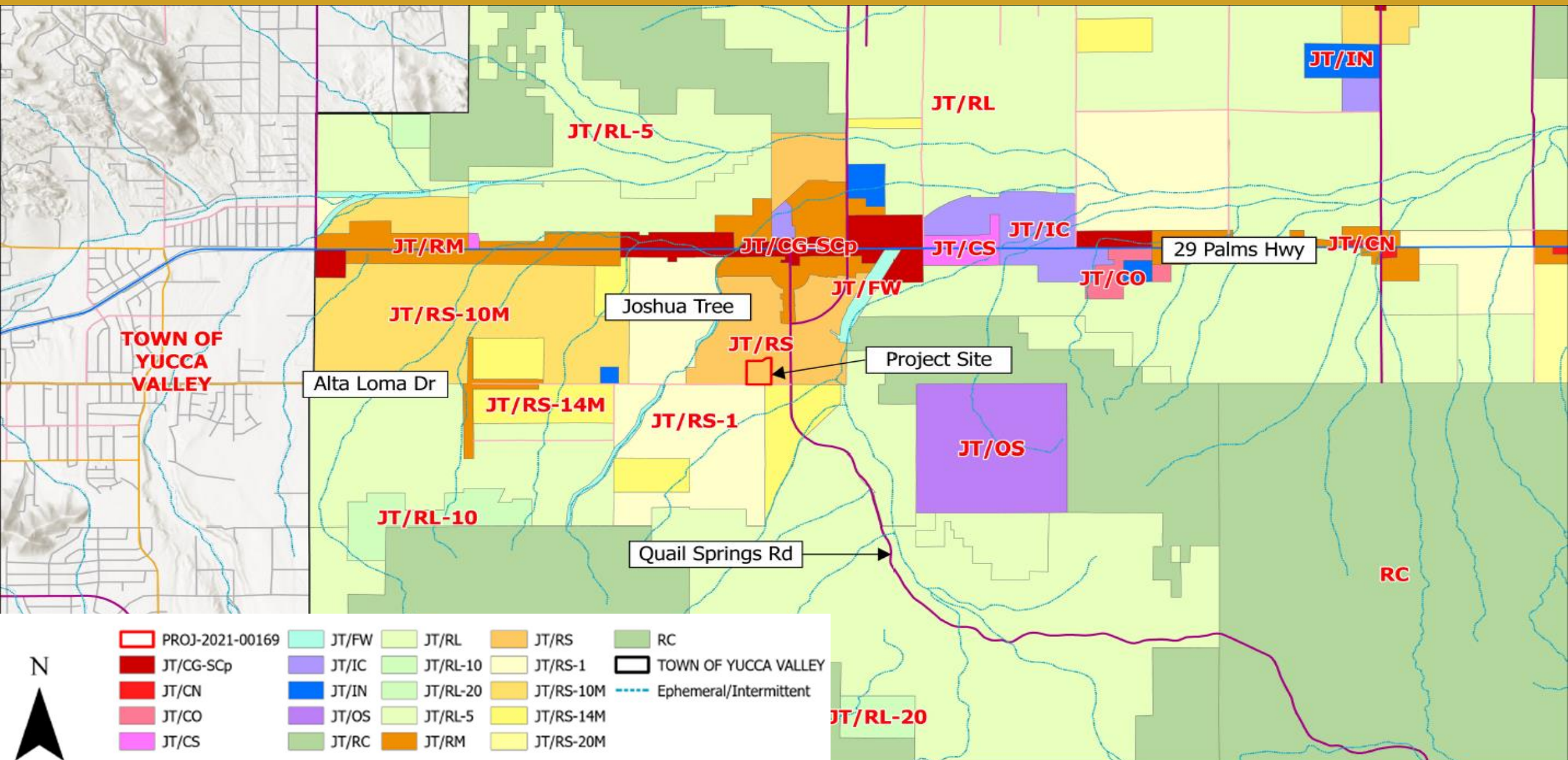
Joshua Tree National Park

Park Entrance

Land Use Category Map



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Project Site Looking North – Alta Loma Drive



Project Site Looking East – Hillview Drive

Tentative Tract Map

The Tentative Tract Map includes:

- 64 single family residential lots, ranging in size from 7,200 to 13,068 square feet.
- Lot A: Wastewater Treatment Facility.
- Lot B: Open Space, Pool, Recreational Area.
- Lot C: Private Roads and Utilities.



Countywide Policy Plan

- Policy LU 2.1 – Compatibility with Existing Uses
- Policy LU 2.4 – Land Use Map Consistency
- Policy LU 4.5 – Community Identity
- Policy H 1.1 – Appropriate Range of Housing
- Policy TM 1.8 – Emergency Access

Policy/ Standards	Density	Total Dwelling Units
General Plan	2-5	37-92
Development Code	6	112
Project Proposal	3.5	64

Development Code

The Project meets Development Code by:

- Providing two enclosed parking spaces per single family home.
- Meeting the minimum requirements for setbacks and not exceeding the maximum height of 35 feet.
- Being conditioned to comply with Dark Sky, and landscape requirements for the Desert Region.
- Having parcels less than two acres, with the potential to allow a maximum of one Short Term Rental unit.

Housing Accountability Act

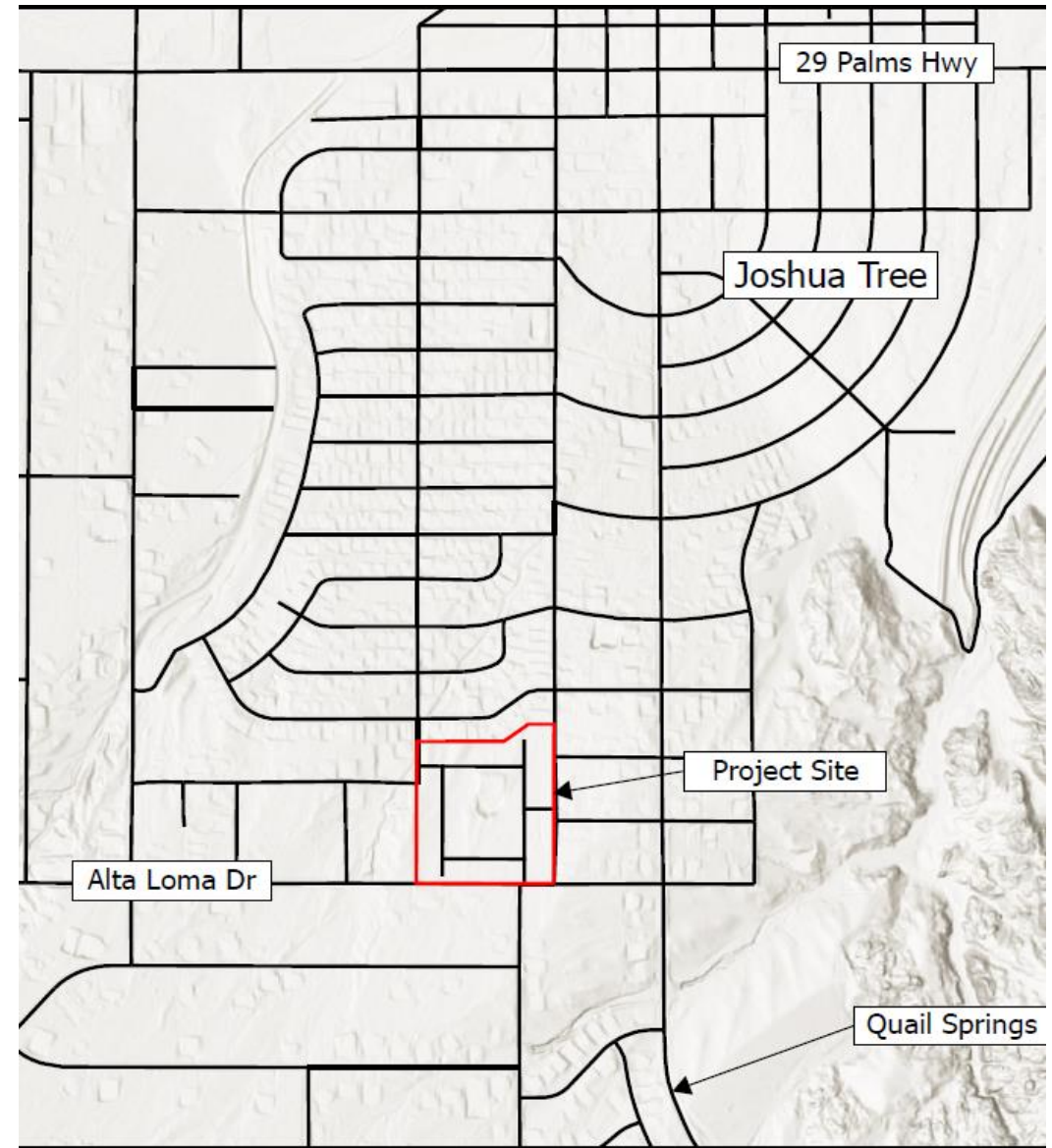
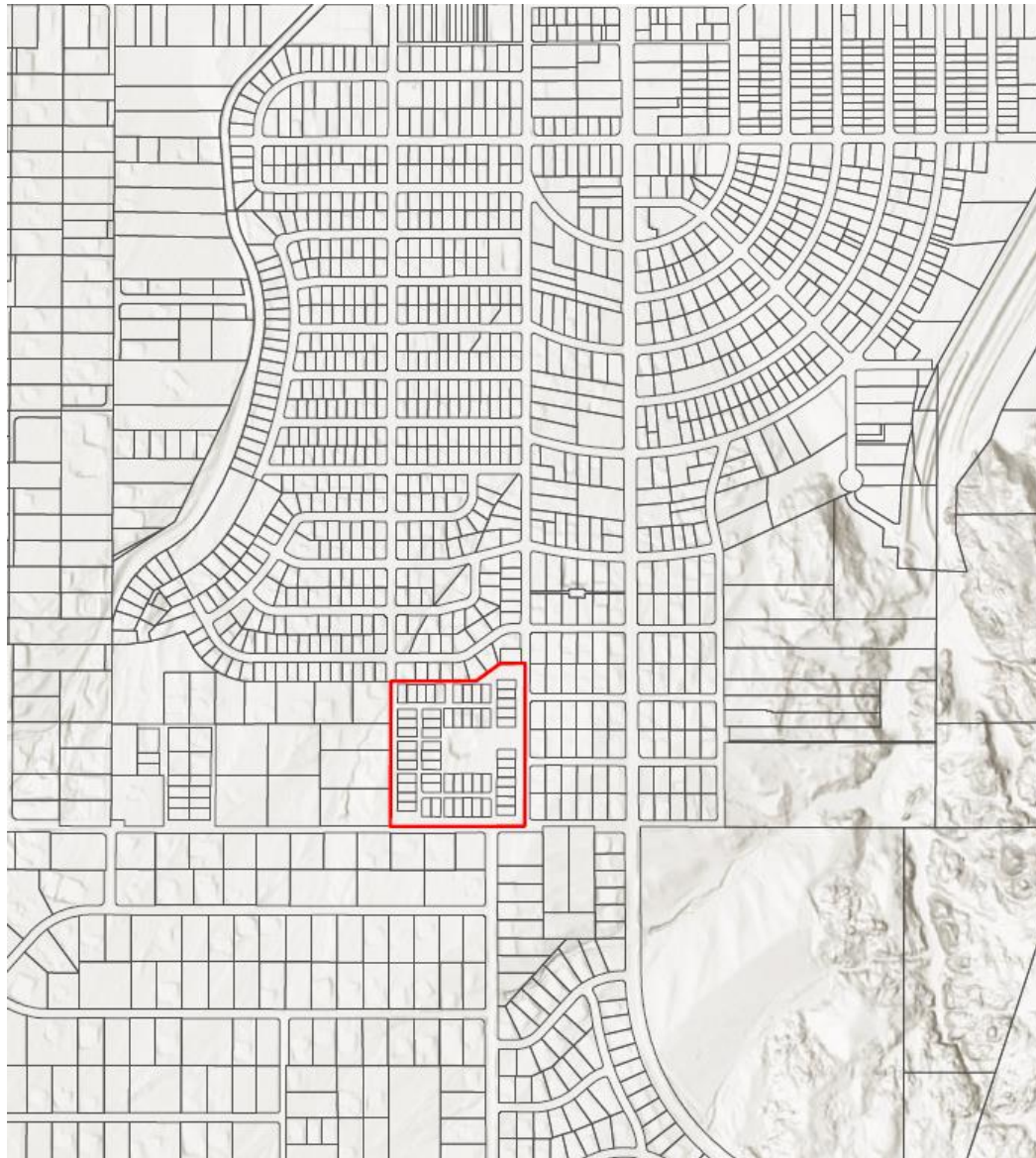
This is a market rate housing development project, and the proposal complies with the applicable objective General Plan and Development Code standards for new subdivisions for residential lots.

Site Characteristics

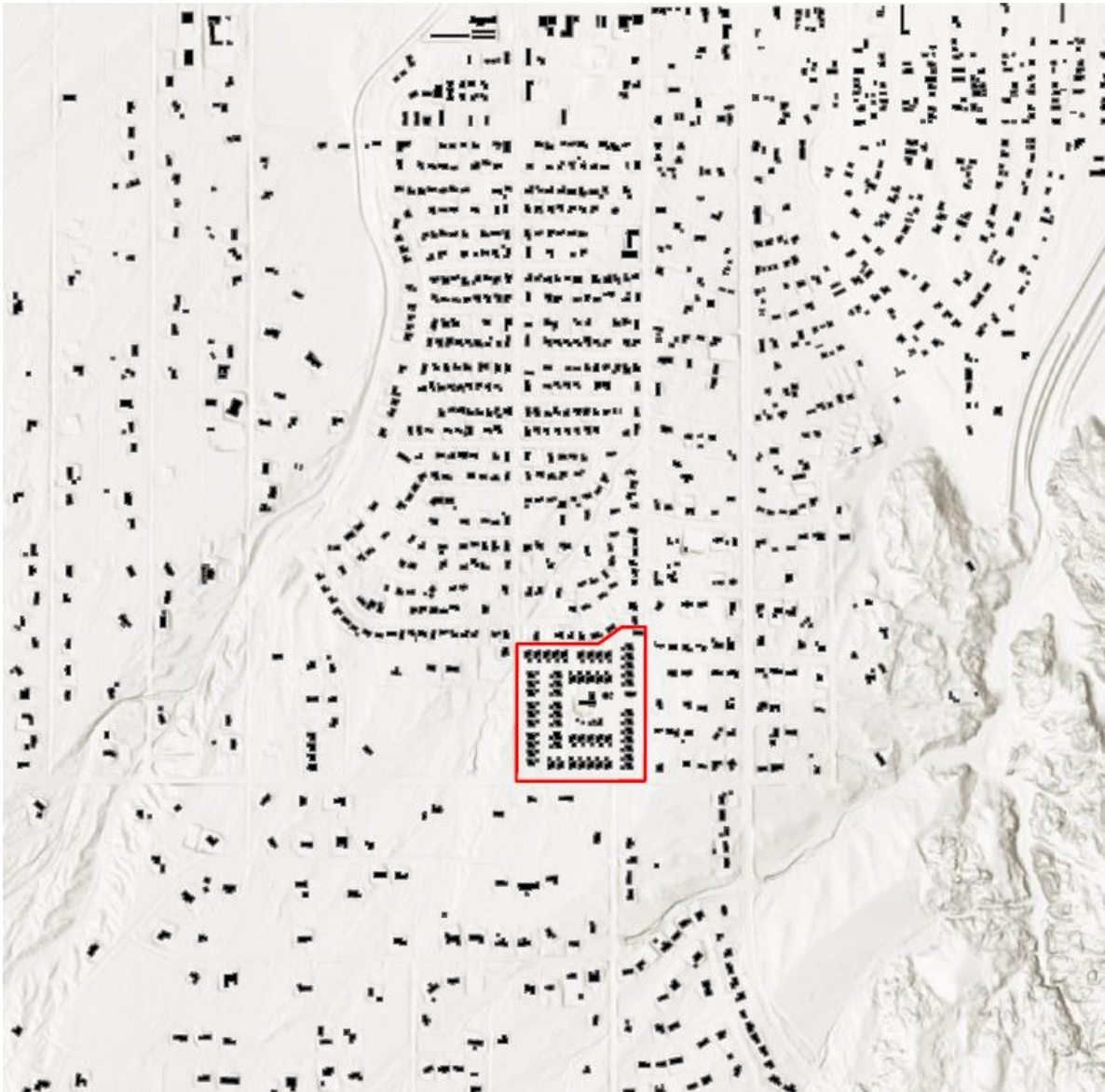
- Relatively Flat Site
- On-site Western Joshua Trees
- On-site Blue Line Streams
- Surrounded by existing residential development



Community Compatibility – Lot and Street Pattern



Community Compatibility – Building Pattern



CEQA evaluation requirements:

- The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and circulated to meet the CEQA-mandated 30-day public review and comment period; one comment was received.
- Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program includes measures to reduce the potential impacts to a level below significance for the following:
 - Biological Resources (BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3)
 - Cultural Resources (CR-1 and CR-2)
 - Geology & Soils (GEO-1)
 - Tribal Resources (TCR-1)

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on January 23, 2025, to consider the Project.

- Three members from the public provided comments pertaining to the development.
- The Project has been designed to be consistent with the Countywide Plan and Development Code for the approval of the Tentative Tract Map (TTM).
- The Project was approved as proposed, including the TTM, Project Findings, Mitigated Negative Declaration, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting program, with a vote of 3-0-2, with two Commissioners absent.

The Appellant filed an appeal February 3, 2025, including the following appeal issues:

1. Omission of public comments submitted in response to Project Notice.
2. Planning Commission attendance and ex parte communications.
3. Improper noticing of the Initial Study and Notice of Hearing:
 - Appellant did not receive Notice of Intent and Notice of Hearing.
 - Availability of Bob Burke Joshua Tree Government Center - not noticed, advertised or promoted.
4. Project is inconsistent with Countywide Policy Plan, (General Plan), and Development Code:
 - Lack of required applications.
 - Environmental concerns related to biological resources, aesthetics, air quality, hydrology, and transportation.
 - Encourages use of Short-Term Rentals.
 - Applicability of Housing Accountability Act.

1. The Appellant's previously submitted responses, to the Project Notice, were not incorporated into the record.

Response to Issue:

All comment letters on the Project, received by the County, are included in the agenda material for this item.

2. The Appellant states the absence of the Planning Commissioner, appointed by the Third District, was material to the decision, and that the developer held ex parte communications with Planning Commissioners.

Response to Issue:

- At the January 23, 2025, public hearing, the Planning Commission had a quorum and was able to hold the public hearing and vote.
- Ex parte communications, which are disclosed prior to a hearing, do not raise due process concerns. The Commissioners made the necessary disclosures.

3. The Appellant asserts proper notice was not provided including:
 - Notice of Intent for the Initial Study and the Notice of Hearing.
 - Notice of Intent for the Initial Study was not received by parties registered for notifications.
 - Project Notice should have issued to all commenters.
 - The Bob Burke Joshua Tree Government Center's availability to participate in the Commission hearing.

Response to Issue:

- The comment letters received by the Appellant do not identify a request to be notified of public hearings or environmental actions.
- Registration to receive email updates on the County's environmental website does not constitute a written request to receive CEQA or public hearing notice.
- The submission of comments in response to Project Notices does not constitute a request for future project notice, unless the commentor expressly indicates a request for future notice as part of the comment letter.
- The public hearing notice provided all required content, there is no requirement to provide notice on social media or radio.

4. The Appellant asserts that the Project:
- Is inconsistent with the General Plan and the Development Code.
 - Contains environmental concerns.
 - Lack of required applications.
 - Further encourages Short-Term Rentals.
 - Infringes on the applicability of the Housing Accountability Act.

Response to Issue:

- The Project density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre is consistent with Low Density Residential.
- Evaluation of the proposed Project demonstrates consistency with the General Plan and Development Code.
- The Mitigated Negative Declaration establishes mitigation measures related to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, and tribal resources that reduce impacts to less than significant.
- An Errata has been prepared to clarify the hydrology section of the Initial Study to reflect that there is onsite detention, and outflows onto Sunset Road from Project site will not exceed historical flows.
- The amenities are being obtained concurrently within the TTM.
- Parcels less than two acres may apply for a maximum of one Short-Term Rental unit.
- The Project is consistent with the Housing Accountability Act.

Thank you!

