



DS24 General Plan and Community Plan Conformance

The DS24 Analysis Area covers two parcels over approximately 169 acres in the western portion of the Borrego Springs Community Planning Area (CPA). The Analysis Area is located near the intersection of Borrego Springs Road and Country Club Road, approximately two miles south of Palm Canyon Drive. Under the 2012 Board of Supervisors (Board) direction for analysis (“Proposed Project” Map), the entire Analysis Area would change from SR-10 to SR-1. The Proposed Project Map would be estimated to increase the overall dwelling unit (DU) potential by 153 (total potential of 169 DU). An Alternative Map is also available for consideration, which would only change approximately 20 acres in the northeastern edge of the Analysis Area to SR-1, resulting in an estimated DU increase of 18 (total potential of 34 DU). Figure 1 below shows the Existing, Proposed, and Alternative General Plan land use designation maps. See Figure 2 on page 5 for a table showing the density formula for slope-dependent lands (Semi-Rural [SR] designations).

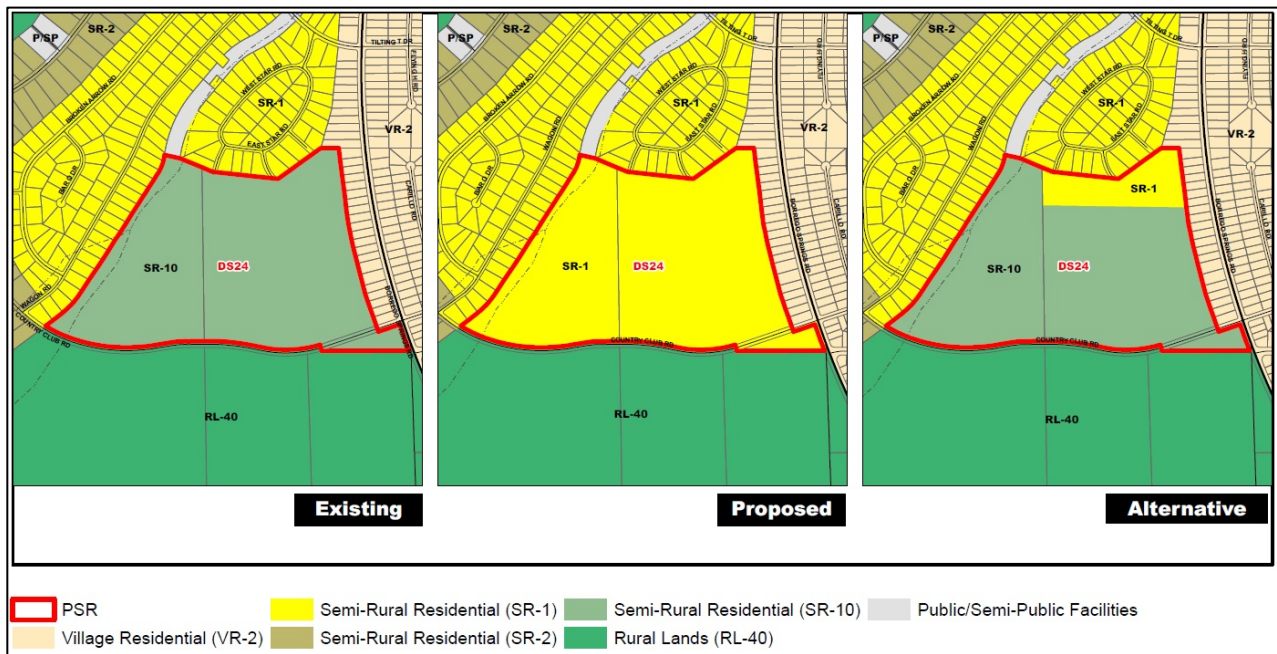


Figure 1: DS24 Existing, Proposed, and Alternative Land Use Maps

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT MAP – GENERAL PLAN

Provided below is a review of the General Plan policies that are applicable to a “stand-alone” General Plan Amendment (GPA)/Rezone with no associated development applications or proposals. This review is associated with the Proposed Project Map. Following the review of applicable General Plan policies for



the Proposed Project map, a discussion of applicable Borrego Springs Community Plan policies is provided, and then a discussion of General Plan and Community Plan consistency for the Alternative Map.

Findings of policy inconsistency should not be interpreted to conclude that any development project at the proposed designation density in the subject area would be inconsistent with the policy. It is possible that development project-specific mitigation and/or design considerations could be proposed with analysis leading to a consistency finding. In addition to other factors discussed, the policy consistency evaluations consider the project context of a stand-alone GPA/Rezone with no development proposed, and the extent of development that would be possible under the proposed designation.

APPLICABLE LAND USE ELEMENT POLICIES

LU-1.1 Assigning Land Use Designations. Assign land use designations on the Land Use Map in accordance with the Community Development Model and boundaries established by the Regional Categories Map.

Refer to Guiding Principle 2 for an explanation of the Community Development Model.

In addition to addressing development patterns and Regional Categories, the Community Development Model (CDM) addresses locating growth near existing and planned infrastructure, services and jobs. Though Borrego Springs has grown as a popular winter/spring tourist destination with associated service sector jobs, retirement income continues to be a major source of income for the community. The closest major job center is in Escondido, approximately 60 miles away via road distance. A small portion of the southeastern end of the Analysis Area is adjacent to a County-maintained Mobility Element Road (Borrego Springs Road) and two additional public roads dead end at the northern end of the site (Lapped Circle Drive and Lightning Road). The public portions of Country Club Road terminate at the southwestern and southeastern edges of the site and along the southern perimeter of the site, Country Club Road is private (and currently dirt with a berm preventing use as a through road). The town center at Christmas Circle is approximately 2 miles north and SR-78 is approximately 10 miles south, via roads. There is a bus stop 2 miles away, on Palm Canyon Drive, though bus service only runs on Thursdays and Fridays (to and from El Cajon). The property is within the water service area for the Borrego Water District (BWD), but there is no current water service to the site or water infrastructure. The property is not within the sewer service area for BWD, but it is within the sewer service Sphere of Influence (SOI). The Analysis Area is served by the Borrego Springs Fire Protection District (BSFPD), and the station is approximately 2.5 miles away, with the 5-10 minute emergency response travel time estimated for most of the Analysis Area (General Plan standard of 5-minute maximum for SR-1 development; see the review of Policy S-6.4 in this report).

The Analysis Area is in a transition area between the previously subdivided areas of SR-1, SR-2 and VR-2 between the Analysis Area and the town center/Village core area and Rural Lands to the south and west. The site is less than a mile from State Park lands to the west and south. The land use mapping of these adjacent and nearby SR-1, SR-2 and VR-2 areas reflected pre-existing parcelization, as the existing lot sizes generally matched the densities applied. The majority of the parcels in these nearby areas of higher Land Use Map densities are vacant, but have access to existing public roads and water lines in the road right-of-way. In accordance with the parameters of the CDM and associated Guiding Principle 2, additional residential development should be directed to these parcels with existing infrastructure and



public road access, prior to increasing densities on large lot properties like DS24, in sensitive habitat lands and in close proximity to State Park lands. Overall, estimates show there are approximately 3,700 private unbuilt parcels in the CPA, and over 10,000 additional dwelling units would be possible in the CPA when adding vacant lots to the additional subdivision potential and multi-family potential on the current Land Use Map. This is well beyond the demand for housing in the CPA.

The greatest obstacle for increased residential development in the CPA is the reliance on groundwater. Per the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a Groundwater Sustainability Plan will soon be prepared for the Borrego Valley, in order to ensure long term groundwater sustainability. Early estimates indicate that groundwater use in the CPA will have to be reduced by approximately 70% in order to comply with the requirements of SGMA. The current overdraft situation presents a severe constraint, in terms of resources/services available for development.

Due to the reasons summarized above, the proposal to apply a density 10 times that of the existing allowed density for the site would not be in line with the parameters of the CDM, as outlined in Guiding Principle 2. **Therefore, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-1.1.**

LU-1.2 Leapfrog Development. Prohibit leapfrog development which is inconsistent with the Community Development Model. Leapfrog Development restrictions do not apply to new villages that are designed to be consistent with the Community Development Model, that provide necessary services and facilities, and that are designed to meet the LEED-Neighborhood Development Certification or an equivalent. For purposes of this policy, leapfrog development is defined as Village densities located away from established Villages or outside established water and sewer service boundaries. [See applicable community plan for possible relevant policies.]

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because no Village designations are proposed.

LU-1.3 Development Patterns. Designate land use designations in patterns to create or enhance communities and preserve surrounding rural lands.

*As discussed in the review of Policy LU-1.1, the land use mapping pattern in the area of the DS24 site generally reflected parcel sizes existing at the time of the General Plan Update. Nearby areas of higher densities include pre-existing parcel sizes that generally reflect the applied density. The majority of these nearby areas of higher density are vacant, but are adjacent to public roads and water lines. The DS24 site shares many similarities with the adjacent Rural Lands to the south and west, including large parcel sizes, sensitive habitats, high flood hazard, and close proximity to State Park lands; however, it serves as a low density Semi-Rural edge and transition area between the parcelized area of higher densities and this Rural Lands area. **The proposed change to SR-1 would not be in line with the existing land use mapping pattern in this area; therefore, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-1.3.***

LU-1.4 Village Expansion. Permit new Village Regional Category designated land uses only where contiguous with an existing or planned Village and where all of the following criteria are met:



Potential Village development would be compatible with environmental conditions and constraints, such as topography and flooding

Potential Village development would be accommodated by the General Plan road network

Public facilities and services can support the expansion without a reduction of services to other County residents

The expansion is consistent with community character, the scale, and the orderly and contiguous growth of a Village area

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because no Village designations are proposed.

LU-1.5 Relationship of County Land Use Designations with Adjoining Jurisdictions. Prohibit the use of established or planned land use patterns in nearby or adjacent jurisdictions as the primary precedent or justification for adjusting land use designations of unincorporated County lands. Coordinate with adjacent cities to ensure that land use designations are consistent with existing and planned infrastructure capacities and capabilities.

The DS24 Analysis Area is approximately 14 miles from the border with Riverside County, 10 miles from the Los Coyotes Reservation, and less than a mile from State Park lands. Land use patterns in nearby jurisdictions are not used as primary precedents or justifications for consideration of the proposed land use designation change.

LU-1.9 Achievement of Planned Densities. Recognizing that the General Plan was created with the concept that subdivisions will be able to achieve densities shown on the Land Use Map, planned densities are intended to be achieved through the subdivision process except in cases where regulations or site specific characteristics render such densities infeasible.

The proposed SR-1 designation applies a 1 unit per acre density only in the areas of less than 25% slope, and applies a lower density in the areas of steep slopes (25% and greater); however, there are no steep slopes within the Analysis Area. The Proposed Project Map would be estimated to yield a total of 169 potential dwelling units over the whole Analysis Area. This amounts to an increase of 153 potential dwelling units, over the 16 potential units under the current General Plan.

As discussed in the review of Policy LU-1.1, the biggest obstacle to increased residential development in the CPA is the unsustainable pattern of groundwater use, in light of requirements associated with the SGMA. A Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and associated implementation plan will soon be prepared for the Borrego Valley to reduce groundwater use to a sustainable level. Estimates show that groundwater use will have to be reduced by approximately 70%. Such a drastic increase in potential density in this Analysis Area would likely require density reductions in other portions of the CPA in order to meet required reductions.

The site is mostly within the 100-year floodplain and the potential for particularly hazardous flooding is apparent, due to the confluence of west to east drainage flows associated with the alluvial fans of Dry Canyon, Tubb Canyon, Culp Canyon, and Loki Canyon. A County Department of Public Works (DPW)



brochure (“Guidelines for Flood Protection of Structures in Borrego Springs”) notes the Dry Canyon and Culp-Tubb Canyon complexes as specific sources of flash floods. A previous subdivision application (placed in “idle” status when the applicants chose not to move forward) seeking 148 lots under the previous General Plan designation (equivalent of SR-1) included a hydrology/drainage study which called for improvements to an existing off-site diversion dike and additional diversion structures, in addition to the proposed formation of a “Geological Hazard Abatement District” in order to construct regional flood control facilities. County staff noted that such a district must be formed prior to the approval of a Tentative Map (if relied on for satisfying flood control requirements of the TM), and it is apparent that there would be extensive opposition from nearby property owners to the formation of such a district. In addition, the offsite diversion dike is completely on private property with no maintenance easements, has been breached in recent heavy rain years, and is slowly naturalizing with the property owners not seeking to maintain it. Satisfying flood control requirements could limit feasibility of the proposed density.

The plans for the TM application relied on a Boundary Adjustment of 3.3 acres from an adjacent parcel to the south in order to connect Country Club Road and provide access to proposed new parcels in the western portion of the site; however, no Boundary Adjustment was submitted, nor any correspondence from the owner of the adjacent parcel, regarding willingness to sell a portion of the property. In addition, the further processing of the TM application required focused surveys for two California Species of Special Concern, the burrowing owl and the flat-tailed horned lizard. If surveys were to detect evidence of the presence of these species, additional requirements would be placed on a subdivision application, which could limit the available area that would be required to reach the density potential under SR-1.

These issues are anticipated to substantially limit the feasibility of reaching the density potential of 169 units. **Therefore, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-1.9.**

Table LU-2 Density Formula for Slope-Dependent Lands			
Land Use Designation	Slope less than 25%	Slope 25% to less than 50%	Slope 50% or greater
Semi-Rural 0.5	2 du/gross acre	1 du/gross acre	1 du/2 gross acres
Semi-Rural 1	1 du/gross acre	1 du/2 gross acres	1 du/4 gross acres
Semi-Rural 2	1 du/2 gross acres	1 du/4 gross acres	1 du/8 gross acres
Semi-Rural 4	1 du/4 gross acres	1 du/8 gross acres	1 du/16 gross acres
Semi-Rural 10	1 du/10 gross acres	1 du/20 gross acres	1 du/20 gross acres

Density calculations shall be based on a topographic map with 10-foot contour intervals or less. To calculate maximum density for a property the acreage of the property should be divided into the above three categories (<25%, 25–50%, >50%), each total should be multiplied by the associated density, and then the resulting yields combined.
du = dwelling unit

Figure 2: General Plan Table LU-2 - Density Formula for Slope-Dependent Lands

LU-2.3 Development Densities and Lot Sizes. Assign densities and minimum lot sizes in a manner that is compatible with the character of each unincorporated community.

The densities surrounding the DS24 site were developed with consideration of existing parcelization. There are only a few parcels in the VR-2, SR-1, and SR-2 areas near the DS24 site that have any additional subdivision potential. Issue LU-2.2 of the Community Plan calls for GPAs to consider the



number of existing vacant lots in the community. The majority of the lots in the areas of SR-2, SR-1, and VR-2 that are near the DS24 site (between the site and the Village core) are vacant. Estimates indicate there are approximately 3,700 vacant undeveloped lots in the CPA.

The Borrego Springs Community Plan also includes issue and policy references to the community character impacts of increased development on undisturbed desert vegetation (like the DS24 site), as opposed to fallowed agricultural lands and other previously cleared parcels. Page 8 of the Community Plan under d. Existing Land Uses and Community Character notes, “There is significant development pressure for housing and commercial development projects that are not consistent with our community character. Of special concern are those proposed plans that do not take the fragile ecosystem into account, or are sited on botanically-rich, native desert vegetation and which would significantly impact dark skies, scenic and vegetative elements of the community character.” In addition to the biological and erosion control values of the dense ocotillo forest in this Analysis Area, it is directly visible from County Scenic Highway Montezuma Valley Road, which is the main community entry road from the west, and from Borrego Springs Road, which is the main community entry road from the south. The aesthetic values of the native vegetation in the Analysis Area make it a draw for tourists, in addition to providing substantial aesthetic value to residents. This is a particularly significant issue because policy LU-2.3 was relied upon in the 2011 General Plan Update PEIR to reduce aesthetic impacts. All of these factors were considered in applying the current SR-10 designation on the property, which requires a Conservation Subdivision approach to facilitate clustering and maximize preservation. **Therefore, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-2.3.**

LU-2.4 Relationship of Land Uses to Community Character. Ensure that the land uses and densities within any Regional Category or Land Use Designation depicted on the Land Use Map reflect the unique issues, character, and development objectives for a Community Plan area, in addition to the General Plan Guiding Principles.

Preliminary estimates indicate that the CPA will have to function within a groundwater use limit of roughly 5,600 acre-feet per year as part of implementation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan. If legally buildable vacant lots were developed with housing and additional density potential associated with the current General Plan were built out, it is estimated almost 6,000 acre feet of groundwater use per year would be added to the roughly 19,000 acre feet per year use now.

Though related to the groundwater issue, existing vacant lots is also a major issue onto itself, which the community has grappled with for some time. Based on analysis prepared for the General Plan Update Groundwater Study, estimates show that there were approximately 3,700 existing, private, unbuilt parcels in the Borrego Valley in 2007. Of those, it was estimated that approximately 3,200 had legal lot status. This excess supply of buildable vacant lots is discussed in the Community Plan (Issue 2.2) and limits justification for adding additional density and subdivision potential.

*Another issue of importance to the community and discussed throughout the Community Plan is preservation of native desert habitat areas and favoring development of fallowed agricultural lands and other previously disturbed sites. The vegetation of the site is categorized as Sonoran creosote bush scrub. This classification includes ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) and the site contains one of the densest concentrations of ocotillos in the Borrego Valley, outside the State Park. The site is also valued for its*



aesthetic value and is directly visible from two main community entry roads, Montezuma Valley Road (a County Scenic Highway) and Borrego Springs Road.

Considering these issues, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-2.4.

LU-2.5 Greenbelts to Define Communities. Identify and maintain greenbelts between communities to reinforce the identity of individual communities.

The Analysis Area is currently undeveloped and designated SR-10 so it is not in “very low density rural residential lands” as discussed in the greenbelts definition. There is an area of Rural Lands separating the Analysis Area from the state parks lands to the south and west. This Rural Lands area makes up the greenbelt (as discussed in the General Plan definition) for this area of Borrego Springs. Therefore, the Proposed Project Map for DS24 is consistent with Policy LU-2.5.

LU-6.2 Reducing Development Pressures. Assign lowest-density or lowest-intensity land use designations to areas with sensitive natural resources.

*The vegetation of the site is categorized as Sonoran creosote bush scrub. This classification includes ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) and the site contains one of the densest concentrations of ocotillos in the Borrego Valley. In addition to the limited recovery capabilities of this type of vegetation community, the removal of native vegetation in this area can have substantial impacts to air quality, as high winds are common. The site provides potential habitat for some sensitive species, including flat-tailed horned lizard and burrowing owl. The site is also near Recovery Region 7 (South San Ysidro Mountains) for the peninsular bighorn sheep which has the potential to visit the site from the nearby east-facing slopes, for foraging and for a seasonal water source. A drainage corridor (USGS blue line stream) is found on the western end of the Analysis Area.*

*In terms of natural resources, the greatest obstacle for increased development in this CPA is the reliance on groundwater. Per the requirements of SGMA, a GSP will soon be prepared for the Borrego Valley, in order to ensure long term groundwater sustainability. Preliminary estimates indicate that the CPA may have to reduce groundwater use by 70% or more as part of implementing a GSP. Estimates from the Groundwater Study of the General Plan Update showed over 10,000 additional dwelling units would be possible when adding legally buildable vacant lots to the additional subdivision and multi-family development potential in the current Land Use Map for the CPA. As such, increasing allowed density within the CPA would further exacerbate an already critical overdraft situation. **Considering these issues, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy LU-6.2.***

LU-6.11 Protection from Wildfires and Unmitigable Hazards. Assign land uses and densities in a manner that minimizes development in extreme, very high and high fire threat areas or other unmitigable hazardous areas.

The Analysis Area is within a Moderate FHSZ. The estimated fire response travel time is currently estimated to be beyond the 5-minute General Plan standard. This will require confirmation during the subdivision application process, based on existing and proposed access roads at that time. The proposed designation is not inconsistent with the level of fire hazard in this area, though extensive access



improvements would be required for a subdivision. The site is mostly within the 100-year floodplain and the potential for particularly hazardous flooding is apparent, due to the proximity to the confluence of west to east drainage flows associated with the alluvial fans of Dry Canyon, Tubb Canyon, Culp Canyon, and Loki Canyon. The flood hazards and fire response times could prove challenging to mitigate during the development review process, and could render the proposed densities infeasible, as discussed in the review of Policy LU-1.9. However, a consistency finding can be made at this programmatic level, based on nearby designations of the same or slightly higher densities, with similar hazard constraints.

LU-7.1 Agricultural Land Development. Protect agricultural lands with lower-density land use designations that support continued agricultural operations.

The Analysis Area does not contain any agricultural operations or a recent history of agricultural operations. Therefore, there are no inconsistency issues with Policy LU-7.1.

LU-8.1 Density Relationship to Groundwater Sustainability. Require land use densities in groundwater dependent areas to be consistent with the long-term sustainability of groundwater supplies, except in the Borrego Valley.

As noted in the language of the policy, LU-8.1 does not apply to the Borrego Valley; however, the current groundwater overdraft in relation to the SGMA process is discussed in multiple policy reviews of this report for the DS24 Analysis Area.

LU-9.2 Density Relationship to Environmental Setting. Assign Village land use designations in a manner consistent with community character, and environmental constraints. In general, areas that contain more steep slopes or other environmental constraints should receive lower density designations. [*See applicable community plan for possible relevant policies.*]

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because no Village designations are proposed.

LU-9.5 Village Uses. Encourage development of distinct areas within communities offering residents places to live, work, and shop, and neighborhoods that integrate a mix of uses and housing types.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because no Village designations are proposed.

LU-9.6 Town Center Uses. Locate commercial, office, civic, and higher-density residential land uses in the Town Centers of Villages or Rural Villages at transportation nodes. Exceptions to this pattern may be allowed for established industrial districts and secondary commercial districts or corridors.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because the Analysis Area is not within a Town Center and does not include proposals for commercial, office, civic, or high density residential uses.



LU-9.9 Residential Development Pattern. Plan and support an efficient residential development pattern that enhances established neighborhoods or creates new neighborhoods in identified growth areas.

Policy LU-9.9 is under Goal LU-9, which discusses well-defined, well-planned Villages and Townner Centers. The Proposed Project Map would not include Village densities or expand the Village boundary; therefore, this policy has not been determined to be applicable to the proposal.

LU-10.3 Village Boundaries. Use Semi-Rural and Rural land use designations to define the boundaries of Villages and Rural Land Use designations to serve as buffers between communities.

The Analysis Area is on the outer edge of the Semi-Rural area in this portion of the CPA. Given that the Analysis Area would not change the Semi-Rural Regional Category and the Rural Lands designated properties at the edge of the CPA in this portion would not change, there are no inconsistency issues with the policy.

LU-10.4 Commercial and Industrial Development. Limit the establishment of commercial and industrial uses in Semi-Rural and Rural areas that are outside of Villages (including Rural Villages) to minimize vehicle trips and environmental impacts.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because neither proposal would change the existing zoning use regulation. Therefore, there would be no new allowances for commercial or industrial uses.

LU-11.1 Location and Connectivity. Locate commercial, office, and industrial development in Village areas with high connectivity and accessibility from surrounding residential neighborhoods, whenever feasible.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 proposals (Proposed or Alternative Map) because neither proposal would change the existing zoning use regulations. Therefore, there would be no new allowances for commercial, office or industrial uses.

LU-11.10 Integrity of Medium and High Impact Industrial Uses. Protect designated Medium and High Impact Industrial areas from encroachment of incompatible land uses, such as residences, schools, or other uses that are sensitive to industrial impacts. The intent of this policy is to retain the ability to utilize industrially designated locations by reducing future development conflicts.

The proposed change would be consistent with this policy because there are no Medium or High Impact Industrial areas in the vicinity of the Analysis Area (none within ½ mile).

APPLICABLE CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT POLICIES

COS-10.2 Protection of State-Classified or Designated Lands. Discourage development or the establishment of other incompatible land uses on or adjacent to areas classified or designated by the State of California as having important mineral resources (MRZ-2), as well as potential



mineral lands identified by other government agencies. The potential for the extraction of substantial mineral resources from lands classified by the State of California as areas that contain mineral resources (MRZ-3) shall be considered by the County in making land use decisions.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 Analysis Area because it does not contain MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 lands.

COS-12.1 Hillside and Ridgeline Development Density. Protect undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designations on these areas.

This policy is not applicable to the DS24 Analysis Area because it does not contain undeveloped ridgelines or steep hillsides. In addition, a Semi-Rural designation is proposed.

COS-14.1 Land Use Development Form. Require that development be located and designed to reduce vehicular trips (and associated air pollution) by utilizing compact regional and community-level development patterns while maintaining community character.

*The Analysis Area is approximately two miles from the town center area of Borrego Springs. However, there are many vacant undeveloped lots between the Analysis Area and the Village. For the most part, the vacant parcels in this area already have the necessary road network and adjacent water lines to facilitate development (groundwater sustainability concerns notwithstanding), while the DS24 site lacks this existing infrastructure. In the context of this policy, decision-makers will consider the limited jobs in the community, the large number of vacant parcels and the limited demand for the additional density potential currently on the Land Use Map for this community. Estimates indicate there are approximately 3,700 vacant undeveloped lots in the community and over 10,000 additional dwelling units possible when adding the additional density potential currently on the Land Use Map to this estimate of vacant undeveloped lots. **Considering these factors and the fact that the Analysis Area is outside the Village and close to State Park lands, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Policy COS-14.1.***

APPLICABLE HOUSING ELEMENT POLICIES

H-1.3 Housing near Public Services. Maximize housing in areas served by transportation networks, within close proximity to job centers, and where public services and infrastructure are available.

Goal H-1 and associated policies (including the applicable H-1.3) were developed to facilitate a variety of housing options to meet the needs of the varied household types and income groups in the unincorporated County. The policy lacks clear, mandatory requirements; however, based on the general parameters described in the policy, it is seeking to maximize housing in Village areas. Analysis Areas outside Villages typically lack either sewer service or a range of transportation networks/options (or lack both). The DS24 Analysis Area is not within a Village, not within a sewer service area, is not within close proximity to job centers, and most of it is estimated to be beyond the 0-5 minute emergency response travel time standard for SR-1. Therefore, the Analysis Area would not fit the policy description of an area where housing should be maximized.



APPLICABLE SAFETY ELEMENT POLICIES

- S-1.1 Minimize Exposure to Hazards.** Minimize the population exposed to hazards by assigning land use designations and density allowances that reflect site specific constraints and hazards.

The Analysis Area is within the Moderate FHSZ. The fire response travel time is currently estimated to be beyond the 5-minute General Plan standard. This will require confirmation during the subdivision application process, based on existing and proposed access roads at that time. The site is mostly within the 100-year floodplain and the potential for particularly hazardous flooding is apparent, due to the proximity to the confluence of west to east drainage flows associated with the alluvial fans of Dry Canyon, Tubb Canyon, Culp Canyon, and Loki Canyon. These factors will be considered by decision makers, in the context of existing designations in this area. There are no dam inundation zones in the Analysis Area. A pre-quaternary (inactive) fault zone goes through a small portion of the site near the eastern boundary. The flood hazards and fire response times could prove challenging to mitigate during the development review process, and could render the proposed densities infeasible. However, a consistency finding can be made at this programmatic level, based on nearby designations of the same or slightly higher densities, with similar hazard constraints.

- S-6.4 Fire Protection Services for Development.** Require that new development demonstrate that fire services can be provided that meets the minimum travel times identified in Table S-1 (Travel Time Standards from Closest Fire Station).

Per General Plan Table S-1, the maximum allowable emergency response travel time for the proposed SR-1 designation is 5 minutes. This standard will require verification during the subdivision application process, based existing and proposed roads at the time. Available estimates from GIS models show that most of the Analysis Area would be within the 5-10 minute travel time range. This current problematic estimate should be considered by decision-makers in light of the fire hazards; however, considering the standard requires review and consideration at the subdivision application stage, there is not a clear inconsistency with the policy at this stage.

- S-9.2 Development in Floodplains.** Limit development in designated floodplains to decrease the potential for property damage and loss of life from flooding and to avoid the need for engineered channels, channel improvements, and other flood control facilities. Require development to conform to federal flood proofing standards and siting criteria to prevent flow obstruction.

- S-9.4 Development in Villages.** Allow new uses and development within the floodplain fringe (land within the floodplain outside of the floodway) only when environmental impacts and hazards are mitigated. This policy does not apply to floodplains with unmapped floodways. Require land available outside the floodplain to be fully utilized before locating development within a floodplain. Development within a floodplain may be denied if it will cause significant adverse environmental impacts or is prohibited in the community plan. Channelization of floodplains is allowed within villages only when specifically addressed in community plans.

- S-9.5 Development in the Floodplain Fringe.** Prohibit development in the floodplain fringe when located on Semi-Rural and Rural Lands to maintain the capacity of the floodplain, unless



specifically allowed in a community plan. For parcels located entirely within a floodplain or without sufficient space for a building pad outside the floodplain, development is limited to a single family home on an existing lot or those uses that do not compromise the environmental attributes of the floodplain or require further channelization.

S-9.6 Development in Dam Inundation Areas. Prohibit development in dam inundation areas that may interfere with the County’s emergency response and evacuation plans.

S-10.1 Land Uses within Floodways. Limit new or expanded uses in floodways to agricultural, recreational, and other such low-intensity uses and those that do not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the base flood discharge, do not include habitable structures, and do not substantially harm, and fully offset, the environmental values of the floodway area. This policy does not apply to minor renovation projects, improvements required to remedy an existing flooding problem, legal sand or gravel mining activities, or public infrastructure.

Policies S-9.4, S-9.6 and S-10.1 are not applicable to the DS24 Analysis Area because it does not contain a floodway or dam inundation zone and is not within a Village.

Policy S-9.2 and S-9.5 review: The Analysis Area is mostly within a FEMA alluvial floodplain, as discussed in the review of Policy LU-1.9. Building regulations address specific requirements for elevating structures above the base flood elevation, to allow residential development in the community without impeding flood flows. At this programmatic review level, the approach to evaluating policy consistency with these floodplain and floodway policies is similar to the approach of the General Plan Update. Considering the extent of the alluvial floodplain in the Community Planning Area, development review includes design considerations and mitigation to elevate structures above the base flood elevation, so that development of habitable structures is still possible. However, reaching the density potential is questionable, as discussed in the review of Policy LU-1.9. Considering the higher density designations applied during the General Plan Update in areas of the community with similar alluvial floodplain constraints, a finding of consistency with these policies can be made at this programmatic stand-alone GPA stage.

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT MAP – COMMUNITY PLAN

*A few policies of the Community Plan have been considered for the Proposed Project because they are applicable to a stand-alone GPA/Rezone and have a purpose that is related to the proposal. Community Plan policy LU-2.1.1 discourages development on undisturbed and substantially undisturbed desert native habitat lands outside the Village Core. Policy LU-1.1.1 follows along these guidelines by ensuring these types of undisturbed desert native habitat lands are conserved to the greatest extent possible. The Analysis Area contains Sonoran creosote bush scrub, including a dense concentration of ocotillos, with the potential to host multiple sensitive species, as discussed in the review of Policy LU-6.2. In the proposed change from SR-10 to SR-1, the DS24 Analysis Area proposal would remove the Conservation Subdivision requirements from the site and allow a density ten times what is allowed now. **Therefore, the Proposed Project Map has been found to be inconsistent with Community Plan Policies LU-2.1.1 and LU-1.1.1.** Policy LU-1.5.1 encourages the siting of new development in areas that will make optimum use of existing infrastructure. As discussed in the review of General Plan Policy LU-1.1, there is an area of SR-*



1, SR-2, and VR-2 properties between the Analysis Area and the town center. The majority of these parcels are vacant, but they are adjacent to public roads and water lines, and are in closer proximity to the fire station. **These issues are considered in combination with the lack of demand for additional lots in the CPA and the critical groundwater overdraft, in determining that the Proposed Project Map is also inconsistent with Community Plan Policy LU-1.5.1.**

REVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVE MAP – GENERAL PLAN AND COMMUNITY PLAN

The Analysis Area is comprised of two parcels totaling approximately 169 acres in the western portion of the CPA. The proposed change from SR-10 to SR-1 is estimated to result in an increase of 153 potential dwelling units (estimated 16 potential units under the current designation and 169 under the Proposed Project Map). The Alternative Map (shown on Page 1 of this report) would only change the northeastern approximately 20 acres to SR-1, leaving the rest at SR-10. This change is estimated to result in an increase of 18 potential dwelling units (estimated 16 potential units under the current designation and 34 under the Alternative Map).

*The Proposed Project Map for DS24 was found to be inconsistent with General Plan Policies LU-1.1, LU-1.3, LU-1.9, LU-2.3, LU-2.4, LU-6.2, and COS-14.1, and Community Plan Policies LU-1.1.1, LU-2.1.1 and LU-1.5.1 as discussed earlier in this report. **The Alternative Map for DS24 has also been determined to be inconsistent with each of these policies, except General Plan Policies LU-1.9 and COS-14.1, for the same reasons as noted for the Proposed Project Map option.** The issues of excessive amounts of unbuilt available density in the community (existing buildable vacant lots, additional subdivision potential, and additional multi-family development potential on the current Land Use Map), and forthcoming reductions in groundwater use present difficult hurdles to overcome with regard to making community character consistency findings for increasing densities. Beyond groundwater resources, the highly sensitive habitats within DS24 are discussed in the review of LU-6.2 for the Proposed Project Map, and this issue remains with the Reduced Density Alternative Map, as the sensitive habitats are also within the SR-1 area of the Reduced Density Alternative Map. At this programmatic stand-alone GPA/Rezone stage, a consistency finding can be made for General Policy LU-1.9, as most of the portion that would change to SR-1 in that option would be out of the alluvial floodplain and most of the site would remain SR-10, which greatly reduces the unit potential and leaves more room for potential open space preservation requirements. In addition, a consistency finding can be made for General Plan Policy COS-14.1, as the much smaller area of SR-1 would be adjacent to existing homes, two public roads, and on the side closest to the Village and fire station. The Proposed Project Map was not found to be inconsistent with any other policies of the General Plan that are applicable to a stand-alone GPA/Rezone, nor was it found to be inconsistent with any other policies of the Community Plan when considered at this programmatic stand-alone GPA/Rezone approach. The same would hold true for the much lower density Alternative Map.*