

MUSEUM MARKET PLAZA SPECIFIC PLAN

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

VI. SHORT-TERM USE VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Introduction

This section of the EIR discusses the long-term effects of the build out of the Specific Plan. It evaluates the relationship between the short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity. Those environmental issue areas that affect the beneficial uses of the environment or pose long-term risks to health and safety are discussed further below. These areas include water quality and resources, air quality and noise. This section also analyzes why the adoption and implementation of the Specific Plan is justified at this time.

Water Resources

Development of the Specific Plan will result in increased demand for domestic water. As discussed in Section III-G of this EIR, the Desert Water Agency has indicated the ability to provide water to the Specific Plan project area through the use of imported water to supplement local supplies, even under extreme drought conditions. Even so, development within the Specific Plan will be required to implement water-conserving provisions above and beyond the Uniform Building Code. For example, the Specific Plan requires the use of drought tolerant and native species in landscaping to reduce water consumption.

Based on the conservative estimates identified in the project's Water Supply Assessment, build out of the Specific Plan is expected to result in the consumption of 194.3 acre feet of water per year, a marked increase over the current water consumption rate of 64.9 acre feet per year. Build out of this project will modestly contribute to the cumulative impacts of urban development on

ground water resources in the Coachella Valley, and will represent 0.26% of the total water demand in Desert Water Agency's service area.

Mitigation measures set forth in Section III-G, along with state water conservation codes, and City and Desert Water Agency requirements, are expected to substantially enhance water conservation at the project. The City's General Plan, as well as other regulatory documents, set forth policies, programs and regulations to achieve conservative water resource use for landscape and domestic uses. The predominant use of native, drought-tolerant planting materials, and the installation of efficient irrigation systems that minimize runoff and evaporation and maximize effective watering of plant roots is required.

Air Quality

Section III-B details the potential impacts of the proposed project on air quality in the City. Air quality resources, however, are a regional issue, and are influenced not only by new development projects, but by the efficiency of existing development, and the development of transit routes and pedestrian access ways.

The development of the Specific Plan will result in air emissions which will exceed thresholds established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. For comparison to the current General Plan, both the proposed project and the existing General Plan land use impacts exceed air quality threshold criteria. Although it is likely that in the long-term air emissions will be reduced by technological advances, the impacts associated with air quality cannot be eliminated. In addition, although stationary source emissions associated with energy consumption are expected to accompany this development, these contributions to locally-emitted pollutants and in air basins outside the Coachella Valley are considered insignificant. Finally, the project's location on major arterial roadways, and inclusion of a broad range of residential, commercial and public land uses will result in a highly efficient use of the regional transportation network, and fewer vehicular emissions.

Noise

The Specific Plan will result in increased development in the City's Downtown, which will marginally increase noise levels and impact the community. The primary source of noise will be from increases in traffic. Noise levels in the project area are already impacted by existing traffic and commercial activities, and will not substantially increase with implementation of the proposed project.

Noise generated by construction equipment and machinery, which is generally temporary, will also increase and contribute to the degradation of the project area's noise environment. Mitigation measures in this EIR, and the development standards of the Specific Plan will assure that these impacts remain less than significant.