



## City Council Staff Report

Date: April 5, 2017

NEW BUSINESS

Subject: COACHELLA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CV LINK MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

From: David H. Ready, City Manager

Initiated by: Engineering Services Department

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### SUMMARY

This action allows for the City Council to discuss the proposed CV Link Multi-Modal Transportation Project to be constructed by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG). The CV Link is a 49-mile non-motorized, multi-modal transportation path that passes through the Coachella Valley, including the City of Palm Springs. CVAG prepared a Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR) to assess potential environmental impacts of the CV Link. Three potentially feasible path alignments are analyzed based on assessment of characteristics such as physical conditions, land ownership, and regulatory conditions.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive report from the City Council Ad-Hoc Subcommittee (Coachella Valley CV Link) – Mayor Pro-Tem Foat / Councilmember Mills.

### STAFF ANALYSIS:

The CV Link Multi-Modal Transportation Project (CV Link) is a proposed 49 mile multi-modal path that would provide access and connectivity between residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional uses throughout eight cities in the region from Palm Springs to Coachella. The project is anticipated to result in a reduction of traffic and air pollutants in the region. The DEIR was prepared by the CVAG pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate potential impacts associated with the near-term construction and operation of CV Link's route, from Palm Springs to Coachella.

The CV Link route does not include the City of Rancho Mirage. The CV Link will also incorporate and expand the Tahquitz Creek Trail in Palm Springs, between South Palm

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Canyon Drive and the Whitewater Channel. The western termini are at Highway 111 (North Palm Canyon Drive) in northern Palm Springs (the Palm Springs Visitor Center at Tramway Road – access point for the Aerial Tram) and at South Palm Canyon Drive in central Palm Springs providing access to adjacent commercial services and to Downtown Palm Springs, as well as the Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Center.

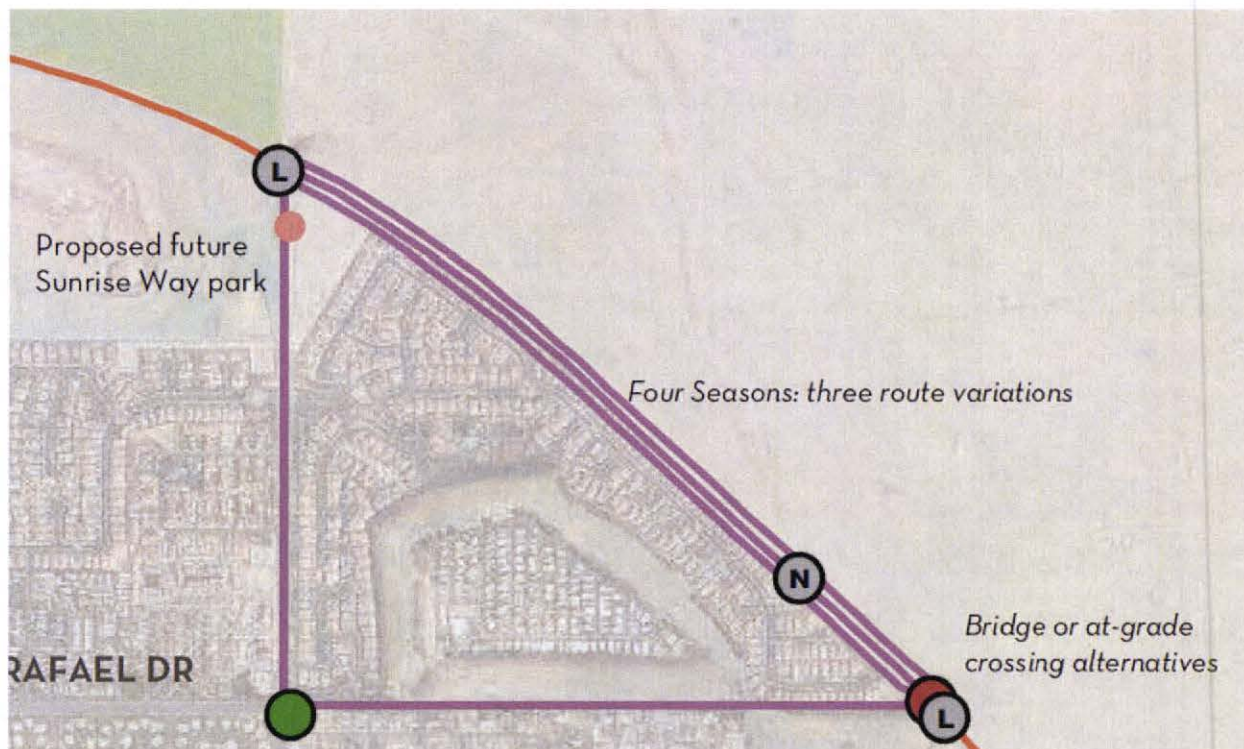
The CV Link route largely follows, and is to be built upon, the levees of the region's principal watercourses, including Chino Wash, Tahquitz Creek, and the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. In some locations, the pathway shares right-of-way with roads and provides direct access to key commercial districts and recreational and institutional venues.

The CV Link route extends through 15.3 miles within the City of Palm Springs, along two routes: 1) Whitewater River levee (with alternative alignments adjacent to the Four Seasons community; and 2) Tahquitz Creek trail. The Exhibits shown on the following pages from the DEIR identify the alignments analyzed within Palm Springs. The main alignment of CV Link begins at the Palm Springs Visitor's Center on N. Palm Canyon Dr. at Tram Way, with two alternatives extending north along either the east or west sides of N. Palm Canyon Dr. to the Chino Creek / Whitewater River levee, with a proposed overcrossing bridge structure at Chino Creek (for the westerly alignment crossover). A visual simulation of the proposed overcrossing on N. Palm Canyon Dr. is shown here.





The CV Link alignment extends further east and south along the Chino Creek levee, with three alternative routes identified for the segment adjacent to the Four Seasons community, and an additional alignment along the easterly extension of San Rafael Dr. and along the northerly extension of Sunrise Way as shown here.



The DEIR describes the alternative alignments along the Chino Creek / Whitewater River levee adjacent to the Four Seasons community in Section 4.2, and states:

*At its location adjacent to the Four Seasons community, three alignment variations are proposed: one on the top of the levee, one in the 10 to 15 foot area between the top of the levee and the Four Seasons property line, and one at the base of the levee in the channel bottom. The first alignment variation on top of the levee would result in CV Link users having views into the rear yards of the residents, because the elevation of the levee is above the elevation of the homes. The residents' views of the mountains to the north could be partially obstructed by screening that would be installed on the levee top to assure privacy, but the peaks of the range would remain visible due to the angle of the view at this location, as it relates to the levee top (also see Section 4.10, Land Use). The second alignment variation in the intervening land between the levee and the Four Seasons property line would occur at the same elevation as the homes, and existing perimeter walls would remain. Under this alignment variation, the views of the mountains to the north from residents' properties would remain as they currently occur, since the Proposed Project would not change the visual condition. The third alignment variation on the channel bottom would be on the north side of the levee, and would not be proximate to, or visible to Four*



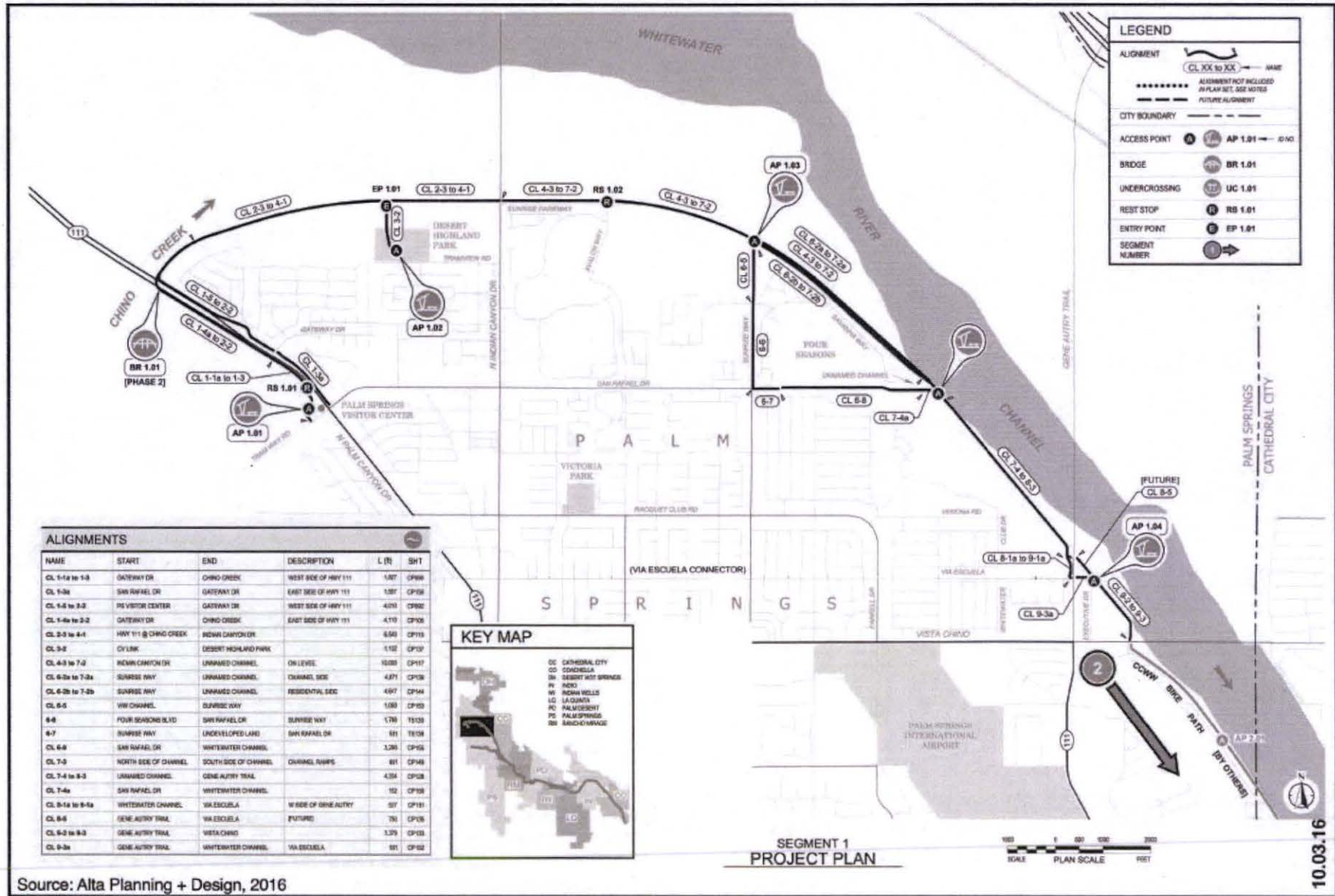
*Seasons residents. The location of the path in the floodplain will also assure that the views from the Four Seasons community of the surrounding mountains will remain as they are currently. As shown in Exhibit 4.2-3, at this location there are sweeping views of the mountains and foothills. The addition of CV Link, as shown in the Exhibit, will not impact the scenic vista at this location. Rather, it will create an opportunity for a wider range of the local population to have access to this scenic vista.*

The third alignment variation adjacent to the Four Seasons community could be identified by the City Council as the preferred alternative, as it places the CV Link in a location separated from the adjacent residential properties by the existing Whitewater River levee. A visual simulation of the third alignment variation with CV Link extending along the north side (wash side) of the Whitewater River levee is shown here.

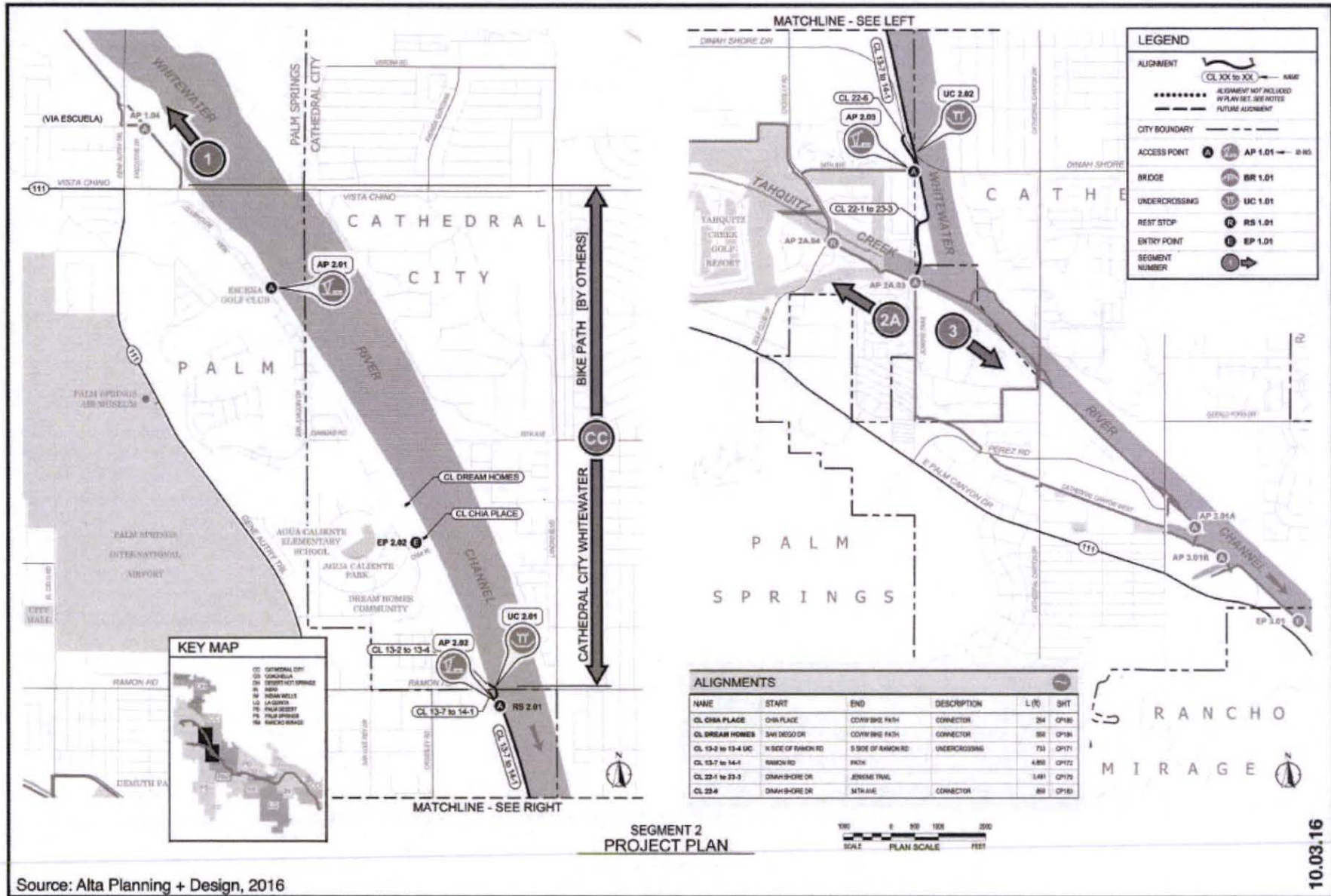


Wherever possible, CV Link will be a dual path system that includes a path for faster modes of travel, such as bicycles and low-speed electric vehicles (LSEVs), and a separate path for slower modes, including pedestrians. Path widths will vary depending upon right-of-way availability and terrain. A range of surface materials have been evaluated for their durability, cost, aesthetics, and functionality, and materials may vary with location and purpose. Pathway cross-sections are illustrated in the following figures. Shade structures, restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, street furniture, electric vehicle charging stations, and other accessory features will be built to support the needs of travelers. Landscaping and security measures, including fencing, barriers, lighting, and emergency access, will be integrated into project design. The pathway will also incorporate informational kiosks and public art at appropriate locations, particularly at important access and intersection points to assist users with way-finding. Drainage improvements will be installed, and access for emergency, utility, and channel maintenance vehicles will be provided, where necessary.

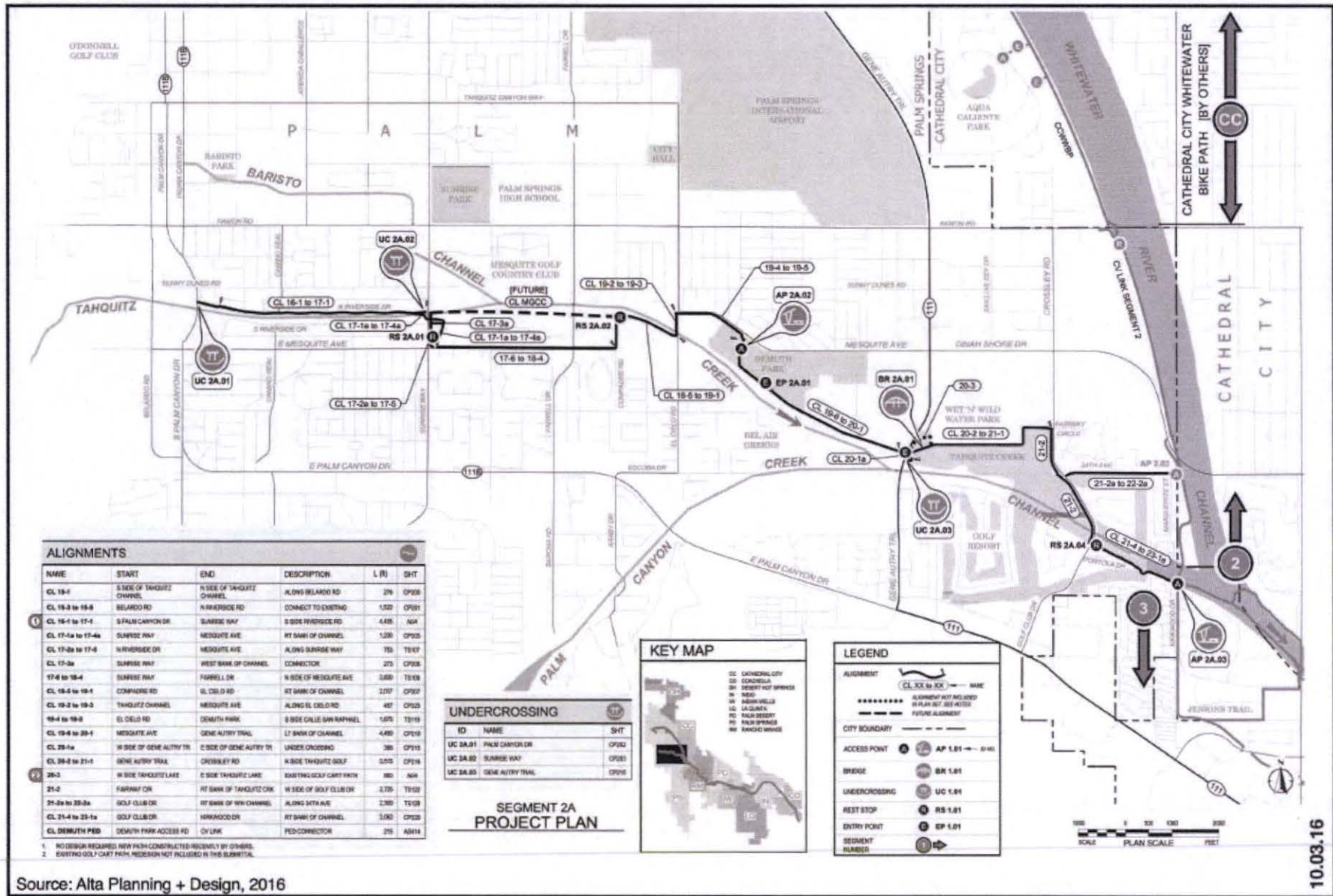




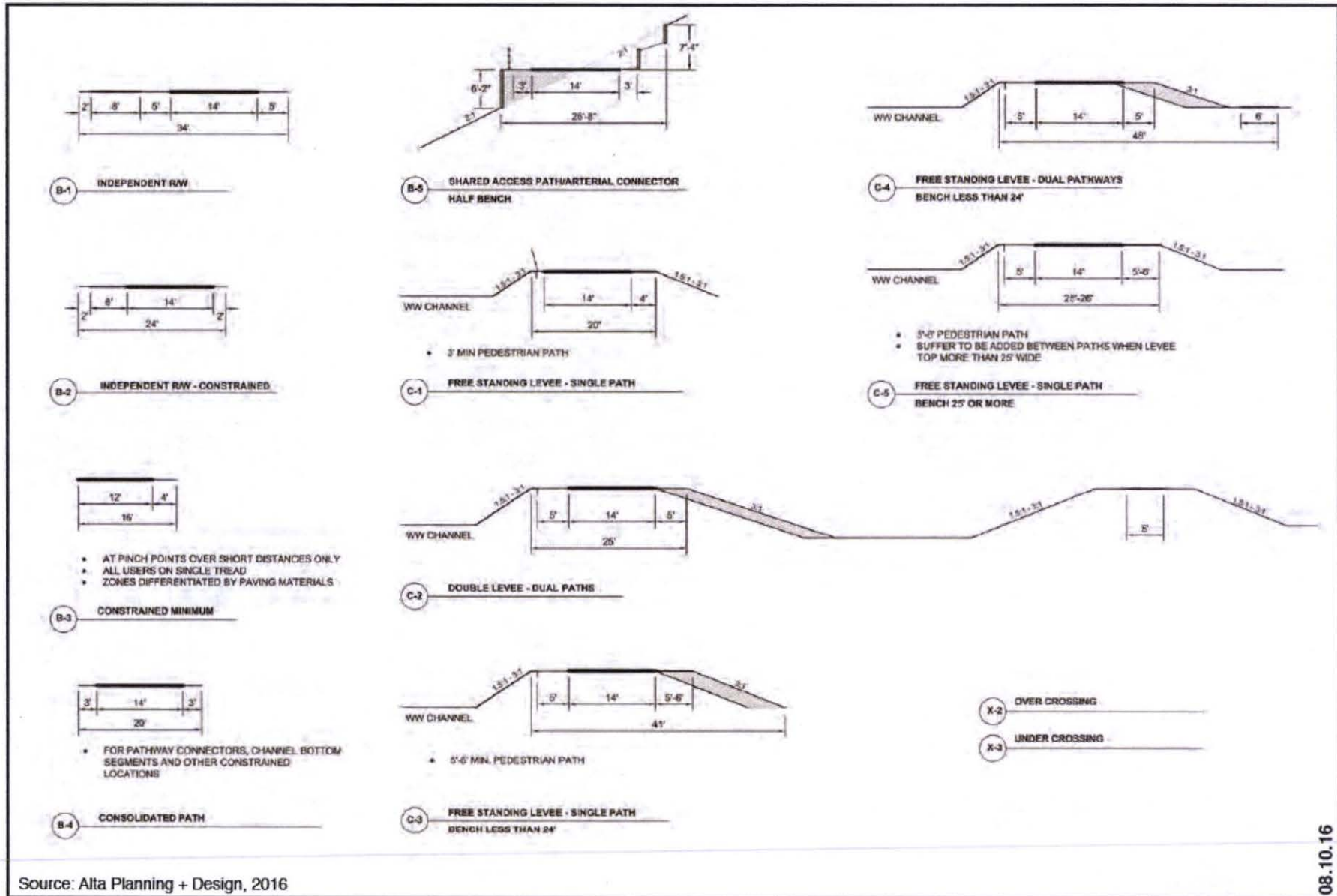
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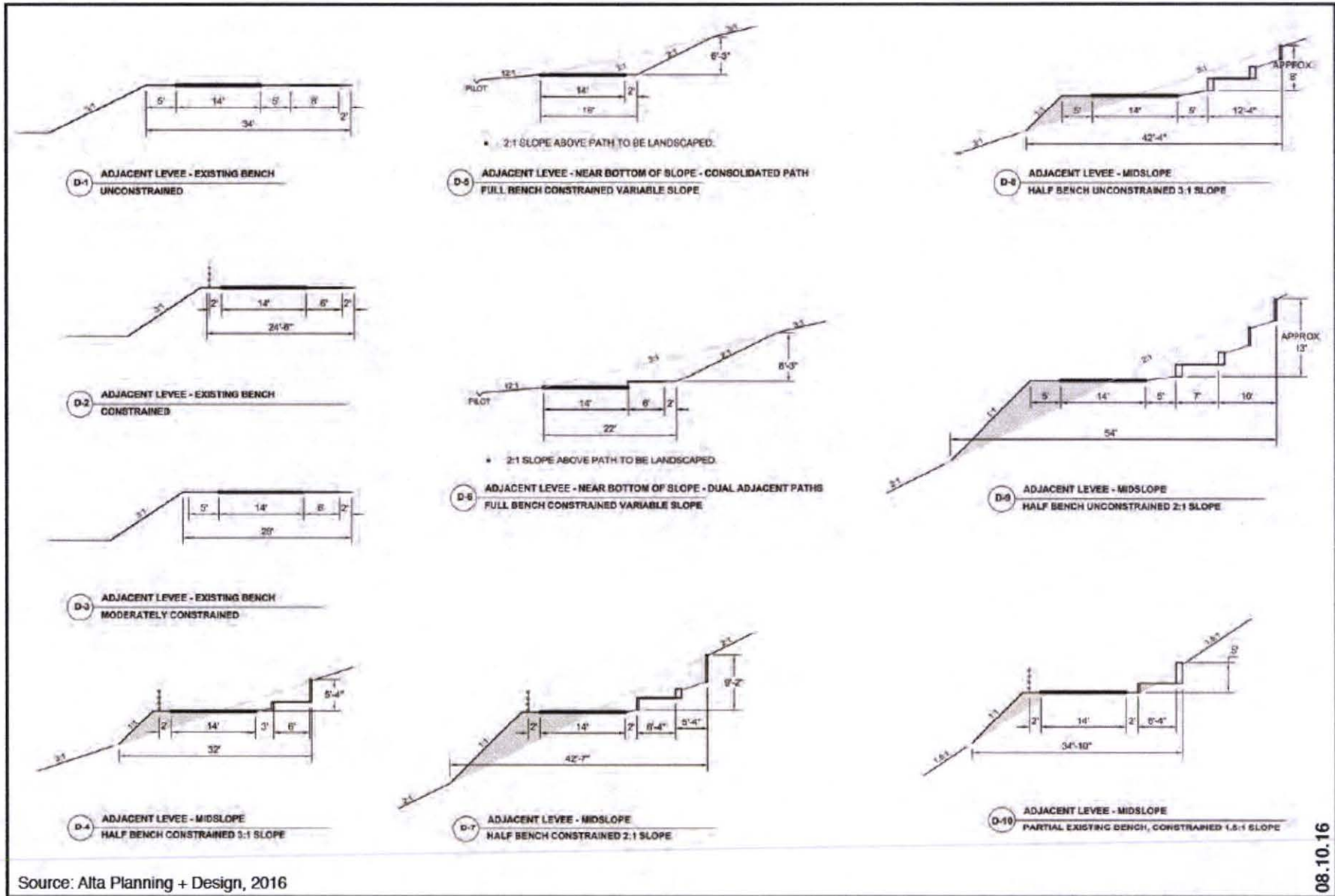
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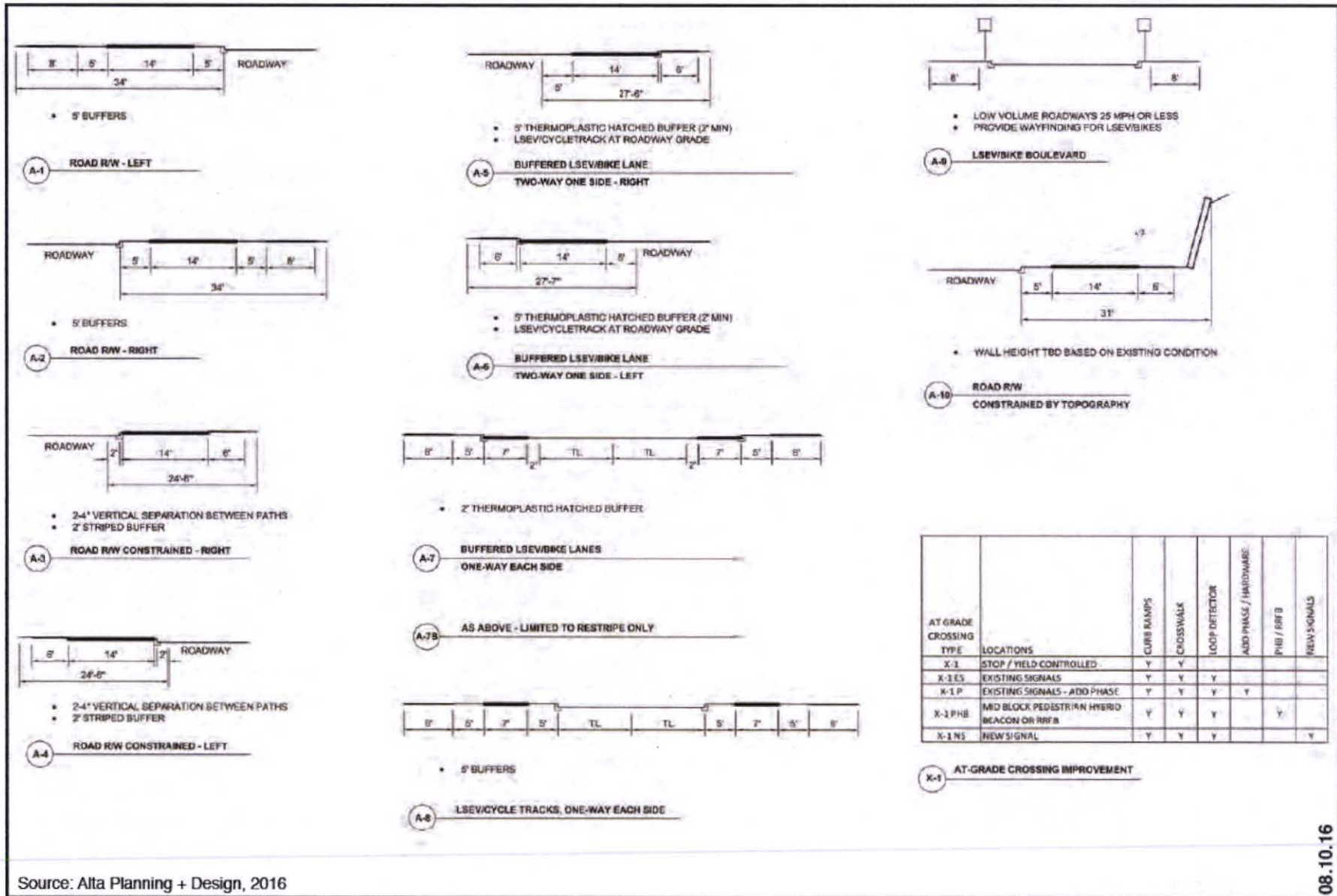


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Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Section 21084 of the California Public Resources Code requires Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, CVAG acting as "Lead Agency" pursuant to CEQA, completed an environmental analysis of the potential impacts resulting from construction of the CV Link. CVAG issued a Notice of Availability of the DEIR for the CV Link Project, identified as State Clearinghouse Project No. 2013111050, and solicited public comments from January 5 through February 21, 2017.

The Project is funded, in part, by federal funds, requiring local oversight by the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans). As a federally funded project, the Project is subject to environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), is the lead agency for the project under the NEPA. A separate Environmental Assessment (EA) document is being prepared to evaluate the project's potential environmental effects in accordance with NEPA. The EA document will serve as the principal informational document for project analysis by Caltrans and federal agencies with an interest in the CV Link Project, including the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

The DEIR has analyzed various project alternatives, as identified below.

### **Proposed Project – Project without Rancho Mirage:**

The project begins with a western terminus at Highway 111 in Northern Palm Springs and an eastern terminus at Airport Boulevard at the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. CV Link segments in Rancho Mirage along the storm channel would be deleted. The CV Link segments in the City of Palm Springs will also incorporate and expand the Tahquitz Creek Trail in Palm Springs between South Palm Canyon Drive and the Whitewater Channel. The western termini are at Highway 111 (North Palm Canyon Drive) in northern Palm Springs (the Palm Springs Visitor Center at Tramway Road – access point for the Aerial Tram) and at South Palm Canyon Drive in central Palm Springs providing access to adjacent commercial services and to Downtown Palm Springs, as well as the Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Center.

### **Alternative 1 – Project without Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells:**

The primary difference between Alternative 1 and the proposed project is removal of CV Link improvements in Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells. Termini for CV Link would be accommodated in the vicinity of their city limits. This alternative assumes CV Link users will be able to continue to pass through Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells on existing sidewalks, bike paths, and streets. The eastern Indian Wells terminus is proposed to begin at the western boundary of the City of La Quinta on the Southside of Highway 111 near Plaza La Quinta, continues north through a proposed at-grade crossing and extends through the western edge of the Point Happy commercial development to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. The City traffic engineer has expressed traffic safety concerns with the proposed at-grade crossing for the project across Highway

111. CVAG staff is considering a trailhead at Point Happy as an alternative to the crossing of Highway 111.

**Alternative 2 – Project with all eight cities:**

This project alternative evaluates the route through all of the incorporated cities, unincorporated county and Native American lands from Palm Springs to Coachella.

**Alternative 3 – No Build/No Project:**

This project alternative includes continuing with the existing multi-modal network in the vicinity of the CV Link route.

The DEIR evaluated environmental issues associated with the project implementation and includes mitigation measures to mitigate project impacts.

The DEIR evaluated impacts associated with Land Use and Planning, and identified a "Potentially Significant" impact (Section 4.10(b)): *The Proposed Project could conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect as they relate to privacy of adjacent property owners.*"

In order to mitigate this potentially significant impact, CVAG has identified Mitigation Measure LU-1:

**LU-1** *Where CV Link alignments abut residential land uses, and has the potential to affect their privacy, structural and landscape screening as provided in the Conceptual Master Plan standards and guidelines shall be applied.*

The DEIR evaluated environmental impacts associated with Noise, and identified a "Potentially Significant" impact (Section 4.12(b)): *The Proposed Project will result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.*"

In order to mitigate this potentially significant impact, CVAG has identified the following Mitigation Measures N-1, N-4, N-6, and MMN-7:

**N-1** *Project construction activities shall only occur between the permitted hours of each local jurisdiction's Municipal Code. The project construction supervisor shall ensure compliance.*

**N-4** *The use of large bulldozers within 100 feet of nearby sensitive land uses (e.g. residential, school, etc.) shall be minimized and avoided if possible.*

**N-6** *Alternative piling methods shall be used to reduce the potential impacts at nearby sensitive receiver locations as follows:*

*a. No impact pile driving devices and CIDH piling methods shall be used within 76 feet of sensitive receiver locations near the Thunderbird Channel and Deep Canyon*



*Channel Bridge (as indicated on Table 4). Alternative piling methods are required to reduce the vibration levels at these locations. Based on an evaluation by Caltrans an alternative method, such as Tubex piles, which can produce lower vibration levels of 0.05 in/sec PPV at 25 feet during installation shall be used. Other pile driving alternatives capable of producing equal or lower vibration levels are acceptable.*

*b. Cast-In-Drilled-Hole (CIDH) piling methods, or alternatives capable of producing equal or lower vibration levels, shall be used for the following bridge locations as an alternative to impact pile driving activities planned within 400 feet of sensitive receiver locations (as indicated on Table 4.12-13, below):*

*Highway 111 Overcrossing*

*West Magnesia Canyon Channel Bridge at Highway 111*

*West Magnesia Canyon Channel Bridge at Library*

*Cook Street Overcrossing*

*La Quinta Channel Bridge*

***MMN-7*** *Residences and other sensitive land uses within 400 feet of the planned pile locations shall be notified of the construction in writing. The notification shall describe the activities anticipated, provide dates and hours, and provide contact information with a description of a noise and vibration complaint and response procedure.*

The DEIR evaluated environmental impacts associated with Noise, and identified a "Potentially Significant" impact (Section 4.12(c)): *The Proposed Project will result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.*

In order to mitigate this potentially significant impact, CVAG has identified the following Mitigation Measures N-1, N-2, N-3, N-4, and N-5:

***N-1*** *Project construction activities shall only occur between the permitted hours of each local jurisdiction's Municipal Code. The project construction supervisor shall ensure compliance.*

***N-2*** *During all project site construction, all construction equipment, fixed or mobile, shall be equipped with properly operating and maintained mufflers, consistent with manufacturers' standards. The construction supervisor shall place all stationary construction equipment so that emitted noise is directed away from the noise-sensitive receivers nearest the Project site.*

***N-3*** *The construction supervisor shall locate equipment staging in areas that will create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and noise-sensitive receivers nearest the project site (i.e., at the planned staging areas or farther from nearby sensitive receiver locations if possible) during all Project construction. 61 staging areas have been determined along the Route, please see Appendix B (Alignments Map Book). The closest distance between a sensitive receptor to a staging area will be 30 feet.*

**N-4** *The use of large bulldozers within 100 feet of nearby sensitive land uses (e.g. residential, school, etc.) shall be minimized and avoided if possible.*

**N-5** *The construction supervisor shall limit haul truck deliveries to the same hours specified for construction equipment by each local jurisdiction's Municipal Code.*

The DEIR has determined that the potentially significant environmental impacts associated with Noise, identified in Sections 4-12(b) and 4-12(c) cannot be mitigated to a level of less than significant, and has identified these as "Significant and Unavoidable" impacts, which will require CVAG to prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations as part of its adoption of the DEIR.

CVAG is completing the environmental review process, has accepted previously submitted public comments, and is scheduled to review the DEIR for potential approval and adoption at the April 24, 2017, CVAG Executive Committee meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

***Construction Costs***

CVAG has developed an estimate for the initial construction costs for the CV Link, which is identified in Table 12 of Appendix C (Master Plan Volumes 1 & 2) of the DEIR:

**Table 12: Proposed Initial Implementation Cost Estimate Summary**

Undercrossings and ramps	17	\$5,914,800
Bridge crossings of channels and roadways	0.2	\$8,463,300
Crossings of roadways at-grade	0.6	\$1,372,200
Existing routes with minor changes	25	\$6,500
Street segments to be upgraded	77	\$5,758,700
Off Street Pathway	34.8	\$43,479,300
Support Elements		\$4,187,100
Landscaping		\$6,135,900
Access Points		\$2,690,800
	Subtotal	\$78,008,800
Mobilization		\$5,977,600
Right-of-Way Acquisition		\$963,100
Art		\$780,100
Contingency (10-25%, varies by element)		\$14,267,700
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$99,997,300</b>



At the time of the release for public review of the DEIR, CVAG had secured over \$75 Million towards CV Link Project costs, as identified in Table 14 of Appendix C (Master Plan Volumes 1 & 2) of the DEIR:

**Table 14: CV Link Development Funding**

CVAG Transportation Program	\$20,000,000		✓		✓
Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) - Sentinel Air Quality Mitigation Funds	\$17,400,000				✓
Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement funds	\$12,600,000		✓	✓	✓
California Active Transportation Program (ATP)	\$10,900,000	✓	✓	✓	
Desert Healthcare District	\$10,000,000				✓
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds allocated by the California Transportation Commission (CTC)	\$2,000,000		✓	✓	✓
California Strategic Growth Council	\$1,000,000	✓			
Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District*	\$750,000		✓	✓	
Cathedral City (BTA)	\$748,500				✓
Caltrans Environmental Justice Grant	\$291,000	✓			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,689,500</b>				

Most recently, the California Transportation Commission at its March 2017 meeting awarded CVAG an additional \$5,520,537 in funding through the Active Transportation Program, bringing the total funding secured for construction to over \$81 Million. All construction costs associated with the CV Link Project will be paid by CVAG.

### **Long-Term Operational & Maintenance (O&M) Costs**

CVAG has developed estimates for long-term O&M costs for the CV Link, which were reviewed by the CVAG Executive Committee at its June 1, 2015, meeting. As part of the CVAG staff report presented to the Executive Committee at that time, CVAG stated:

*A lot of clamor has been made about how much each jurisdiction will be required to contribute to O&M expenses over time. As early as August 2014, CVAG addressed the long-term costs associated with CV Link's operations and maintenance. (Refer to Attachment 2 – Section 7.8: Operational Funding, from the August 2014 Draft CV Link Master Plan.) The latest CV Link Master Plan states on page 153 that “construction and operations of the CV Link will not require local funding.” This is a phrase that has been repeated many times. Note that the same document outlined 22 different ideas to cover the costs, including several local ones, as was noted in the Desert Sun article from May 16, 2015, and there is no “requirement” for local funding. Staff's intent has always been to rely on regional, state, federal, and private sources of funding. If there is to be local funding, it would voluntary and at the discretion of each local jurisdiction.*

Further reference regarding long-term O&M costs and sources of funding is stated in Section 8 of Appendix C (Master Plan Volumes 1 & 2):

*Maintenance workers employed or contracted by a single agency would permit the establishment of a consistent maintenance standard for the entire CV Link. Given that CV Link is regional in nature, transportation focused, and there is a need for a steady revenue stream, it is recommended that CVAG lead O&M as well as plan and construct it.*

Table 17 of Appendix C identifies the range of estimates for long-term O&M costs:

**Table 17: Annual Operations and Maintenance Cost Estimates**

<b>MAINTENANCE</b>			
Sand and debris removal, sweeping	\$51,900	\$80,000	\$50,000
Signs and pavement markings	\$56,400	\$56,400	\$46,400
Fences, bollards and gates	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$16,000
Clearing of drainage channels and culverts	\$15,000	\$45,000	\$15,000
Restrooms	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
Site furnishings	\$30,000	\$45,000	\$30,000
Graffiti removal	\$30,000	\$82,000	\$30,000
Lighting maintenance	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$20,000
Landscaping	\$250,400	\$300,400	\$200,400
<b>Subtotal Maintenance</b>	<b>\$504,700</b>	<b>\$699,800</b>	<b>\$427,800</b>
<b>OPERATIONS</b>			
NEV leases	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$0
Utilities (electric and water)	\$28,900	\$33,900	\$23,900
Events, promotions and website maintenance	\$47,500	\$62,500	\$32,500
Management, administration and dispatch	\$51,200	\$176,000	\$51,200
Rangers	\$0	\$553,100	\$0
<b>Subtotal Operations</b>	<b>\$163,600</b>	<b>\$861,500</b>	<b>\$107,600</b>
<b>TOTAL MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$668,300</b>	<b>\$1,561,300</b>	<b>\$535,400</b>

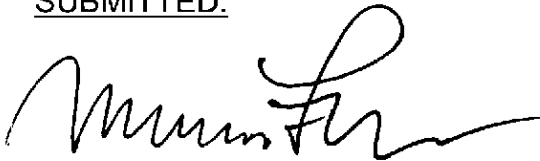
As stated in Appendix P (Community Impact Assessment) of the DEIR, the CV Link Project will impose long-term operational and maintenance costs on CVAG and affected local agencies. Specifically, the DEIR (Section 3.4 of Appendix P), states the following:

*The project will also require long-term capital replacement costs, including costs associated with minor and major repair, replacement, and/or restoration of project components, such as bridges, surfaces, railings, and signage. These costs are typically funded through annual reserve fund contributions. The project will generate long-term maintenance costs, including those associated with debris removal, routine inspections, trash disposal, and landscape and lighting*

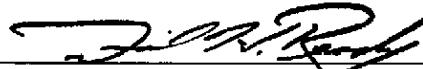
*maintenance. Long-term operational costs will include utilities (electric and water), events and promotions, dispatch and administration. Annual operational and maintenance costs are estimated to be between approximately \$535,000 and \$1.56 million. Operational and maintenance costs are expected to be funded through a variety of sources, such as public transportation funds, grants, taxes, and private foundations. Donations, volunteer programs, and in-kind services may also be used. The project will also require long-term police protection, costs of which will be absorbed by local police departments and may be supplemented by rangers and community volunteers.*

Any local commitment by the City of Palm Springs to absorb long-term O&M costs will require specific review and approval by the City Council, which would likely be through a Cooperative Agreement with CVAG and the other local agencies through which the CV Link extends.

SUBMITTED:



Marcus L. Fuller, MPA, PE, PLS  
Assistant City Manager/City Engineer



David H. Ready, Esq., Ph.D  
City Manager