



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: June 24, 2009

Case No.: 3.3357 - MAJ

Type: Major Architectural Application

Applicant: City of Palm Springs – Jackie Lee Houston

Location: 281 Calle Alvarado

APN: 508-051-055

General Plan: High Density Residential

Zone: HR – R-4

From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services

Project Planner: Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is the development of a plaza that will consist of a gathering place, sculpture garden, walking path, demonstration garden and main plaza for outdoor events. The new plaza which will be named in honor of Jackie Lee Houston, is a proposal by the City of Palm Springs on a vacant 1.75-acre "triangle parcel" across from the convention center at 281 Calle Alvarado.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission approve Case No. 3.3357 – MAJ for the construction of the Jackie Lee Houston Plaza and recommend approval to the City Council.

PRIOR ACTIONS:

The Architectural Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed project on June 8, 2009 and with a vote of 5-0 recommended approval with a recommendation that final plans be brought back to AAC for review at a later date.

The Tribal Council of the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians reviewed the proposal at their meeting held on June 15, 2009 and recommend approval subject to conditions attached to this report as Attachment "A".

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is bounded by residential uses to the north, west, and south; and the convention center to the east. Surrounding Land Uses, Zoning, and General Plan designations are detailed below.

	Land Use	Zone	General Plan
North	High Density Res.	HR	High Density Res.
South	High Density Res.	HR	High Density Res.
West	High Density Res.	HR	High Density Res.
East	Tourist Resort Comm.	PD 164	Tourist Resort Comm.

The subject lot is part of a master lease owned by the City of Palm Springs and is included in the Palm Springs Convention Center complex.

ANALYSIS:

General Plan and Zoning

The General Plan and Zoning designation in conjunction with the Section 14 Specific Plan has designated this parcel as HR (High Density Residential). This designation would permit a large-scale hotel and multiple-family residential development. In addition, the Section 14 Specific Plan defers to the City zoning ordinance and the designation of R-4 (High Density Residential). According to Section **92.05.01 (A) (4)** the permitted uses within that zone would allow for a park as an accessory use customarily and incidental to the permitted use of the Palm Springs Convention Center.

Project Description

Site Plan:

The subject site is approximately 1.75-acre parcel located at 281 Calle Alvarado at the northeast corner of Calle Alvarado and Amado Road across the street from

the Palm Springs Convention Center. The proposed new park will be anchored by two shade spaces on the north and south portions of the lot; flanked with seats looking out to the desert garden. The main events plaza is located directly across from the convention center and will be constructed of paving surfaces with designs similar to the patterns of the convention center building. A passive lawn area is located at the center of the site with dominate views to the mountains. The design of the park also includes two modular translucent screen walls with seating spaces. The site plan calls for a new convention center monument sign to be placed at the northeast corner of the lot.

Design Principals:

According to the applicant representing the City, several design meetings were held with the members of the immediate surrounding communities and other stakeholders. The following is a list of design principals agreed upon by the participants of the meetings.

The design principals and goals of the park are to provide the following:

- Improve pedestrian safety by minimizing vehicular conflict and controlling crossing points.
- Screen the adjacent condominiums for both security and aesthetics.
- Create a cohesive plaza with the convention center that is flexible in use and program.
- Connect the plaza with a red carpet entry.
- Recognize human comfort and seasonal microclimates.
- Allow for street closures thru a new pop-up bollard system.
- Create a gradient of transition for both plantings and plaza.
- Create a coherent valet drop-off area.

Parking:

Eight handicapped pull-in parking spaces are being added along Calle Alvarado. These spaces will be used by the general public and media trucks during special events.

Landscaping:

The overall site can be described as a desert passive park. Pathways will be constructed of several different types and colors of decomposed granite, and large boulders will be interspersed throughout the site. All shrubs, perennials and trees will be native or adaptive native to the Coachella Valley. The planting palette will include trees such as Desert Smoke Trees, Palo Verdes; Palms to include Sago and Date; shrubs consisting of Hop bush, Brittlebush, Bamboo, and Autumn Sage; accents and ground cover, Desert Spoon, Ocotillo, Trailing Lantana and Indigo Bush. A lawn area will be located just west of the main

plaza. The existing hedge between the neighboring condominiums will remain.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

There are no required findings for applications for major architectural approval which does not require environmental assessments, the Zoning Ordinance Section 94.04.00(D)(1-9) provides guidelines for the Architectural review of development projects to determine whether the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants as well as being compatible with the character of adjacent and surrounding developments, and whether aesthetically it is of good composition, materials, textures and colors. Conformance is evaluated, based on consideration of the following:

Location and type of planting, with regard for desert climate conditions. Preservation of specimen and landmark trees upon a site, with proper irrigation to insure maintenance of all plant materials.

The proposed landscape planting palette will use shrubs, perennials and trees native or adaptive native to the Coachella Valley. The majority of the site will be planted with water efficient material. Pathways will be constructed of several different types and colors of decomposed granite, and large boulders will be interspersed throughout the site. Irrigation of the site will be integrated into the overall convention center watering schedule.

CONCLUSION

The project is consistent with the land use and development standards of the "HR" zone and has received a recommendation of approval from the Architectural Advisory Committee. Staff is recommending approval of Case No. 3.3357 – MAJ subject to the attached conditions of approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case 3.3357-MAJ for the construction of the Jackie Lee Houston Plaza at 281 Calle Alvarado and recommend approval to the City Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

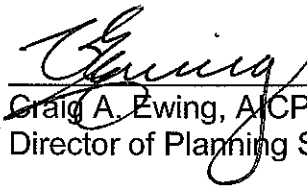
Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project is Categorical Exempt under Section 15332 (Infill).

NOTIFICATION

As a right-of-zone and an infill project that is exempt under the CEQA Guidelines, notification of the project is not required.



Glenn Mlaker
Assistant Planner



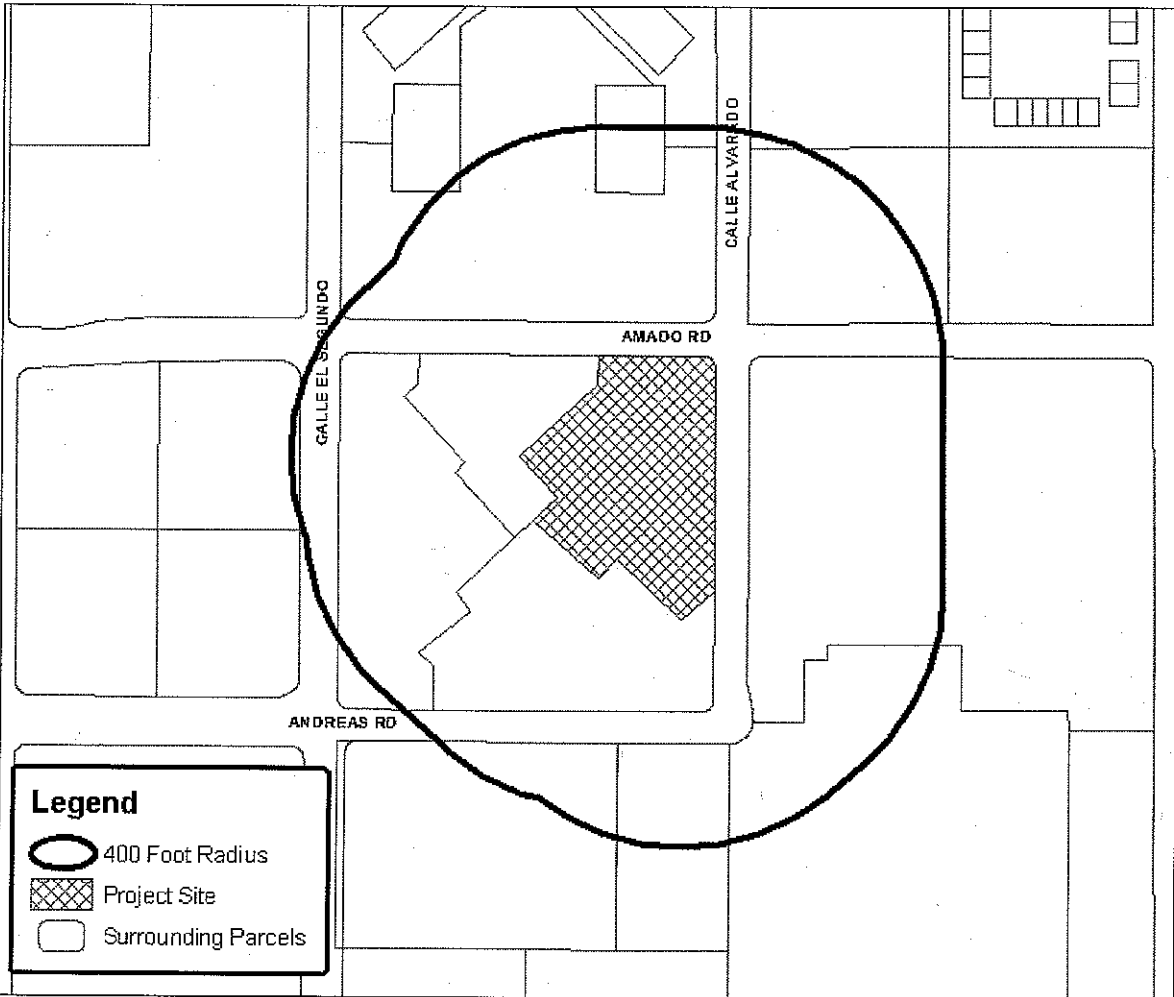
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS:




- 1) 400' Radius Map
- 2) Draft Resolution
- 3) Site Plan
- 4) Landscape Plan
- 5) Letter from the Tribal Council with Attachment "A" – Conditions of Approval



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



Legend

-  400 Foot Radius
-  Project Site
-  Surrounding Parcels

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: 3.3357 – MAJ

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: Location of the Jackie Lee Houston Plaza, a new park equaling 1.75 acres at 281 Calle Alvarado, Zone HR, Section 14, APN: 508-051-055

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING CASE NO. 3.3357-MAJ AND RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE SAME FOR ARCHITECTURAL APPROVAL OF THE JACKIE LEE HOUSTON PLAZA A 1.75 ACRE PARCEL, LOCATED AT 281 CALLE ALVARADO, ZONE HR, SECTION 14.

WHEREAS, The City of Palm Springs, ("Applicant") has filed an application for an architectural approval to construct a new park on a vacant lot located at 281 Calle Alvarado; and

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2009, the Architectural Advisory Committee met and voted (5-0) to recommend approval of the project with conditions to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2009, the Tribal Council of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians reviewed the proposal and recommend approval subject to conditions as Attachment "A".

WHEREAS, the proposed project is considered a "project" pursuant to the terms of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), and has been determined to be Categorically Exempt as a Class I exemption (Infill) pursuant to Section 15301(e) of the CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence presented in connection with the hearing on the project, including, but not limited to, the staff report, and all written and oral testimony presented.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the project has been determined to be categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Section 15332 (Infill) because this project will convert a vacant lot to park space within the larger urban setting.

The Planning Commission has determined that the project is in conformance with the criteria.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Planning Commission hereby approves of Case 3.3357 , subject to those conditions set forth in the conditions of approval attachment "A", which are to be satisfied unless otherwise specified.

ADOPTED this 24TH day of June, 2009.

AYES:

NOES:

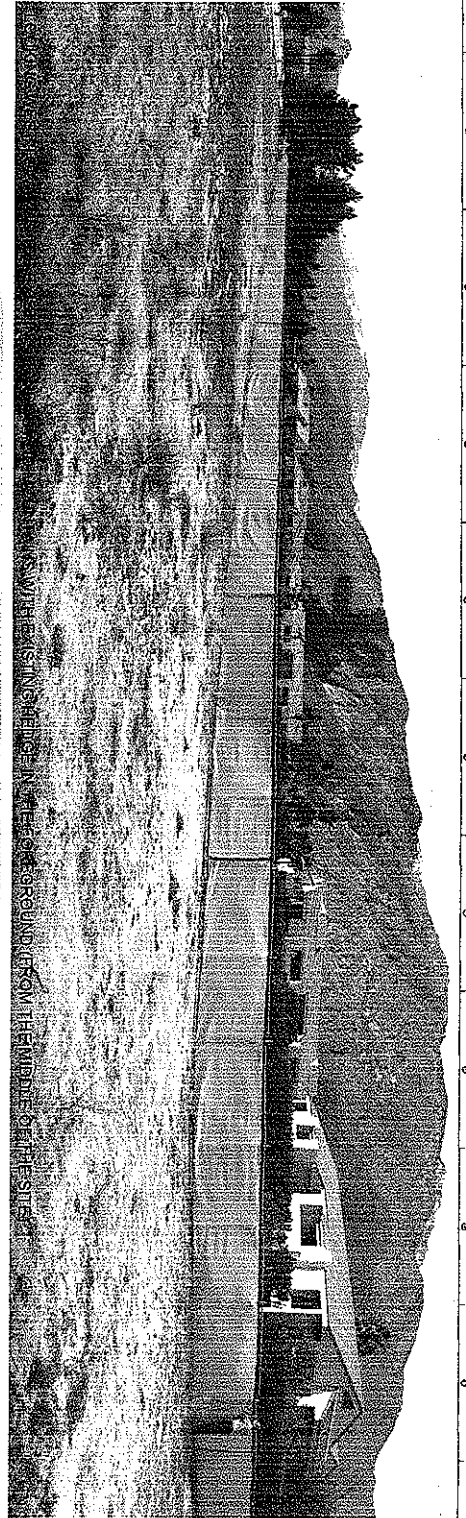
ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

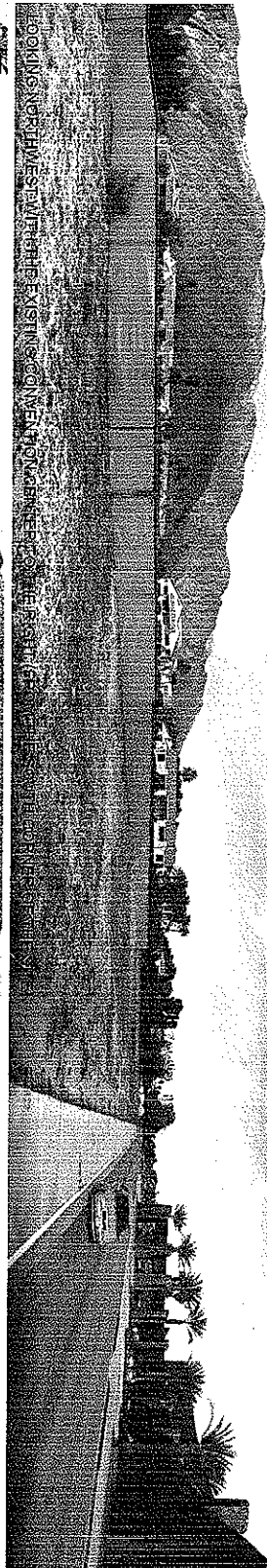
ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

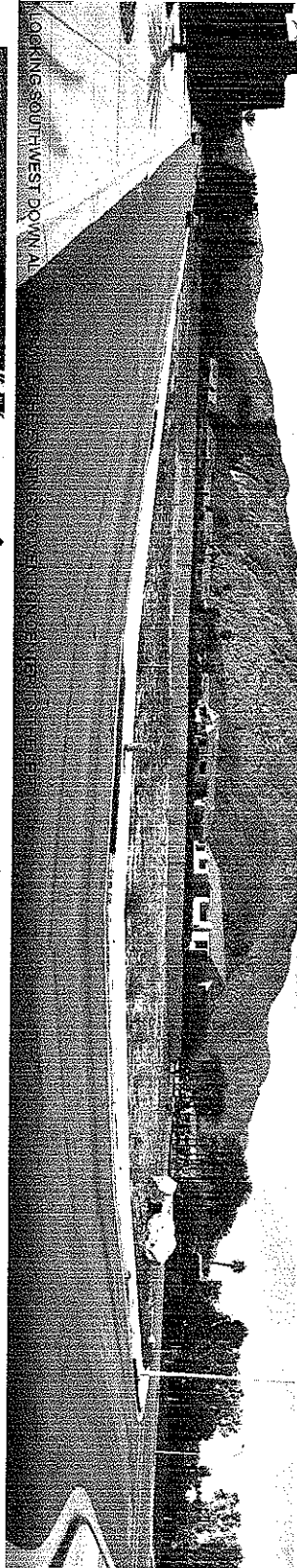
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services



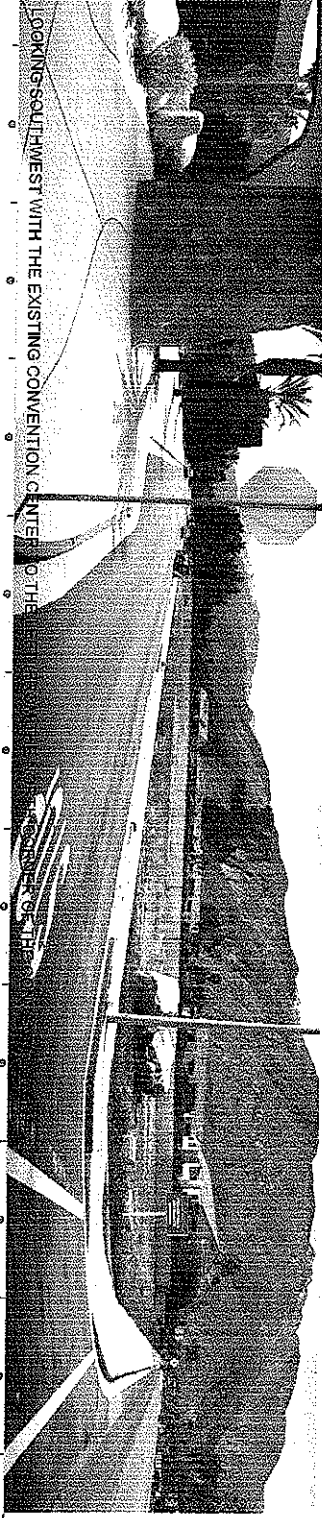
LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE SITE



LOOKING NORTHWEST WITH THE EXISTING CONVENTION CENTER TO THE RIGHT



LOOKING SOUTHWEST DOWN A ROAD



LOOKING SOUTHWEST WITH THE EXISTING CONVENTION CENTER TO THE RIGHT

Jackie Lee Houston Plaza, Palm Springs Convention Center

City of Palm Springs
Palm Springs, CA

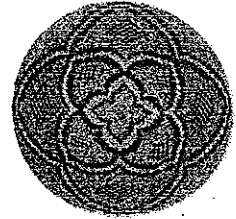
DESIGNWORKSHOP
 1000 West Palm Beach Blvd., Suite 100
 Palm Beach, FL 33411
 Phone: (561) 833-8888
 Fax: (561) 833-8889
 Website: www.designworkshop.com

PROJECT NO.	1000
DATE	10/15/08
PROJECT NAME	Jackie Lee Houston Plaza
CLIENT	City of Palm Springs
ARCHITECT	Major Architectural (MAJ) Submittal
SCALE	AS SHOWN
DATE	10/15/08
BY	DESIGNWORKSHOP
CHECKED BY	DESIGNWORKSHOP
APPROVED BY	DESIGNWORKSHOP

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS
 EX-1

AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

TRIBAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



June 16, 2009

HAND DELIVERED

RECEIVED

Mayor Steve Pougnet and City Council
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, California 92262

JUN 16 2009

PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

RE: Palm Springs Case No. 3.3357 MAJ - Jackie Lee Houston Plaza

Dear Mayor and City Council,

The Tribal Council of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians reviewed the above referenced project at its meeting of June 16, 2009, and recommends approval of the project to the City Council subject to the conditions of approval recommended by the Indian Planning Commission (Attachment A).

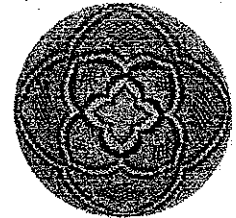
Please contact me should you have any questions at 760-883-1326.

Very truly yours,

Margaret E. Park, AICP
Director of Planning & Natural Resources
**AGUA CALIENTE BAND
OF CAHUILLA INDIANS**

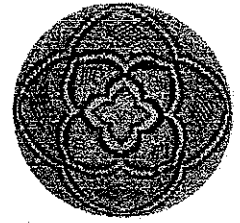
MP/si

C: Tribal Council
Tom Davis, Chief Planning & Development Officer
Craig Ewing, Director of Planning Services, City of Palm Springs



Attachment A
Conditions of Approval
Palm Springs Case No. 3.3357 MAJ – Jackie Lee Houston Plaza
June 16, 2009

1. Landscaping for the Project should use plant material indigenous to the Colorado Desert (specifically the Coachella Valley), to the fullest possible extent, in place of non-native vegetation.
2. That a Native American Monitor(s) be present during all ground disturbing activities including clearing and grubbing, excavation, burial of utilities, planting of rooted plants, etc. at the cost of the developer.
 - a. Should buried cultural deposits be encountered during project development and construction the Cultural Monitor has the right to halt destructive activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and shall notify a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of Interior standards to assess the find.
 - b. If significant Native American cultural resources are discovered the archaeologist shall prepare a Treatment Plan for submission to the THPO for approval.
 - c. Human remains encountered shall be handled consistent with the state law provisions and implementation.
 - d. If requested by the Tribe, the developer or the project archaeologist shall, in good faith, consult on the discovery and its disposition (e.g. avoidance, preservation, return of artifacts to the Tribe, etc.).
3. That the project contractor be subject to the State law regarding the discovery and disturbance of human remains should human remains be discovered during construction of the proposed project.
 - a. In that circumstance, destructive activity in the immediate vicinity shall halt and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code §7050.5.
 - b. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) shall be contacted.
 - c. The NAHC will make a determination of the Most Likely Descendent (MLD).



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- d. The City of Palm Springs and Developer will work with the designated MLD to determine the final disposition of the remains.