

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: Travertine Point Specific Plan

Project Location: 4,144 acres in Riverside County and 983 acres in Imperial County

Lead Agency: Riverside County

Pursuant to Section 15051 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of Riverside is the Lead Agency and the County of Imperial is a Key Responsible Agency. The majority of the proposed project is located in Riverside County (81 percent) with the remainder located in Imperial County. The County of Riverside is closely coordinating with Imperial County on the environmental review of this project. Portions of the proposed project also include lands located on the reservation of the Torres Martinez Cahuilla Indians, who are considered a sovereign nation and can be considered a Lead Agency under NEPA per 40 CFR 1501.5 for lands under their jurisdiction.

Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your agency's reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR. The following agencies will be involved as lead agencies or key responsible agencies in the process:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- County of Riverside (Lead Agency)
Planning Department
4080 Lemon Street
Riverside, CA 92502
Contact: James Fagelson

County of Imperial (Key Responsible Agency)

Planning & Development Services department
801 Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243-2811
Contact: Planning Director

Other Lead Agencies:

- Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Planning Department
66725 Martinez Street
Thermal, CA 92274
Contact: Raymond Torres, Chairman

Responsible and Other Agencies:

In addition to the counties of Riverside and Imperial, and the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, the proposed project may require review and approval by other agencies; state and local public agencies that may have responsibility to carry out or approve aspects of the project are considered Responsible Agencies under Section 21069 of CEQA. These agencies include but are not limited to:

- Army Corps of Engineers for Sections 401 and 404 activities under the Clean Water Act;
- Bureau of Indian Affairs for planning on tribal Trust Lands;
- Bureau of Land Management for activities and planning related to the Salton Sea;
- Salton Sea Authority for activities and planning related to the Salton Sea;
- California Department of Fish and Game for streambed alteration agreement pursuant to Section 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code;
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for activities related to improvements to state highways;
- Coachella Valley Water District for activities related to water, sewer, and stormwater in Riverside County; and
- Imperial Irrigation District for activities related to water, sewer, and stormwater in Imperial County.

Consulting Firm:

Firm Name: Impact Sciences, Inc.
Mailing Address: 803 Camarillo Springs Road
City/State/Zip Code: Camarillo, CA 93012
Contact: Joe Gibson

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is soliciting views of your agency regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by this agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and a preliminary list of the environmental topics identified for study in this EIR is attached to this notice. If any topics of concern to your agency have already been identified for analysis, your agency need not provide a response to this notice.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent to the County at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please send your response to James Fagelson, Principal Planner, Riverside County Planning Department, Riverside County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside, California 92502. Agency responses to this NOP should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency.

Pursuant to Section 15082(c)(1) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County of Riverside will hold a scoping meeting to receive comments from public agencies and other interested parties to assist the County in determining the scope and content of the environmental information and analysis to be included in this Draft EIR. This scoping meeting will be held on November 7, 2007 at 1:30 PM at the City of La Quinta Council Chambers, 78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, CA 92253-1504

Project Description (brief): The project consists of a Specific Plan proposed to master plan and regulate land use on approximately 5,131 acres located along the northwestern shore of the Salton Sea within Riverside and Imperial counties. The majority of the proposed Specific Plan area is located in Riverside County and the remainder is located in Imperial County. Both

privately owned land and some land located in the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians reservation is included in the planning area. As proposed, the Travertine Point Specific Plan would provide for the development of residential neighborhoods of varying densities encircling a Town Center along with supporting commercial and community facilities, including a resort, a marina, a cultural preserve and living desert, open space, trails, parks and recreation areas, schools, and golf courses. The proposed Specific Plan would allow for the development of up to 12,300 residential units. In addition to considering adoption of the Specific Plan, the project will require approval of related discretionary actions including amendments to the Riverside and Imperial County General Plan, Zone Changes, Development Agreements with both counties, and large lot Tentative Tract Maps.

Date: October 25, 2007

Signature: _____

R. JAMES FAGELSON

Title: **PRINCIPAL PLANNER**

Telephone: **951-955-9514**

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (*CEQA Guidelines*), Sections 15082(a), 15103, 153

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Travertine Point Specific Plan (Riverside and Imperial Counties)

INTRODUCTION

The Travertine Point Specific Plan is a proposed mixed-used community plan on the northwestern shore of the Salton Sea. The majority of the approximately 5,131-acre proposed Specific Plan area is located in Riverside County and the remainder is located in Imperial County. For this reason, pursuant to Section 15051 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*, the County of Riverside is acting as the Lead Agency conducting the environmental review of this proposed project with Imperial County, acting as a Responsible Agency.

The Specific Plan is proposed by Black Emerald, LLC in consultation with the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. The Specific Plan area currently consists of approximately 5,131 acres of land of which 4,148 acres (approximately 81 percent) is within County of Riverside, and 983 acres (approximately 19 percent) is within County of Imperial. Approximately 1,419 acres (approximately 28 percent) of the total Specific Plan area consists of land located within the reservation of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians; consisting of 785 acres within Riverside County and 643 acres within Imperial County. Those portions of the Specific Plan area consisting of Torres-Martinez reservations lands will be processed under the requirements of the tribe and, and as appropriate, will be subject to additional environmental review under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) per 40 CFR 1501.5 because the Torres Martinez Cahuilla Indians are considered a sovereign nation.

PROJECT LOCATION

Regional access is provided by California State Route (SR) 86S, a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Highway connecting the El Centro/Mexicali area to the south with the Desert Cities area and Interstate 10 to the north. SR-86S traverses the center of the planning area as a limited-access highway. **Figure 1, Regional Location Map**, illustrates the regional location of the surrounding areas of the proposed Travertine Point Specific Plan within Riverside and Imperial counties. The site is generally located west of the Salton Sea, south of the City of Coachella, and north east of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. SR-86S traverses the planning area as a limited-access highway. **Figure 2, Project Location Map**, illustrates the location of the project site plan along the northwest shore of the Salton Sea, and also identifies Torres-

Martinez tribal land in the area. Torres Martinez lands in the general area include several residential developments and the Torres Martinez Travel Center and Casino located on SR-86S near Mecca in northeast Imperial County.

EXISTING LAND USE

Much of the land within the proposed Specific Plan area is currently in agricultural production – grapes, row crops, dates – as well as some aquaculture uses. The Torres Martinez lands within the proposed Specific Plan area are largely undeveloped. Several natural drainages traverse the property, which lies on an alluvial fan at the base of the mountains.

The Oasis landfill, an existing 24-acre facility, is located within the proposed Specific Plan area, situated on approximately 160 acres of land owned by Riverside County. The un-lined landfill was started several decades ago. It has recently re-opened, two days a week, after having been limited to two days of operation per year for the past several years.

PLANNING CONCEPT

The proposed project consists of a Specific Plan that would master-plan the approximately 5,130 acres as a residential mixed-use community. The preliminary land use concept, provided in **Figure 3, Preliminary Land Use Concept**, illustrates the type and range of uses proposed. This concept plan includes several residential or mixed-use colonies, each with its own mix of land uses. The colonies included in the concept plan consist of (1) the Town Center, (2) the Resort and Marina, and (3) the Residential Colonies (Golf, East, and West).

Figure 1 Regional Location Map

Figure 2 Project Location Map

A summary of the type and amount of proposed land uses, as illustrated in the concept plan, is provided in **Table 1, Travertine Point Specific Plan Concept, Summary of Proposed Land Uses**.

**Table 1
Travertine Point Specific Plan Concept
Summary of Proposed Land Uses**

Statistical Summary						
Land Use	Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Black Emerald and Others		Acreage Total	Total Units
	Acres	Units	Acres	Units		
Commercial	42	100	56	0	98	100
Mixed Use	15	250	72	450	87	700
Business Park	0	0	34	0	34	0
Resort & Marina	90	0	37	0	127	0
Residential	175	600	2,064	10,900	2,239	11,500
Golf	95	0	181	0	276	0
Open Space	973	0	1,088	0	2,061	0
Roads	29	0	180	0	208	0
Totals	1,419	950	3,712	11,350	5,131	12,300

Source: FORMA, September 2007.

SPECIFIC PLAN LAND USE CONCEPT

The Town Center

The heart or “Town Center” of Travertine Point includes four major districts that would form the urban core of the community. The Town Center is located near the geographic center of the Travertine Point Specific Plan area, at a future Highway 86S interchange proposed as part of the project. Much of the Town Center area consists of Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians reservation land. The four districts in the Town Center include:

- A regional retail center that will include shopping, services, restaurants, entertainment uses, commercial offices and medical offices;
- an employment-based business/industrial park;

Figure 3 Project Land Use Plan

- a mixed-use area that will allow for a variety of uses, including retail, offices, institutional uses, hotels and other visitor-serving uses, a possible casino, as well as multi-family residential; and
- medium-density and high-density residential areas in a more urban configuration.

The Resort

The resort area is located to the south of the Town Center on the west side of Highway 86S. Uses proposed for this area include a hotel, spa, and possible casino, an upscale RV park, and golf course. Approximately half of the resort area is on Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Reservation land and a casino may on the reservation lands is also being considered.

The Marina

A marina is proposed at the southeast portion of the planning area on Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Reservation land. The marina development is a future use that assumes the successful restoration of the Salton Sea as presently proposed. In addition to boat docks, slips and marine services, the marina area would also include retail shops, restaurants, and possibly lodging. The marina would be conveniently connected to the Town Center and Highway 86S interchange, with an additional connection, via an overpass, to the resort area.

The Cultural Preserve and Living Desert

The northern portion of Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Reservation land within the Specific Plan area is proposed to be maintained as a cultural preserve and "living desert." This is an area where significant archeological resources are known to be present. The cultural preserve will identify, protect, and preserve these culturally sensitive lands and resources as well as providing interpretive displays and materials to educate residents and visitors about the early Cahuilla way of life. The living desert will include plants and interpretive displays and materials to educate residents and visitors on the importance and manner of use of various plants for food, shelter, medicinal, implements, and spiritual purposes.

The Residential Neighborhoods

The residential component of Travertine Point is planned to provide for a wide array of product types, home sizes, lot sizes, densities, and pricing. The residential neighborhoods will cater to a broad range of demographics, lifestyles, and family groups.

The primary residential portion of Travertine Point consists of two colonies, one west of Highway 86S and the other east of the highway. Residential housing would be predominantly

single-family in character, but may also include compact lots, attached homes, condominiums and multi-family – for-sale and rental units. The residential areas are characterized by three density categories:

- Low Density Residential (LDR) – development in the range of 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre.
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)/Medium High Density Residential (MHDR) – development in the range of 5 to 14 dwelling units per acre.
- High Density Residential (HDR)/Very High Density Residential (VHDR) – development in the range of 14 to 20 plus dwelling units per acre.

A third residential colony is an upscale neighborhood of homes integrated with a membership golf course that is planned for a portion of the Specific Plan area in Imperial County.

Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood retail centers, one in the west colony and two in the east colony, are proposed to provide for the day-to-day shopping needs of the residents. Grocery supermarkets and drug stores are anticipated to anchor these centers that will also include other shops, services, and conveniences.

Open Space, Trails, Parks and Recreation

A significant portion of the proposed Travertine Point Specific Plan area – approximately 2,060 acres, or 40 percent of the total Specific Plan area – is planned for a variety of open space uses including:

- an extensive complex of broad, vegetated linear corridors that will also function as stormwater drainages,
- stormwater detention areas that can also be developed for park and recreation uses,
- a public park system that will provide a full spectrum of places and activities, ranging from intimate and passive to large and active recreation facilities, including sports fields,
- existing natural open space areas that will remain undisturbed by development or possibly enhanced to increase the habitat value,
- the cultural preserve/living desert and possibly other culturally sensitive lands that will be left undisturbed or enhanced,
- golf course(s),

- water reservoirs that will be designed as multi-functional facilities for irrigation water storage, storm water detention, possible ground water recharge and for recreational uses (non-motorized boating and fishing),
- private recreation centers that may be developed in conjunction with some residential projects, and
- an extensive network of multi-purpose trails that will connect the residential neighborhoods, the open space complex of washes, water reservoirs, parks, schools, and shopping.

Schools

Several elementary schools and middle schools would be planned and located to serve the needs of the community and to act as neighborhood focal points. The Travertine Point community would ultimately also require a new high school. The actual number and location of all school facilities will be determined in collaboration with the Coachella Valley Unified School District based on the number of homes built and the number of new students generated by the development.

Public Services and Facilities

Public safety and emergency services and facilities (police, fire, EMT) will be accommodated in the planning for Travertine Point in collaboration with the responsible agencies. Civic uses (libraries, museums, performing arts, government centers, courts, etc.) will be allowed uses in the Town Center district.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Transportation

The primary regional transportation system for this part of the Coachella Valley is currently provided by SR-86S connecting the El Centro/Mexicali area to the south with the Desert Cities area and Interstate 10 to the north. SR-86S traverses the center of the planning area as a limited-access highway. Air transportation for the region is provided by Palm Springs International Airport, approximately 35 miles to the northwest, and Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, approximately 10 miles to the north. Currently no rail or mass transit service exists in this part of the valley.

An extensive network of trails and bikeways are planned within the community of Travertine Point to provide safe and convenient alternatives to the private automobile. The mixed-use

nature of Travertine Point, the incorporation of special places and parks within a short 5-minute walk of most homes, pedestrian-friendly streets, and walkable neighborhoods are all designed to reduce dependency on the auto, thereby reducing air pollutants and fossil-fuel energy consumption.

Circulation

The circulation network planned for Travertine Point employs a system of arterial and collector roads that will distribute vehicular traffic from SR-86S throughout the community and provide connections to adjoining properties. The preliminary concept plan for Travertine Point includes a future SR-86S interchange in the vicinity of 83rd and 84th Avenues. The planning for Travertine Point assumes that other future interchanges will ultimately be developed in the area as outlined on the Route Concept Plan for SR-86S; these possible future interchanges would be located outside of the Travertine Point project site area, one to the north at SR-86S and 81st Avenue, and to the south below 86th Avenue in Imperial County.

The Travertine Point circulation network has been planned to provide an alternate surface street route to SR-86S for vehicles traveling north-south. An overpass is proposed in the southern portion of the plan, connecting the resort and the marina. Roundabouts are proposed at several key intersections to reduce congestion, reduce speed, improve air quality, and enhance safety by reducing the severity of accidents. The circulation system will be planned to accommodate possible future mass transit through the provision of bus turn-outs and bus stops at appropriate locations.

DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL

The drainage and flood control system currently contemplated is based upon a plan that accepts the off-site flows along the upstream southwestern boundaries of the project, directs flows to a series of basins that captures the large debris elements, and passes them through the planning area in wide, shallow vegetated washes. The resulting flows into the Salton Sea will be stripped of debris, sand and considerable silt therefore causing higher quality water than is currently discharged into the sea through the existing native and agricultural washes. The off-site hydrology plan utilizes the existing SR-86S bridges and culverts, with one or two possible exceptions that will likely require expansion or reconstruction. These broad open space features will also incorporate a network of trails and park amenities, providing recreational opportunities, as well as visual open space buffers within the community.

The on-site drainage system will connect to the major flood control facilities. In addition the on-site system will employ a series of detention basins that will also serve as stormwater and irrigation storage reservoirs, and, in certain cases, possibly as groundwater recharge areas. Thus, these water bodies will serve many useful functions, benefiting the entire region. The water reservoirs will also provide visual and recreational amenities to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water

The project's water master plan will consider the potential to decrease the demand for potable water by implementing a separate non-potable water supply and distribution system for irrigation and fire flow requirements should that approach be deemed feasible. This dual water system strategy has the potential to reduce the total potable water demand, when compared to a single system, by as much as 80 percent. The water system will be designed to be part of the Coachella Valley Water District's (CVWD) water distribution system as an integral part of a larger regional master water and irrigation plan.

The quantity of water that the development area currently uses for agricultural purposes will be maintained. A portion of that canal water will be diverted for the fire and irrigation system, another portion will be diverted for potable water use, and the remainder would be diverted to recharging the aquifer. This strategy assumes that the primary source of water for the project will be treated canal water. The other options that may also be considered include treating deep well water and perched ground water.

Wastewater

The Travertine Point wastewater system will be designed to be part of the CVWD collection system and an integral part of a larger regional master sewer plan. The wastewater system will likely consist of gravity flow lines to a new treatment plant strategically located at a low point within the project area. During the initial stages of the development of Travertine Point, the new wastewater treatment plant may involve transferring wastewater to existing treatment plants. The treated effluent from the treatment plant could be discharged to the Salton Sea, recycled and used for irrigation, or discharged into wetlands. Alternatives to a new on-site wastewater treatment plant that may also be considered include pumping south to the existing treatment plant in Desert Shores, or pumping north to the District's WRP-4 treatment plant at 62nd Avenue.

Utilities

Utilities service will be provided by:

Electrical

The local provider is Imperial Irrigation District, IID Energy Division (IID).

- a. **Substation Sites:** Due to the lack of IID infrastructure in the area of Travertine Point IID will request developers to participate in providing substation sites. Each substation site is designed to serve 3,000 to 4,000 single family residents or equivalent based on density. Each substation site is designed to support development within a 1.5-mile radius. Typical substation sites are 300 feet by 300 feet, or 2.2 acres. It is probable that Travertine Point will require multiple substation sites.
- b. **Transmission Lines:** Existing transmission lines in the area consist of 92kV and 161kV transmission lines.

Natural Gas

The local provider is The Southern California Gas Company; there are currently no natural gas facilities in the project area.

Telephone Service

Verizon is the provider for phone service in the area with a copper wire system.

Fiber Optic Service

Fiber optic service is not available in the area at this time. It may be possible to provide fiber optic service in the future. Long term planning and budgets would have to be evaluated by Verizon before a decision could be made. Larger projects on the scale of Travertine Point would be given serious consideration. The decision by Verizon to bring fiber optics to the area could take a year, with additional time needed for Verizon to budget the monies and provide the required line extension.

AT&T has a fiber optic transcontinental direct buried line that runs the length of the project along the east side of Hwy 86. Numerous wooden posts warn about the presence of the line. This transcontinental fiber optic line is not intended for distribution-type use and cannot be accessed.

Cable TV

The local provider of cable service is Time Warner Cable (TWC). There are currently no facilities in the area. TWC is willing to extend their service lines to the Travertine Point project site if density and construction timelines justify it. TWC evaluates everything based on return on investment. If the demand justifies the line extension, they will make the investment. If the developer decides to finance the extension, TWC will undertake the installation.

LEAD AND OTHER AGENCIES

The Lead Agency will consider the comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining the final scope and content of the Draft EIR to be prepared. Pursuant to Section 15051 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County of Riverside is the Lead Agency and the County of Imperial is a Key Responsible Agency. The Torres Martinez Cahuilla Indians are considered a sovereign nation and can be considered a Lead Agency under NEPA per 40 CFR 1501.5 for lands under their jurisdiction.

Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your agency's reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR. The following agencies will be involved as lead agencies or key responsible agencies in the process:

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Other Lead Agencies:

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Planning Department
66725 Martinez Street
Thermal, CA 92274

In addition to the counties of Riverside and Imperial, and the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, the proposed project may require review and approval by other agencies; state and local public agencies that may have responsibility to carry out or approve aspects of the project are considered Responsible Agencies under Section 21069 of CEQA. These agencies include but are not limited to:

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- Bureau of Indian Affairs for planning on tribal Trust Lands;
- Bureau of Land Management for activities and planning related to the Salton Sea;
- Salton Sea Authority for activities and planning related to the Salton Sea;
- California Department of Fish and Game for stream bed alteration agreement pursuant to Section 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code;
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for activities related to improvements to state highways;
- Coachella Valley Water District for activities related to water, sewer, and stormwater in Riverside County; and
- Imperial Irrigation District for activities related to water, sewer, and stormwater in Imperial County.

Entitlements

The Travertine Point entitlements will include:

- Riverside County General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan, Development Agreement and Certified Environmental Impact Report,
- Imperial County General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan, Development Agreement and Certified Environmental Impact Report, and
- Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Project Approval and Environmental Clearance.

To ensure the integrity of the community's Vision and Master Plan, the Travertine Point Specific Plan will be a single document processed concurrently through Riverside and Imperial Counties.

PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF SCOPE OF STUDY OF THIS DRAFT EIR

The County of Riverside, in consultation with the County of Imperial, has completed a preliminary review of the application for this project, as described in Section 15060 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, and has determined that an EIR should be prepared to address the potential for the proposed specific plan and related actions to result in significant environmental effects. The scope of work for this EIR will involve research, analysis, and study of the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

A brief description of the probable effects of the proposed project and the proposed scope of study for each of these effects is provided as an attachment to this notice for your information.

Aesthetics – Analysis of this topic will address the change in the visual character of the project site as viewed from surrounding areas, streets, and highways. The emphasis of the analysis will be on proposed modifications to the existing hills and other desert landforms within the proposed Travertine Point Specific Plan Area visible from SR-86S and other areas such as Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the Salton Sea. Analysis of potential impacts to scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and other features along scenic highways will be completed. The closest highway that is eligible for the California State Scenic Highway Program is SR-111 located east of the project site, along the eastern shore of the Salton Sea. To the degree the project area is visible, aesthetic impacts will be analyzed from SR-111 looking across the Salton Sea to the Travertine Point Specific Plan area and the surrounding landscape. The Specific Plan

area will also be visible from the Anza Borrego Desert State Park located approximately 3 miles south of the project site. Analysis will also be completed on the scenic views associated with the project site and the Anza Borrego State Park. Development of the Travertine Specific Plan Area will follow design guidelines for residential, commercial, and community based structures that will be aesthetically pleasing to the community. Scenic vista in the area will be evaluated to determine potential impacts. Analysis will evaluate the conversion of large areas of undeveloped lands used primarily for agricultural purposes to a more urban and suburban setting. Introduction of new sources of light and glare in the existing desert and rural areas will be analyzed.

Agricultural Resources – Agricultural resources are an integral element of environmental settings of the eastern Riverside and northern Imperial counties. Therefore, both Riverside and Imperial County General Plans emphasize the need to preserve and enhance these agricultural resources through area plan policies and subsequent implementation policies.

The Specific Plan area has had a long history of agricultural uses. Therefore, the environmental review will analyze the potential for loss of agricultural land resulting from the project. The impacts of the project on agricultural resources will be evaluated in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the California Department of Conservation (DOC) requirements and protocols. The development of agricultural lands that are currently in production will be evaluated to determine their production status economically, and their status as Prime Farmland. Analysis of the conversion of the agricultural lands within the Specific Plan area will be evaluated using the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (LESA) provided by the California Department of Conservation. This tool helps to determine the effects of converting agricultural land to developed land.

The potential to convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined by the DOC's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program will be assessed. The review of potential agricultural impacts will also include identification of lands that may have Williamson Act or other land conversion contracts, and other local existing zoning for agricultural uses.

The County of Riverside is currently developing an Agricultural Conservation Policy. Upon adoption of the Agricultural Conversion Policy, any development proposal requiring conversion of agricultural land located outside a city sphere of influence (SOI) will require a specific plan; the environmental review will include analysis of the conversion of agricultural land per this proposed policy.

Air Quality – The Specific Plan area is located within the Salton Sea Air Basin and is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) (for the Riverside County portion) and the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) (for the imperial County portion). The EIR will evaluate the impacts of the project on air quality in accordance with SCAQMD and ICAPCD analysis guidelines applicable to the Salton Sea Air Basin, as well as the project’s consistency with existing air quality management plans.

The proposed project will be evaluated to determine the potential to violate federal and state air quality standards. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated the air basin as a non-attainment area with regards to National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Increases in air emissions from stationary and vehicular sources during both construction activities and occupancy and use of the project will be assessed, along with potential localized effects such as the creation of, or contribution to, carbon monoxide “hotspots” along streets and highways in the area. An analysis of criteria pollutants will be completed with emphasis on identifying potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

The air quality analysis will also include an evaluation of the potential impacts of greenhouse gases resulting from the development of the Specific Plan.

Biological Resources – General vegetation and wildlife surveys of the entire Travertine Point Specific Plan Area will be completed along with focused surveys for sensitive plant and wildlife species likely to be present on the site. Desert wash areas, the coast of the Salton Sea, and other drainage features on the site and areas subject to regulation under the California Fish and Game Code and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be identified. The four main natural communities that are located within the proposed Travertine Point Specific Plan are agricultural communities, water communities, Sonoran Desert Scrub communities, and playa communities. The potential to impact wildlife and vegetation either directly or indirectly through habitat modification, will be evaluated. Inventories and surveys will be completed to identify species listed as a candidate, sensitive, or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Potential wildlife movement corridors will be identified. Impacts of the Specific Plan that would interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors will be completed.

The analysis of the biological impacts of the Specific Plan will include the potential for conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policies or ordinances.

Cultural Resources – The potential for the Specific Plan to cause significant impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources will be determined. Cultural resources literature and records searches will be completed at the Eastern Information Center, housed at the University of California, Riverside, and at the Southeast Information Center, housed at the Imperial Valley College Desert Museum, for the entire 5,131-acre project study area. All previously recorded cultural resources within the approximate 5,131-acre study area will be spot-checked to assess current site condition. Archaeological and historical resources surveys will be completed on designated high priority development areas. Paleontological literature and records searches will also be completed at the San Bernardino County Museum for the approximate 5,131-acre project study area. Extensive consultation has already begun with Tribal representatives and will accelerate during the pre- and post-entitlement approval process. It will also be conducted by the counties of Riverside and Imperial in accordance with the requirements of the Traditional Tribal Cultural Places Act (Senate Bill 18).

Geology and Soils – A geotechnical study of the Specific Plan Area will be completed to identify potential impacts associated with the existing geological and soils conditions. The Specific Plan area is known to contain earthquake faults and specific studies to determine the location and status of faults on and around the project site are being conducted. The Specific Plan is located in the San Jacinto fault zone, and is located just west of the San Andreas fault zone. Other issues that will be analyzed include liquefaction, landslides and rockfalls, subsidence and collapsible soils, and wind erosion. The Specific Plan is currently in an area that is considered highly to moderately susceptible to liquefaction and a detailed study will be completed. The Specific Plan is located in an area that generally has less than 15 percent slope angles. Therefore, the susceptibility of the area to landslides and rockfalls is low. The Specific Plan is in an area that has documented subsidence. Further study will be done to determine the impact associated with this occurrence. The Specific Plan Area is in an area that is susceptible to high wind erodibility; therefore, further analysis will be completed.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials – An assessment of the potential for the Specific Plan area to contain hazards or hazardous materials associated with historical uses of the site will be conducted. Much of the property is currently in agricultural production, allowing the soils to be exposed to hazardous materials such as pesticides and fungicides. The Oasis landfill, a 24-acre facility, is within the planning area, situated on approximately 160 acres of land owned by Riverside County. An assessment of the potential for the Specific Plan area to contain hazards or hazardous materials will be conducted. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be prepared and will be used to support the analysis of potential impacts related to this topic. A summary of relevant federal, state, and County laws and regulations governing the use, disposal,

and transportation of hazardous materials will be provided. The transportation of hazardous materials on SR-86S connecting the El Centro/Mexicali area to Interstate 10, will be analyzed. A discussion will be provided of the potential for encountering previously unidentified contamination, or hazards related to past uses, and appropriate mitigation, consistent with the recommendations included in the Phase I report.

Hydrology and Water Quality – A hydrology study will be prepared to address the potential impacts of the project on existing drainage patterns and facilities and potential impacts to water quality. The Specific Plan area slopes from west to east toward the western shores of the Salton Sea. Numerous washes traverse the project area, beginning along the hills toward the west of the project site, and ending in the Salton Sea. The drainage and flood control system currently contemplated is based upon a plan that accepts the off-site flows along the upstream areas of the project site, directs flows to a series of basins and captures the large debris elements, and passes them through the Specific Plan area in wide, shallow, vegetated washes. The resulting flows into the Salton Sea will be of much higher water quality than is currently discharged into the sea. The on-site drainage system will connect to the major flood control washes that traverse the Specific Plan area. In addition, the on-site system will employ a series of detention basins that will also serve as water storage reservoirs, and in certain cases possibly as groundwater recharge areas. The CVWD is responsible for storm drain service to the site. An analysis will be conducted to determine the possible impacts the Specific Plan area could have regarding hydrology and water quality, including impacts to the Salton Sea.

Portions of the Specific Plan area are located in a 100-year flood zone. The area is located on the shore of the Salton Sea, where the elevation gain from the Sea to the project area is minimal. The elevation provides the possibility of the area to be flooded during 100-year storm events. The Specific Plan area would use existing flood channels to divert water from residential areas and towards the Salton Sea. A further analysis will be completed to determine the impact flooding could have on the Specific Plan area and surrounding areas.

Land Use and Planning – Consistency of the Specific Plan with the goals and policies of the Riverside and Imperial counties General Plans will be assessed. Additionally, the project will be evaluated in terms of consistency with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IPAG), the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, and other applicable regional planning programs. Regional growth forecasts for the Specific Plan area within both counties, will be identified, and project based growth forecast comparison will be completed. The compatibility of the proposed uses with existing and planned uses on the project site and in surrounding areas will also be analyzed. Potential

conflicts that may result from the implementation of the Specific Plan with existing General Plans will be identified.

Mineral Resources – The Plan area is currently in an area that has not been studied for mineral resources. An analysis for the area will need to be prepared in order to determine if an impact associated with the disturbance of mineral resources will occur. This analysis will include identification of potential loss of known mineral resources in the area that would be of value to the region and state. Additionally, the potential loss of availability of locally important mineral resource recovery sites designated by the counties of Riverside and Imperial will be completed.

Noise – The potential for the Specific Plan to result in significant increases in noise levels will be assessed for the proposed land uses to be impacted by noise levels from SR-86S and other existing and proposed streets in the project area. Roadway noise impacts will be assessed based on noise monitoring and modeling to be completed. The modeling will use the traffic volume and distribution information from the project traffic study. Another factor that could contribute to noise production within the Specific Plan area is the proposed marina. Boating activity, marina activity, and other factors could increase noise factors and this section would analyze these contributing factors.

The location of the Specific Plan also could impact the quality of ambient noise located around the site. Natural sounds, such as birds, animals, and running water could be impacted by the development of the Specific Plan. An analysis of ambient noise will also be conducted to determine the impact the Specific Plan could cause to surrounding areas.

Population and Housing – Analysis of the consistency of the project with adopted local and regional growth projections will be provided. The development of the Specific Plan will include approximately 12,300 residential units and will provide a substantial increase to the population of Riverside and Imperial counties. The project will include an assortment of housing units, lot sizes, densities, and pricing. The residential neighborhood will cater to a broad range of demographics, lifestyles, and family groups. Analysis will be conducted using population demographics for Riverside and Imperial counties from the California Department of Finance and U.S. Census Bureau, as well as regional planning data from Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and other appropriate sources to determine whether the project will cause any impacts associated with population and housing. An analysis of local housing policies, applicable housing programs, and affordable housing incentives will be completed.

As assessment of the jobs/housing balance will be completed. Applicable employment/housing policies will be reviewed, and potential impacts resulting from the implementation of the Specific Plan will be identified.

Public Services – The needs of the project for police, fire, and school services from Riverside and Imperial counties and other agencies will be determined. The ability of these agencies to meet the increased demand for services will be assessed. This will include:

- Law Enforcement – The Specific Plan Area would be served by the Riverside and Imperial Counties sheriff’s departments. An analysis would be completed to determine the service levels that the Riverside and Imperial Counties sheriff’s departments would provide to the Specific Plan area.
- Fire – The area is served by both the Riverside and Imperial Counties fire departments. Further analysis will be completed to determine the service capability of these fire departments to serve the Specific Plan area.

Schools – Under current conditions, the Specific Plan area would be served by the Coachella Valley Unified School District (CVUSD). The Specific Plan is currently planning several elementary and middle schools to help serve its population. The Specific Plan will also eventually require a new high school. The actual number and location of all such school facilities would be determined by the number of homes built and the number of new students generated by the development, in collaboration with the CVUSD.

Parks – There are also two major recreation areas located near the project site, including the Salton Sea and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park.

- Salton Sea – The Specific Plan is located on the northwest shore of the Salton Sea. A proposed marina would allow easy access for the residents of the community to enjoy the recreational opportunities that Salton Sea has to offer.
- Anza Borrego Desert State Park – The Specific Plan is located approximately 3 miles north of the boundary of the state park.

Further analysis would be completed to determine the effects that the Specific Plan area could have on these recreational areas, and the addition of recreation areas of Riverside and Imperial counties.

Other Services – Potential impacts on other public services, including health services and libraries, will be completed.

Recreation – A significant portion of the Specific Plan – approximately 2,055 acres, some 40 percent – is planned for a variety of open space uses. These include public park systems, leaving existing natural open space undisturbed, a golf course, the cultural preserve/living desert area, and an extensive network of multi-purpose trails that will connect residential neighborhood and other aspects of the Specific Plan. The construction of these facilities will be examined to determine if potential impacts result.

Transportation and Traffic – A comprehensive traffic impact analysis will be prepared for the project. Changes in roadway and intersection traffic volumes will be studied at all roadway facilities in the area that may be significantly impacted by traffic that would be generated by the project. The traffic study will evaluate the relationship of the proposed circulation plan for the Specific Plan area with the improvements planned for SR-86S that passes through the center of the planning area. These improvements would employ a system of arterial and collector roads that will distribute vehicular traffic from the future SR-86S interchanges throughout the community and provide connections to adjoining properties. An analysis of the Specific Plan circulation network that has been planned to provide an alternate to SR-86S for vehicles traveling north and south will also be conducted.

A review of the adopted policies, plans, and programs of local transportation agencies will evaluate whether implementation of the Specific Plan would result in potential conflicts. This will include a review those programs supporting alternative transportation. In addition, the Specific Plan will be evaluated to determine if adequate parking is to be provided, and if there would be any impacts to emergency access.

Utilities and Service Systems – The impacts of the project on existing and planned sewer, solid waste services, and water facilities in the area will be evaluated along with potential impacts to electricity, natural gas, and communications service systems in the area.

- **Water Services** – The CVWD would provide water service to the Specific Plan area. A Water Supply Assessment (WSA), consistent with the provisions of SB 610, will be prepared. Further analysis on the water supply required to meet the anticipated demand for the Specific Plan area will be completed.
- **Wastewater** – The Specific Plan Area is not currently connected to a sewer infrastructure. The majority of the housing units currently within the area use septic tank systems. The

Specific Plan area would require new sewer infrastructure that would connect into the existing infrastructure from the CVWD, north of the project site area. Further analysis will be conducted on the infrastructure that would be needed to connect to the CVWD and the impacts, if any, the Specific Plan would have on existing infrastructure.

- **Solid Waste** – The Riverside County Waste Management Department provides primary solid waste and recycling service to the Specific Plan area. An analysis will be completed of the solid waste that would be produced by the Specific Plan area, in both Riverside and Imperial counties, will be conducted to determine the impacts, if any, the project would have on the solid waste service system.
- **Utilities** – The two major providers of electricity to the Specific Plan area are Southern California Edison (SCE) for Riverside County and the Imperial Irrigation District, for the southern end of the Coachella Valley and all of Imperial County. Each of these agencies sets specific criteria to determine future service demands from specific land uses. Natural gas is provided to the region by The Southern California Gas Company. Impacts related to energy will be evaluated.