

**Agenda Item No.: 8.8**  
**Area Plan: Eastern Coachella Valley**  
**Zoning District: Lower Coachella Valley**  
**Supervisory District: Fort**  
**Project Planner: Matt Straite**  
**Planning Commission: March 4, 2009**

**General Plan Amendment No. 1068**  
**Applicant: Oasis Date Gardens Inc.**  
**Engineer/Rep.: T&B Planning**

## **COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORT**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:**

**General Plan Amendment No. 1068** proposes to eliminate the land use designation of Community Development: Light Industrial (LI)(0.25-0.06 FAR) and would establish a Community Development Specific Plan on the 164.9 gross acre project site. A Specific Plan application has been filed in conjunction with the General Plan Amendment. The Specific Plan will include designations that would permit a mix of medium and high density residential development and non-residential uses including recreational and open space uses.

The proposed project is located in the Eastern Coachella Valley area plan, more specifically the project is northerly of 60th Avenue, easterly of Whitewater Canal and westerly of Grapefruit Boulevard/State Highway 111, just east of the Jackie Cochran Airport.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The initiation of proceedings for any General Plan Amendment (GPA) requires the adoption of an order by the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Director is required to prepare a report and recommendation on all GPA applications and submit them to the Board of Supervisors. Prior to the submittal to the Board, comments on the applications will be requested from the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission comments will be included in the report to the Board. The Board will either approve or disapprove the initiation of the proceedings for the GPA requested in the applications.

The consideration of the initiation of proceedings pursuant to this application by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will not involve a noticed public hearing. The Planning Department, however, did notify the applicant by mail of the time, date and place when the Planning Commission will consider this GPA initiation request.

If the Board of Supervisors adopts an order initiating proceedings pursuant to this application, the proposed amendment will thereafter be processed, heard and decided in accordance with all the procedures applicable to GPA applications, including noticed public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The adoption of an order initiating proceedings does not imply that any amendment will be approved. If the Board of Supervisors declines to adopt an order initiating proceedings, no further proceedings of this application will occur.

The Board of Supervisors established the procedures for initiation of GPA applications with the adoption of Ordinance No. 348.4573 (effective May 8, 2008), which amended Article II of that ordinance. This particular GPA application is an Entitlement/Policy Amendment, under Section 2.4.

Additionally, refer to the attached worksheet for General Plan Amendment Initiation Consideration Analysis.

### **GENERAL PLAN ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENT FINDINGS:**

In order to support the initiation of a proposed General Plan Amendment it must be established that the proposal could possibly satisfy certain required findings. The Administration Element of the General Plan explains that there are four categories of amendments, Technical, Entitlement/Policy, Foundation, and Agriculture. Each category has distinct required findings.

General Plan Amendment No. 621 falls into the Entitlement/Policy Amendment category. The GPA is an Entitlement/Policy Amendment since it will change the land use designation of the project site from Community Development: Light Industrial (LI)(0.25-0.60 FAR) to a Community Development Specific Plan.

The Administration Element of the General Plan explains that the first two findings and any one or more of the subsequent findings would justify an **entitlement/policy amendment**. The findings for an Entitlement/Policy Amendment are:

- a. The proposed change does not involve a change in or conflict with:
  - (1) The Riverside County Vision;
  - (2) Any General Plan Principle; or
  - (3) Any Foundation Component designation on the General Plan
- b. The proposed amendment would either contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan or, at a minimum, would not be detrimental to them.
- c. Special circumstances or conditions have emerged that were unanticipated in preparing the General Plan.
- d. A change in policy is required to conform to changes in state or federal law or applicable findings of a court of law.
- e. An amendment is required to comply with an update of the Housing Element or change in State Housing Element law.
- f. An amendment is required to expand basic employment job opportunities (jobs that contribute directly to the County's economic base) and that would improve the ratio of jobs-to-workers in the County.
- g. An amendment is required to address changes in public ownership of land or land not under Board of Supervisors' land use authority.

**Consideration Analysis:**

**First Required Finding:** The first required finding explains that the proposed Amendment must not involve a change in or conflict with the Riverside County Vision; any General Plan Principle; or any Foundation Component designation in the General Plan.

A. The proposed Amendment does not conflict with:

- (1) The Riverside County Vision:

The proposed General Plan Update for 2008 will include an overlay for the South Valley Implementation Plan Area (SVIP), a planning effort that generally includes the area south of the Jackie Cochran Airport, westerly of the Vista Santa Rosa area and westerly of Highway 86s. The proposed Amendment is within this overlay. The SVIP is the refinement of the General Plan vision for this area of the County. The overlay will indicate certain alternative land use designations. In the event that one of the properties within the overlay develops, that property

will be able to use the secondary, alternative General Plan Land Use Designation, provided a General Plan Amendment application is filed.

The SVIP gradually increases density from west to east, placing the most dense sections of the plan along State Route 86s and State Highway 111. The site of the proposed Amendment is designated for residential uses in the SVIP overlay. The findings can be made that the proposed Amendment is an appropriate outgrowth of the SVIP vision and an opportunity to implement many aspects of the General Plan 2008 update as embodied in the SVIP.

(2) Any General Plan Principle:

Given staff's review it is possible that the proposed designation could satisfy each of the General Plan Principals and Policies.

(3) Any Foundation Component designation in the General Plan:

The project designation would be within the same Community Development Foundation. Thus, the proposed Amendment is consistent with the Community Development Foundation.

**Second Required Finding:** The second required finding explains that the proposed Amendment must either contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the General Plan or, at a minimum, not be detrimental to them.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan argues that development should be clustered around community centers and that leapfrog development should be discouraged. The proposed Amendment is contiguous with another application for a Specific Plan in an area of the County that has been slated for increased development, clustered around the airport and near a future college site and major transportation infrastructure. Thus, the proposed Amendment is consistent with the General Plan as related in the General Plan 2008 update, and as embodied in the SVIP.

**Third Required Finding:** In addition to the two required findings, the General Plan indicates that an additional finding, from a list of five, must also be made.

The appropriate additional finding for the proposed Amendment is "Special circumstances or conditions have emerged that were unanticipated in preparing the General Plan." The SVIP effort, and its inclusion in the General Plan update illustrate how this area is changing in ways that were not anticipated in the 2003 General Plan. This proposed Amendment is consistent with County efforts to update the uses in this area.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:**

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|---|--|
| 1. Existing General Plan Land Use (Ex. #6): | Community Development: Light Industrial (LI)(0.25-0.60 FAR)  |
| 2. Existing Zoning (Ex. #2):                | Manufacturing- Service Commercial (M-SC)   |
| 3. Surrounding Zoning (Ex. #2):             | Heavy Agriculture 20 Acre Minimum (A-2-20) to the north, south, and east; Watercourse, Watershed and Conservation Areas (W-1) to the west. |
| 4. Existing Land Use (Ex. #1):              | Groves/Agriculture   |

5. Surrounding Land Use (Ex. #1): Vacant land east and north, Whitewater canal to the west, groves/agriculture to the south
6. Project Data: Total Acreage: 164.9 Gross Acres

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Planning Director recommends that the appropriate findings per the General Plan Administration Element can be made and that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors to adopt an order initiating proceedings for General Plan Amendment No. 1068. The initiation of proceedings by the Board of Supervisors for the amendment of the General Plan, or any element thereof, shall not imply any such amendment will be approved.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

1. As of this writing, no letters, in support or opposition have been received.
2. The project site is not located within:
  - a. A city sphere of influence;
  - b. The Stephens Kangaroo Rat Fee Area;
  - c. A High Fire Area;
  - d. A Dam Inundation Area,
  - e. A Fringe Toed Lizard Fee Area or Sand Source Preserve;
  - f. The boundaries of a Redevelopment Area; or,
  - g. An area drainage plan area.
3. The project site is located within:
  - a. County service area Thermal 125;
  - b. The boundaries of the Coachella Valley Unified;
  - c. The Whitewater Watershed;
  - d. An area of high (high B) paleontological sensitivity;
  - e. An area susceptible to subsidence; and,
  - f. An area of moderate liquefaction potential.
4. The subject site is currently designated as Assessor Parcel Number's: 757-220-001, 757-230-002, 757-230-005, 757-230-007