

City of Desert Hot Springs CITYWEST VISION PLAN



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I INTRODUCTION

The City of Desert Hot Springs is currently undergoing a General Plan update and is planning to join the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) in the spring of 2011. Adoption of both of these plans will require the City to balance the open space conservation easements with future development and population growth, especially in the 3,300-acre CityWest area. CityWest is an area approximately 2 miles west of Downtown Desert Hot Springs that straddles the MSHCP Conservation Area (conservation area).

The CityWest Vision Plan (Vision Plan) holds the potential to serve as an example of how planned conservation, under the MSHCP, and planned development, under the General Plan, can be balanced in Desert Hot Springs. This Vision Plan has been developed through a community workshop process with participation from the City of Desert Hot Springs, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, local property owners, and input from other local, regional, and State agencies including Fish and Game and Riverside County. The presentations and results from the stakeholder and community workshops are provided in Appendix A. This document is intended to serve as a starting point for further discussion and community planning.

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS/SOUTHERN
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CITYWEST VISION PLAN
INTRODUCTION

2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter describes existing conditions in the CityWest Study Area (Study Area), including the regional and local settings, Study Area boundaries, and existing land uses and policies to inform preparation of the Vision Plan. This information is based on conversations with the City, research conducted through stakeholder outreach, review of the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and applicable documents.

A. Regional Setting

Desert Hot Springs is located in the western Coachella Valley in Riverside County, about 110 miles east of Downtown Los Angeles, as shown in Figure 2-1. Desert Hot Springs is nestled amongst washes and ravines carved by runoff from the San Bernardino Mountains and Morongo Wash. The steep mountainous slopes that surround the city to the north, east, and west give way to alluvial plains in Long Canyon, Little and Big Morongo Canyons, Blind Canyon, and other small canyons and washes.

B. Local Setting

The city boundary of Desert Hot Springs is shaped like an arrow pointing east, as shown in Figure 2-2. The city has significant land in its sphere of influence (SOI), especially south of its southern boundary and north of Interstate 10. The city is bifurcated by the MSHCP conservation areas, including Mission Creek and Morongo Wash, which run parallel to one another and channel runoff from the canyons and mountains south to the Salton Sea tributaries. The portion of the city located east of Morongo Wash is somewhat developed while to the west of Mission Creek large undeveloped tracts are owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private interests. In addition, the MSHCP conservation area wraps almost entirely around the city's north, east and west city limits.

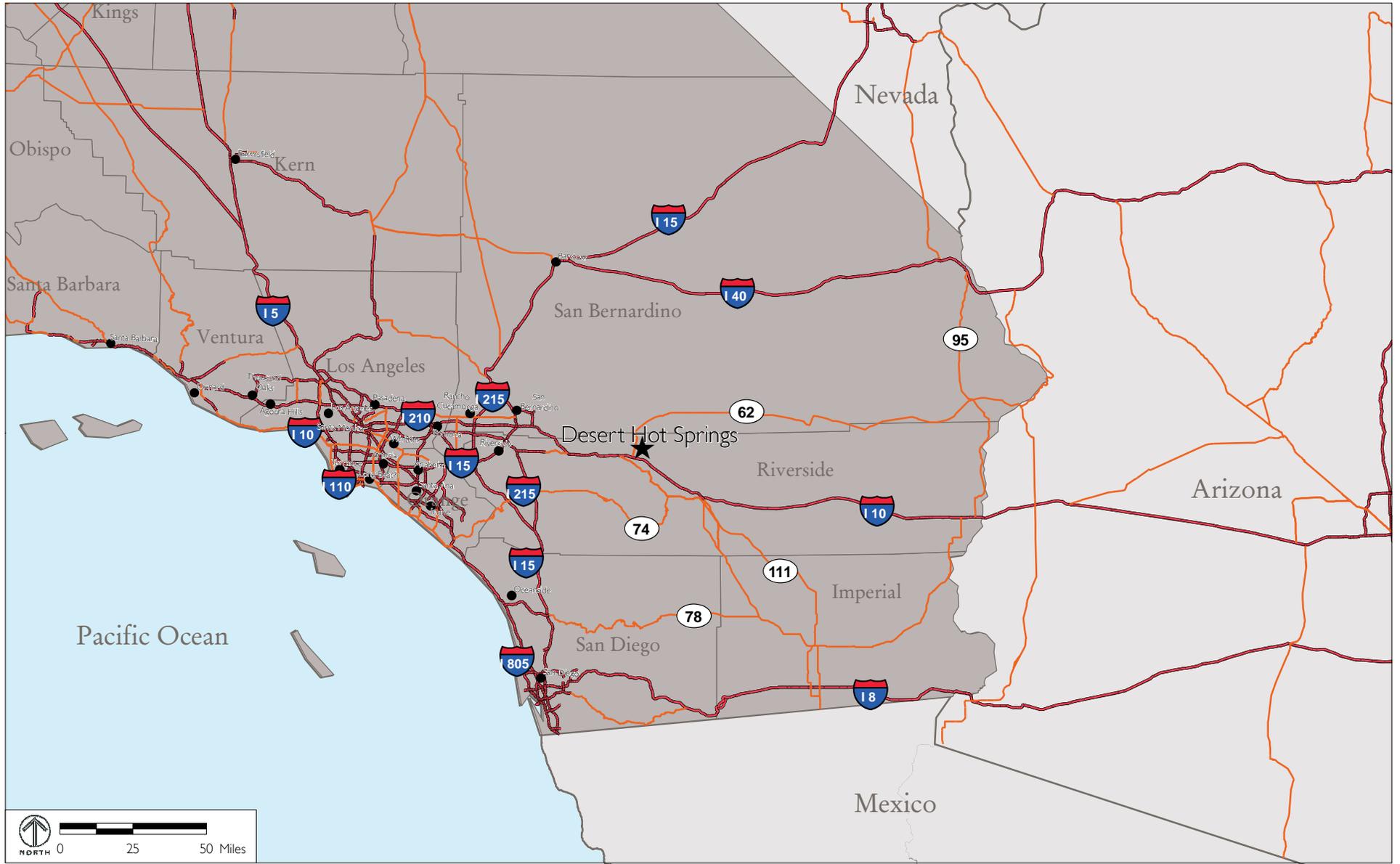
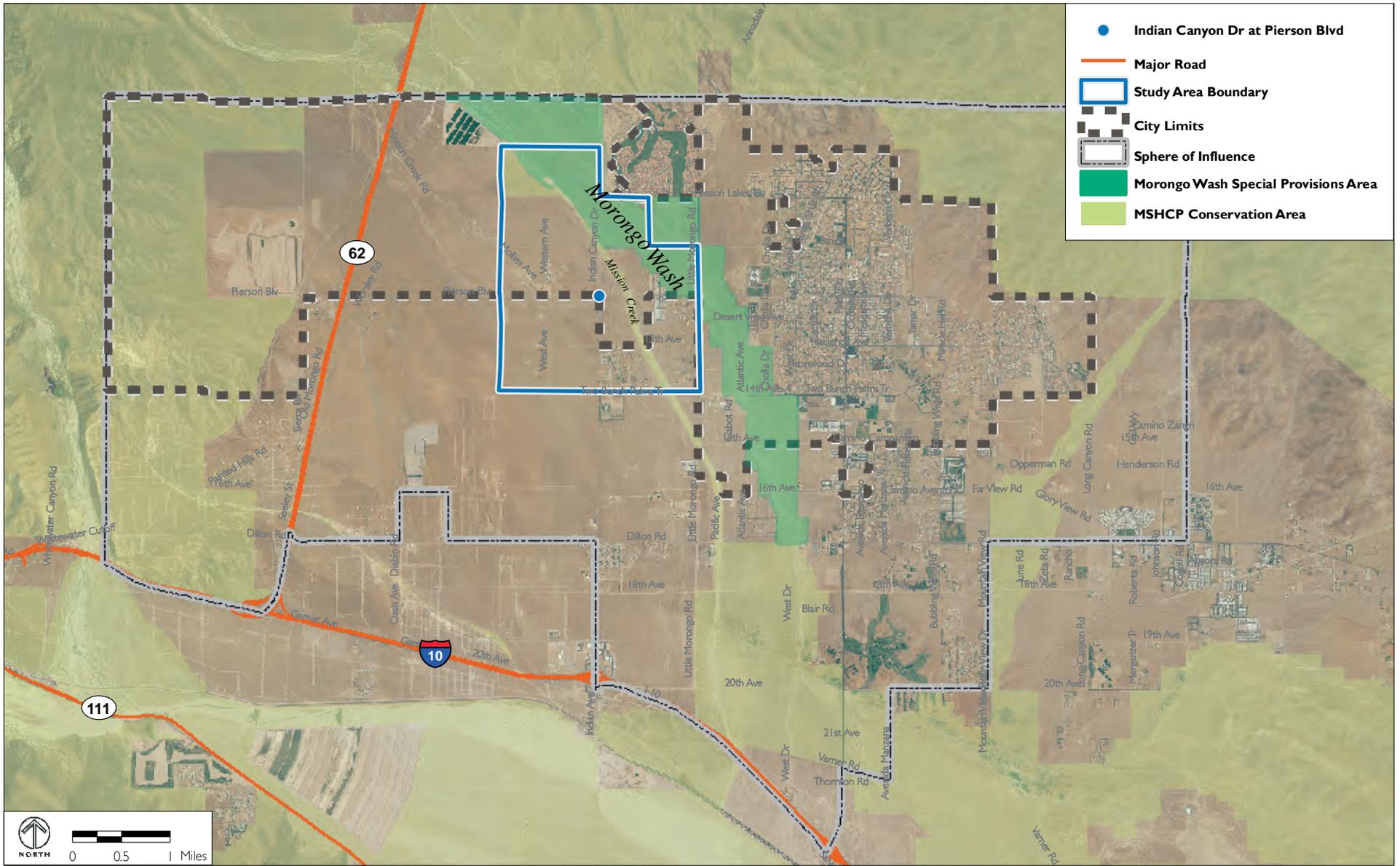


FIGURE 2-1
REGIONAL LOCATION



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CVAG, Riverside County Assessor, Cal-Atlas

FIGURE 2-2
STUDY AREA BASE MAP



CityWest is centered around the intersection of Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive.

C. Study Area

The Study Area consists of the Mission Creek and Morongo Wash MSHCP conservation areas and the surrounding land, largely undeveloped, that is currently designated in the City's General Plan for commercial and residential uses. As shown in Figure 2-2, CityWest is anchored at the intersection of Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive, extending northwest into Mission Creek and Morongo Canyon and southeast to Two Bunch Palms Trail. The Study Area totals about 3,300 acres, 265 of which are currently developed.

The Morongo Wash portion of the conservation area is especially sensitive to habitat disturbance because it is a habitat corridor and linkage. It is designated in the MSHCP as the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area (Figure 2-2). The eastern portion of the CityWest area overlaps the Special Provisions Area. The Special Provisions Area totals approximately 3,700 acres on an assortment of private and public agency owned parcels and contains six of the 27 protected plant and animal species listed under the MSHCP. Land inside the Special Provisions Area was originally planned to accommodate development under the current General Plan and now, under the MSHCP and updated General Plan, must be planned to accommodate open space.

D. Existing Land Use

By acreage, over 99 percent of the CityWest Study Area is vacant or undeveloped land, and only one parcel in the conservation area is developed. This section describes existing parcel patterns and the distribution of existing residential and non-residential development in the Study Area. It also describes transportation and recreational resources, and pending development projects in CityWest.

1. Parcel Patterns

The parcels in the Study Area are a mixture of mostly small lots ranging from about one acre in size to large parcels up to 318 acres. In total, there are 1,009



Over 99 percent of the CityWest Study Area is vacant land

parcels in the Study Area boundary, 294 of which are developed (29 percent). Figure 2-3 reveals that the majority of improved parcels are located on County land south of Pierson Boulevard while most large undeveloped parcels are generally located north of Pierson Boulevard within the City boundary. The Desert Water Agency and Riverside County Flood Control are public agencies that own large parcels within the Study Area.

2. Residential Development

Existing residential development in the Study Area consists of single-family residential and mobile home parks. Most of the units are located on unincorporated, unpaved roads between 13th Avenue and Two Bunch Palms Trail. A cluster of manufactured single family units and mobile homes are centered on Thomas Avenue. There are also a few notable clusters of individually developed lots and planned neighborhoods around Pierson Boulevard. Park West and Park View are two mobile home parks located along Pierson Boulevard, between Mission Creek and Little Morongo Road. On the west side of the conservation area, north of Pierson Boulevard, there is a cluster of single-family residences at Western and Scenic Drive.



This single-family house is setback from Pierson Boulevard

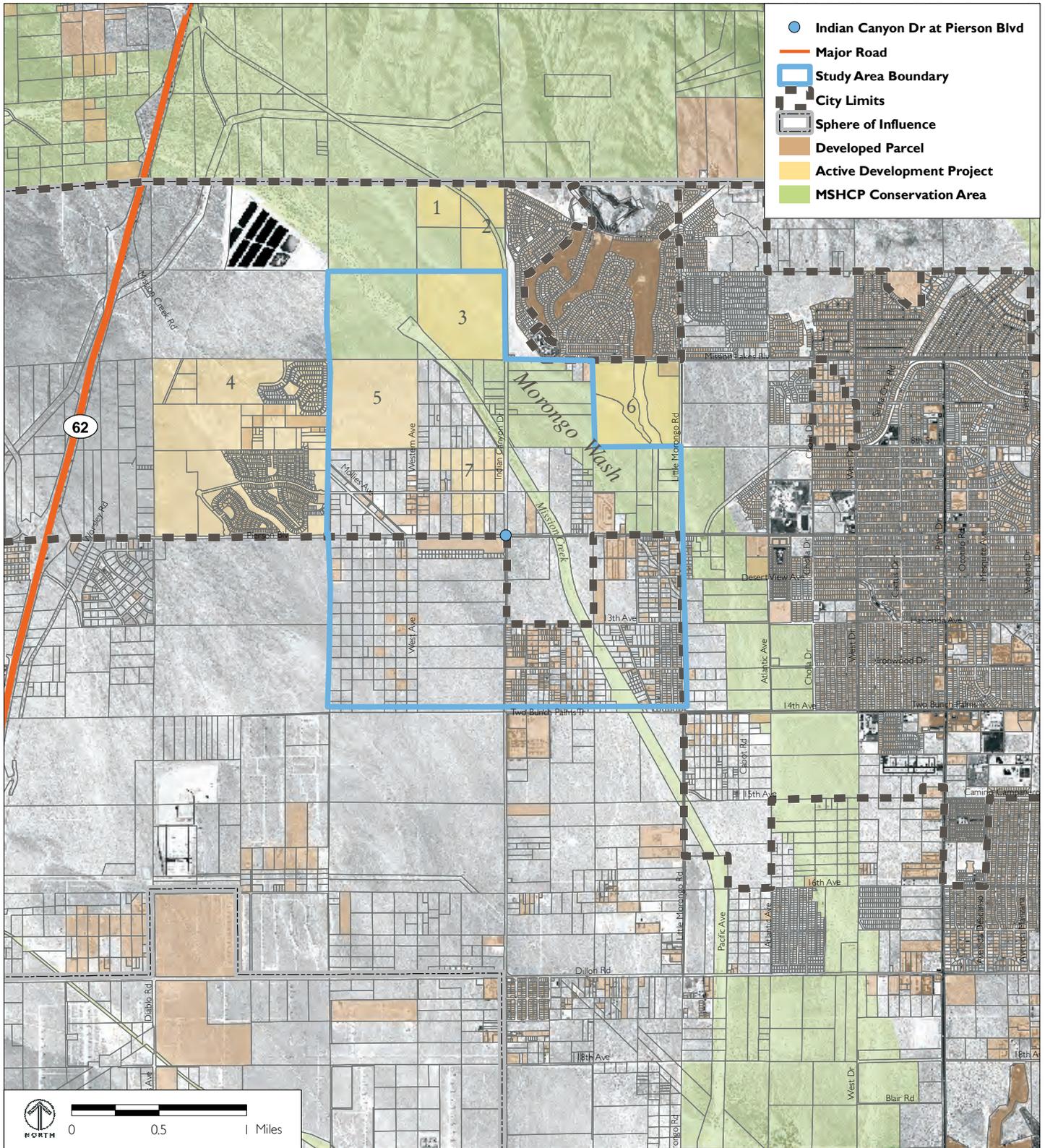
The northeastern perimeter of the Study Area is flanked by Mission Lakes Country Club, a golf course surrounded by subdivided residential tract homes. The Country Club is open only to members.

3. Commercial Development

There is one retail store located in the Study Area at the intersection of Little Morongo Road and Pierson Boulevard. Residents usually drive east about two miles along Pierson Boulevard into Downtown for the nearest goods and services.

4. Circulation

Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive are the two major arterial roads in the Study Area. Pierson Boulevard is a major east/west arterial that connects traffic from Highway 62, through the Study Area, to Downtown Desert Hot Springs. Indian Canyon Drive is a major north/south arterial that serves



Active Development Projects Located In and Adjacent to Study Area

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. High Point Estates | 5. Sunset Ridge |
| 2. Indigo Lakes | 6. Vista del Monte |
| 3. Bochner Estates | 7. Desert Highlands |
| 4. Skyborne | |

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CVAG, Riverside County Assessor, Cal-Atlas

FIGURE 2-3
DEVELOPED PARCELS

as an alternative route to Highway 62, connecting the Morongo and Yucca Valleys to the Coachella Valley. Highway 62 provides the shortest route from the Los Angeles area to Joshua Tree National Park, but daily commuters use Indian Canyon Drive because it is a direct route from high-desert residential communities to jobs in Palm Springs.¹

There are no rail lines or bus lines in the Study Area. SunLine Transit Agency operates buses to Desert Hot Springs, but none in the Study Area. Besides Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, most roads are unpaved and there are no sidewalks in the Study Area at this time. Indian and Pierson have unmarked, Class III, bike lanes.

5. Recreational Resources

Recreational resources in the Study Area include parks, open space and conservation areas such as Morongo Canyon Preserve, the Devil's Garden, County Ecological Preserve, Willow Hole Preserve, and the Coachella Valley Preserve. These amenities provide recreational opportunities such as camping, biking, hiking and rock climbing. The city's geothermal spring waters are a prime attraction for residents and visitors alike. There is potential through new development and the conservation area to link the Study Area to these existing resources through a network of trails and parks in the area.

6. Economic Conditions and Pending Projects

Small-lot single-family housing is historically the market-proven residential product in Desert Hot Springs and will remain the most common unit type built under the Vision Plan. By the time housing is built, pro-active business attraction incentives should be in place to bring new businesses to the area. In the long run, a successful commercial center will be crucial to sustain a sufficient revenue base to cover public services and capital costs. An added incentive is that new development need not be coordinated with major water



This overpass on Pierson Boulevard traverses Mission Creek and connects the western and eastern sides of Desert Hot Springs.



Bicyclists come to the Coachella Valley for the pleasant weather during non-summer months of the year. This bicyclist is riding along Indian Canyon Drive.

¹ Fred Bell, Executive Officer, Building Industry Association Desert Chapter. Personal communication with Aaron Engstrom, DC&E, March 26, 2009.

and sewer infrastructure improvements because upgraded infrastructure lines under Pierson Boulevard have sufficient capacity to support buildout.

Developers estimate that it will take about five years to absorb the existing surplus of unsold residential product in the Coachella Valley. There are seven pending or approved development projects in the Study Area that may or may not be built. These projects were initiated assuming that the period of strong real estate growth that occurred between 1992 and 2004 would continue, and that new development from the Inland Empire would spill over into the Coachella Valley. Each project is briefly described below and numbered in Figure 2-3.

1. High Point Estates is a 40-acre parcel located southwest of the intersection of Indian Canyon Drive and the northern city boundary. The project plans to develop 112 residential units. A tentative tract map was approved on September 26, 2006.
2. Indigo Lakes is an 80-acre project located on two 40-acre parcels that are bifurcated by Indian Canyon Drive. This project plans to develop 230 residential units and a shopping center. A tentative tract map was approved on April 3, 2007.
3. Bochner Estates is a 150-acre project located on one large parcel located northwest of the intersection of Indian Canyon Drive and Mission Lakes Boulevard. This project is planned for 296 residential units. An environmental assessment of the property is near completion. No entitlements have been issued.
4. Skyborne is a large 555-acre, 2,000-unit project located west of the Study Area on the north side of Pierson Boulevard. This project was approved on December 7, 2004 and is currently under construction and being developed in phases.
5. Sunset Ridge is a 155-acre project located on the southwest corner of Western Avenue and Mission Lakes Boulevard. This project is planned for 500 units. A tentative tract map was approved on June 6, 2006.

6. Vista del Monte is a 70-acre project located on the northwest corner of Little Morongo Road and 8th Street. This project is planned for 488 residential units, commercial space, and 29 acres of open space. A tentative tract map was approved on August 3, 2004. This project received approval for an extension on entitlement and is currently on hold.
7. Desert Highlands is an 89-acre project consisting of 18 five-acre parcels located on the southwest corner of Indian Canyon Drive and 8th Street. This 310-unit project extends down to Pierson Boulevard with about 700 feet fronting the corridor. A tentative tract was approved on January 4, 2006.

All of the projects in the conservation area are constrained by flood hazards. The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) is the lead agency managing land acquisition for preservation within the MSHCP. The CVCC is working to acquire properties in the Morongo Wash conservation area that are under pressure from development. Thus far in Desert Hot Springs, the agency has closed escrow on the purchase of Palmwood, a 1,200-acre site located on the north side of the Study Area. Additional purchase agreements are pending. Future development in the conservation area will be limited by the MSHCP, meaning landowners may not be permitted to develop their property, or only small portions of it.

E. Regulatory Framework

This section provides a summary of the regulatory framework that governs development and conservation in the Study Area contained in the Desert Hot Springs General Plan and the MSHCP.

1. Desert Hot Springs General Plan

a. Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is the section of the General Plan that outlines areas for growth given population needs and the amount of development opportu-

nities available. The City’s current Land Use Element prioritizes infill development and encourages lot consolidation for commercial land uses along Pierson Boulevard—an area with some existing development and underutilized infrastructure.²

Overall, the configuration of land use designations in CityWest amounts to a commercial center at the major intersection of Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive, surrounded by adjacent medium- to high-density residential that transitions to low density single-family residential. The General Plan designations within the Study Area are illustrated in Figure 2-4. Under the current General Plan, most of the Study Area is designated for low-density residential land uses.

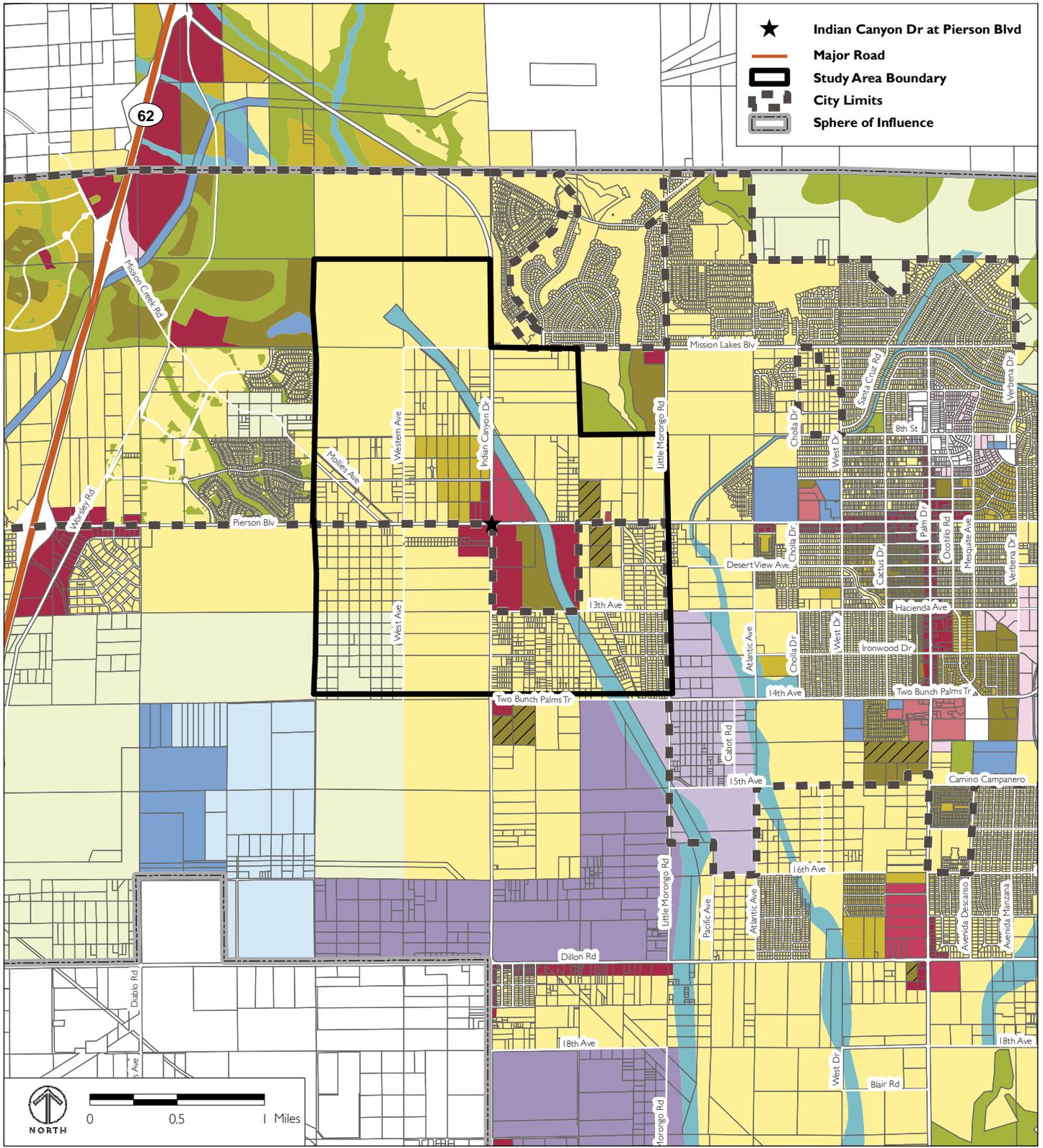
The Pierson Boulevard Specific Plan Overlay provides guiding development principles along the Pierson Boulevard Corridor and extends a half-mile north and south of the Boulevard, overlapping much of the Study Area. The plan encourages mixed-use development in the corridor by permitting development proposals with mixes of uses that would not otherwise conform to the singular underlying zoning district designation.

The Land Use Element encourages master-planned communities to be approved as Specific Plans because the process allows for the provision of amenities, affordable housing, and enhances “the low-density, resort residential character of the City.”³ Intrasite density transfers are permitted under the Land Use Element to provide space for amenities.⁴ Specific Plans can only be used if the site is 40 acres or larger, to help consolidate development interests and make adequate use of infrastructure and other public facilities.

² John Furbee, Vice President, Mission Springs Water District. Personal communication with Aaron Engstrom, DC&E, April 7, 2009.

³ Land Use Element III-16, Residential Goals, Policies and Programs, Goal 1.

⁴ Land Use Element III-16, Residential Goals, Policies and Programs, Goal 2, Policy 5.



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County Assessor

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Residential Estate/SP - 0.1-1 du/ac | Residential High 14 du/ac | General Commercial | Public/QP |
| Residential Low 5 du/ac | Visitor Serving | Light Industrial | Flood Ways |
| Residential Medium 8 du/ac | Neighborhood Commercial | Medium Industrial | Open Space |
| Residential Mobile Home 10 du/ac | Community Commercial | Industrial Energy | |

FIGURE 2-4

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

There are no industrial or public/quasi-public land use designations in the Study Area, but there is a County General Plan Wind Energy Policy Area designated on the south side of CityWest. Areas located east of Indian Canyon Drive and north of Pierson Boulevard have lower wind-energy potential than the areas south of CityWest. The designation is located within the San Gorgonio Pass Wind Energy Policy Area and sets forth policies that guide the access, location and design of wind turbines permitted to operate in the area.

b. Circulation Element

The Circulation Element states that Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard have the capacity to accommodate all expected vehicle trips under General Plan build-out and calls for improvements to transit, sidewalks and bike lanes in the Study Area.



These trails in Mission Creek extend northward into the mountains.

As shown in Figure 2-5, there is a proposed Class I bike path in the Study Area extending from Indian Canyon Drive south along Mission Creek to Palm Springs. There are proposed Class II bike lanes extending along Pierson and Mission Lakes Boulevards through the Study Area, and extending north from Pierson along Indian Canyon Drive to Highway 62. A proposed Class III bike path passes along the east side of the Study Area on Little Morongo Road. Figure 2-5 also illustrates that there are a number of trails for hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists that traverse the area and extend north into the area's canyons and mountains.

c. Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element characterizes the city as a predominantly residential bedroom community and identifies the need to balance jobs and housing through increased employment opportunities within the City. The commercial center in CityWest will meet this goal and generate a large number of jobs.

There are no redevelopment areas or Enterprise Zones in the Study Area.



A lizard basks in the sun in the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area.



Off-road vehicles are prohibited inside the Conservation Area. Protective barriers need to be built to limit illegal access.

2. MSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

Land that is subject to the regulations of the MSHCP includes parcels located within the conservation area that remained undeveloped after 1996. Landowners can generally develop ten percent of land in conservation areas, but there are exceptions for habitat linkages like the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area (labeled on Figure 2-2). The City is entitled to develop up to 225 acres in the Morongo Wash Special Provisions Area and projects have been approved for approximately 100 acres.⁵

The primary goal of the MSHCP is preservation of critical habitat. The CVCC used computer models to determine the extent of the MSHCP conservation areas.

Chapter 4, Section 5 of the MSHCP outlines a list of Land Use Adjacency Guidelines for development of property adjacent to conservation areas.⁶ These recommendations are intended to mitigate edge effects of development. The following briefly describes the Land Use Adjacency Guidelines:

- ◆ Drainage – The quality and quantity of runoff from development adjacent to conservation areas shall be planned such that natural drainage processes are not adversely altered.
- ◆ Lighting – Lighting for development adjacent to conservation areas shall be shielded.
- ◆ Noise – Hourly noise impacts from development adjacent to conservation areas that exceeds 75 decibels shall be mitigated through setbacks, berm and wall construction.
- ◆ Invasives – Invasive species of plants shall not be included in the landscaping of development adjacent to conservation areas. The MSHCP includes a list of permitted native species appropriate for landscaping adjacent to the wash.

⁵ Jim Sullivan, CVAG/CVCC. Personal communication with Aaron Engstrom, DC&E, December 22, 2008.

⁶ *Final Recirculated Coachella Valley MSHCP*, September 2007.

- ◆ Barriers – Barriers shall be constructed to minimize public access and disturbance from pets as a result of development adjacent to conservation areas. Native landscaping, rock and boulders arranged to block access, can be used in addition to fencing, walls and signs.
- ◆ Grading – Grading for development adjacent to conservation areas shall not extend into conservation areas.

The Guidelines conclude with a “Summary of Covered Species Conservation and Take Table.” The Take Table provides prescriptive species-specific mitigation measures and management activities required to reduce impacts on MSHCP areas. The Take Table also includes minimum acreage requirements for each species based on conservation models developed by CVCC and its partners.

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CITYWEST VISION PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS**

3 VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

A vision depicts a realistic and attractive future for a location that bridges the past, present and future. It clearly articulates a set of ideals and core principles with clear purpose and direction. This chapter presents the community’s vision for the CityWest Study Area that has emerged from the CityWest Vision Plan process, and articulates the vision through a Vision Statement, goals and objectives. Community members, civic leaders, developers, community interest groups, conservationists, and urban planners worked together to create this Vision Plan. This chapter is an important starting point in the development of the CityWest Vision Plan, since all subsequent chapters aim to collectively implement the vision and help achieve the future for CityWest desired by the Desert Hot Springs community.

A. *Vision Statement*

CityWest is a distinct area of Desert Hot Springs amidst a protected natural environment, where future development will be founded on sustainable and recreational principles, in harmony with natural resources, and diversely imbued with opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Future development will be comprehensively planned for housing and employment. CityWest will strive to combine principles of “smart growth” with conventional suburban development that results in a vital, sustainable district that meets the needs of many different people, regardless of their income levels or transportation choices. Commercial investment in CityWest will complement the downtown with a mix of local and regional serving facilities that provide a diversified approach to business attraction and tourism. CityWest will serve as an example of how planned conservation, under the MSHCP, and planned development, under the Desert Hot Springs General Plan, can achieve balance.

B. *Goals and Objectives*

The community vision for CityWest is further defined by the following goals and objectives. A goal is a description of the general desired result that the

City seeks to create. An objective is a specific condition or an end that serves as a concrete step toward attaining a goal.

Goal 1: Advance a sense of environmental stewardship

The Vision Plan emphasizes an underlying sense of personal environmental stewardship for residents, businesses and landowners, given the natural habitat and scenic Coachella Valley vistas, framed by the San Bernardino Mountains.

Objectives:

- ◆ Plan active parks and amenities lining the conservation area that provide alternatives to using the sensitive habitat for active recreation. Limit access into the conservation area through well-marked gateways to designated trails.
- ◆ Use native landscaping when possible to provide shade, conserve water and protect the conservation area.
- ◆ Preserve views and plan neighborhoods to ensure that each unit has a view of the mountains, the Coachella Valley, a park, public open space or the conservation area.
- ◆ Promote community participation in social events that educate people about environmental issues and encourage recreation.

Goal 2: Encourage a diverse mix of residents and supporting services

The Vision Plan calls for a balanced mix of housing opportunities. Although demand is currently depleted by the economic downturn, planning policies can be implemented in the interim.

Objectives:

- ◆ Promote home ownership by encouraging varying types and sizes of market-rate and inclusionary affordable units in high-density development located along Pierson Boulevard.

- ◆ Attract higher income residents by permitting development of outlying high-end single-family estates in prime locations.
- ◆ Increase the number of high-wage employees living in the area through programs that attract energy companies.
- ◆ Plan for social benefits such as parks and schools to support the increase in housing.
- ◆ Extend public transit services into the area and provide station amenities.

Goal 3: Provide a mix of circulation and recreational opportunities

Highly connected land uses can be achieved through multimodal transportation options that combine circulation with recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

- ◆ Plan, build and maintain a network of trails, sidewalks and bike paths that encourage a variety of transportation choices for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and drivers.
- ◆ Provide access and parking in the commercial center for bikes, neighborhood electric vehicles and horses.
- ◆ Build parks connected by bike paths or trails that are located within walking distance of all residential neighborhoods.

Goal 4: Promote sustainable development

This is an opportunity to link growth with nature, and implement technologies that save energy and accrue long-term cost savings.

Objectives:

- ◆ Protect the MSHCP by mitigating the impact of adjacent construction and limit access into the conservation area.
- ◆ Lower greenhouse gas emissions by approving projects that reduce vehicle trips and energy consumption.

- ◆ Promote sustainable development through projects that achieve certification by the U.S. Green Building Council or a similar organization.
- ◆ Incubate green businesses such as solar and wind farms.
- ◆ Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation primarily through infrastructure improvements.

Goal 5: Create a distinct community

The community should reflect its treasured natural resources by combining principles of environmental stewardship into a sense of place that is evident in its neighborhoods, public spaces and the commercial center.

Objectives:

- ◆ Provide public spaces, urban design and street layouts that enhance civic pride.
- ◆ Foster public activity and civic engagement that activates the area with planned activities such as parades, art fairs and festivals.
- ◆ Provide a regional attraction for nonmotorized sports, such as races for cyclists and joggers, and shopping, with unique stores and services.

Goal 6: Cultivate commercial growth and investment

The intersection of CityWest, at Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, will anchor a commercial center and provide a mix of business establishments for residents and pass-through traffic.

Objectives:

- ◆ Provide a mix of retail opportunities for residents and pass-through traffic in the commercial center.
- ◆ Successfully transition the commercial center into an Industrial Energy designation extending southwest of Indian Canyon Drive.
- ◆ Attract green technology jobs and train residents for “green collar” jobs in wind and solar energy.

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VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Compared to businesses located along the corridors, create lower intensity businesses fronting the conservation area to provide space for eclectic mixed-use shops, cafes and offices.
- ◆ Recruit some retail anchor venues, possibly sporting goods and stores that specialize in outdoor clothing and gear.
- ◆ Promote businesses that complement the downtown and position City-West as an additional attraction in Desert Hot Springs.

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CITYWEST VISION PLAN
VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

4 LAND USE PLAN ALTERNATIVES

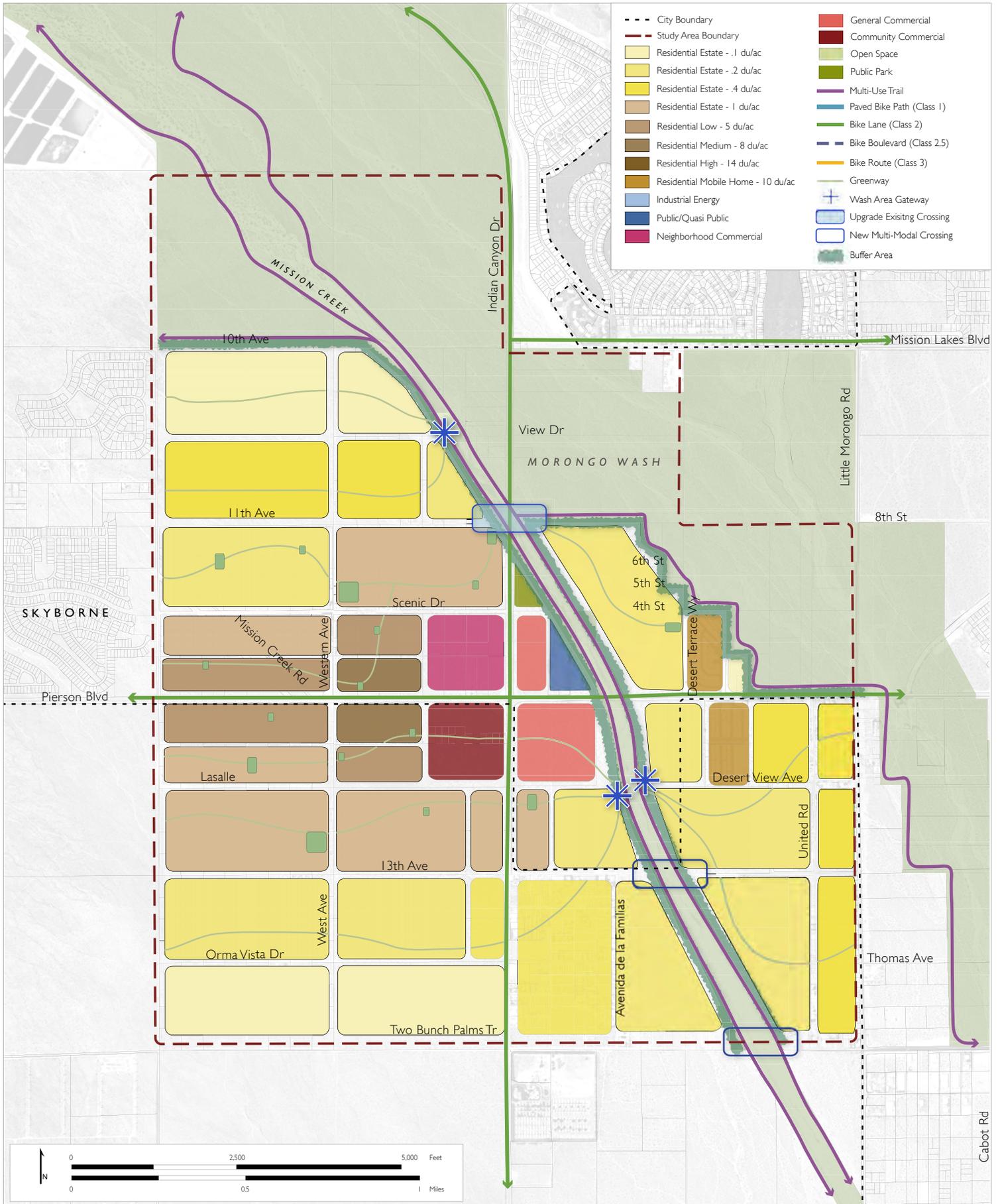
This chapter presents three land use alternatives, or prototypes, for the CityWest Study Area (Study Area) that were developed in collaboration with community stakeholders. The alternatives use the existing General Plan land use designations as a basis. Each alternative is designed to balance future development with conservation area open space and support implementation of the community's vision as expressed in Chapter 3. In addition to land use designations, each prototype illustrates the potential locations of parks and greenways, circulation upgrades consisting of traffic crossings at key locations, additional bike lanes, and gateways to multi-use trails in the conservation area.

The Study Area contains a large amount of undeveloped land that provides the opportunity to effectively plan a large portion of the city; however, the City of Desert Hot Springs estimates that 1,200 acres in the Study Area, which would otherwise accommodate up to 6,000 units, will be redesignated as open space under the MSHCP.¹ A key issue in creating the land use alternatives was to decide whether or not the City should increase density around the conservation area to help balance the loss of residential units that will no longer be permitted within the conservation area.

A. Preliminary Development Prototype 1: Lower Density

Prototype 1 is shown in Figure 4-1. This scenario calls for premium low-density residential development that draws middle- to high-income households to the Study Area. This type of development would result in more open space, less traffic and higher per-unit property taxes; however, as a counterbalance, higher per-capita vehicle miles traveled, less local support of commercial uses and fewer affordable units would be expected.

¹ Mark Staples, Interim Planner, City of Desert Hot Springs. Personal communication with Aaron Engstrom, DC&E, March 25, 2009.



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CIAC, Riverside County Assessor, CalAtlas



FIGURE 4-1
PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPE I: LOWER DENSITY



1. Residential

Illustrated in Figure 4-1, Prototype 1 calls for low- to medium-density residential along Pierson Boulevard, and density as low as one dwelling unit per ten acres in northern and southern portions of the Study Area away from the main corridor. The lower residential densities extend north and south from the edges of the commercial center and Pierson Boulevard corridor.

In this prototype, Residential Estate is a transitional designation, from Open Space to Residential Low. As envisioned, projects built under the Residential Estate designations are developed into ranchettes or estate style houses with equestrian uses. Meandering greenways provide connections for horses to travel to the trails along Mission Creek, extending into the mountains.

2. Commercial

A conventional suburban commercial retail center is designated at Indian Canyon Drive at Pierson Boulevard. There are differences amongst the types of commercial development in each designation as shown in Figure 4-1:

- ◆ General Commercial is developed into planned commercial centers with low- to medium size commercial retail and commercial service uses, including hotels, and parking fronting the roads.
- ◆ Neighborhood Commercial is developed into a grocery store anchor with ancillary shops and restaurants. This use does not permit visitor lodging services.
- ◆ Community Commercial is developed into an entertainment-serving center consisting of large-scale department anchor stores, restaurants and hotels. Approval of Specific Plan is required for development.

The surrounding low-density residential land uses increase the probability that the commercial center will need to be supported by visitors and pass-through traffic more than the other prototypes.

3. Parks and Open Space

Adjacent to the Mission Creek Channel lies a 12-acre Public/Quasi Public space. This could be developed into a destination of sorts for locals and visitors alike. It would provide bike racks and shaded “hitching” areas with water for horses as well as parking to kick-off trail excursions.

A public park is located at the northeast intersection of Indian Canyon Drive and Scenic Drive. This 5-acre park bookends the transition from the commercial center to the open rural character of the Residential-Estate designations north of the center and the Open Space conservation area. The considerable amount of slope ensures upper areas of the park provide views of the Coachella Valley.

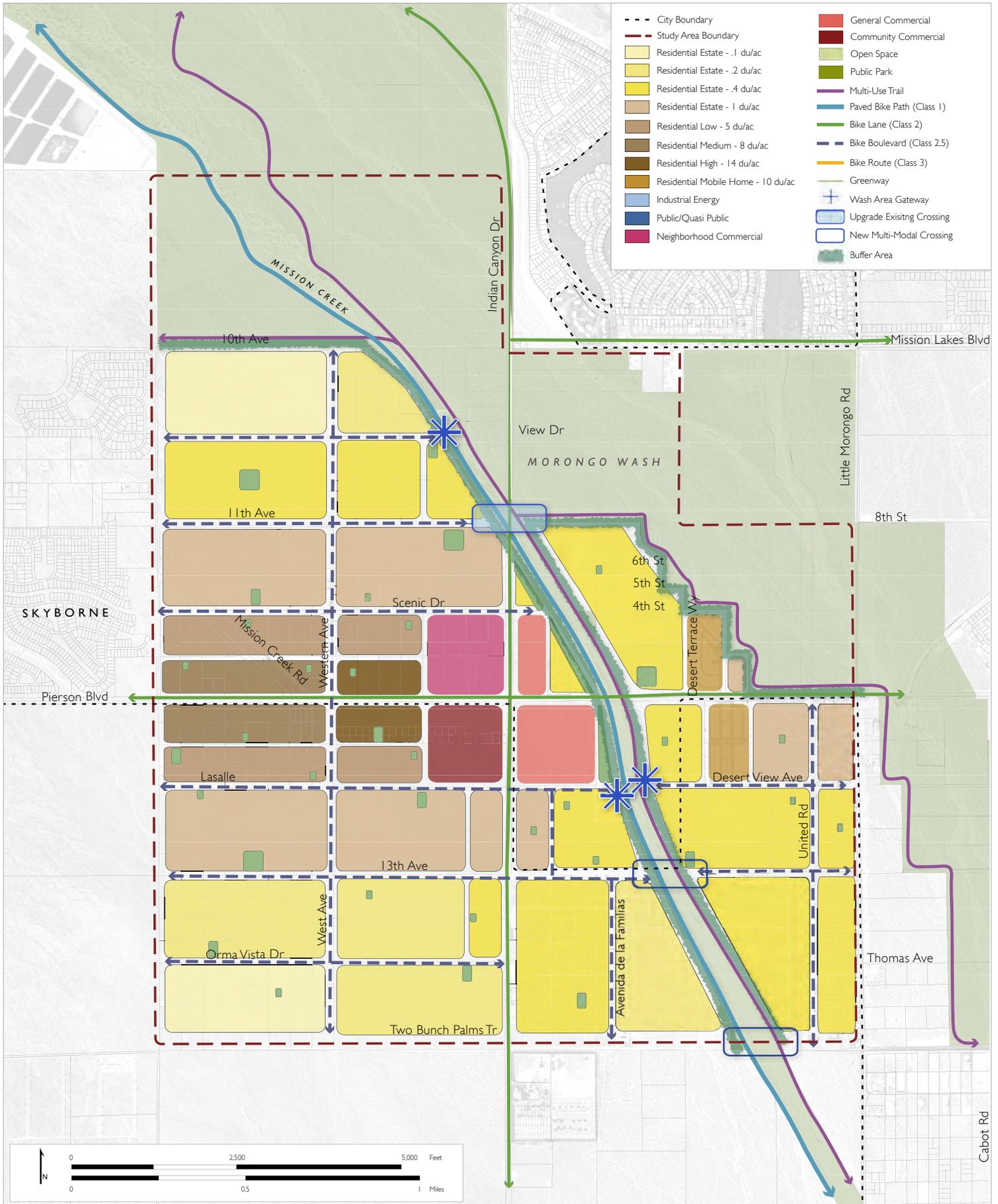
4. Circulation

This low-density prototype provides a network of greenways designed to generally meander within topographic contours and through neighborhoods, connecting to every park along the way to Mission Creek. Both sides of Mission Creek are lined with a multi-use trail. This arrangement, integrating transportation with open space, is conducive to a more rural lifestyle accustomed to hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian uses.

Road crossing improvements are located at 11th Avenue and 13th Avenue. This amounts to three Mission Creek crossings in total. Landscaped sidewalks and a Class 2 bike lane provide transportation alternatives along Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive.

B. Preliminary Development Prototype 2: Moderate Density

Prototype 2 is shown in Figure 4-2. This scenario most closely resembles the current General Plan in terms of permitted density in areas that are not planned for conservation; however this prototype does not provide for additional density to offset the conservation-area units that are no longer permitted. It assumes a mix of densities and a variety of residential housing types.



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CIAC, Riverside County Assessor, CalAtlas

The commercial center is supported by both local residences and pass-through traffic.

1. Residential

Illustrated in Figure 4-2, this prototype calls for increased density along the Pierson Boulevard corridor compared to Prototype 1, up to Residential High (14 units per acre) adjacent to the commercial center, down to residential medium (8 units per acre) approaching Skyborn. Moving away from Pierson Boulevard to the north and south, residential density decreases with each block, from Residential Low (5 units per acre) to Residential Estate 0.1 (10-acre lots) on the northern and southern edges of the Study Area.

This mix of residential ensures that the higher-density development along Pierson Boulevard provides a solid residential base to support the commercial center. Density along Pierson Boulevard is balanced with high-end estate style homes within a few blocks to the north and south. Similar to Prototype 1, these ranchette homes have equestrian facilities and sweeping views of the Valley.

2. Commercial

The geographical extent of the commercial center area remains unchanged compared to Prototype 1, but intends for a more “main street” theme that engages the central intersection, Indian Canyon Drive at Pierson Boulevard, with paseos and buildings fronting the streets. Parking is located behind the buildings, buffering them from adjacent residential uses. Traffic calming measures are implemented to increase pedestrian safety and provide space for limited on-street parking.

3. Parks and Open Space

In this Prototype, Curvilinear greenways are replaced with larger parks distributed throughout the Study Area and with bike boulevards connecting neighborhoods.

4. Circulation

The multi-use trail on the west side of Mission Creek from Prototype 1 changes to a paved Class 1 bike path in Prototype 2. All new roads in the Study Area are built with Class 2.5 bike boulevards. The traffic calming measures built into the commercial center could affect pass-through traffic for local commuters taking Highway 62 as a faster route; however, this could increase revenue from casual shoppers and provide a regional draw.

C. Preliminary Development Prototype 3: Higher Density

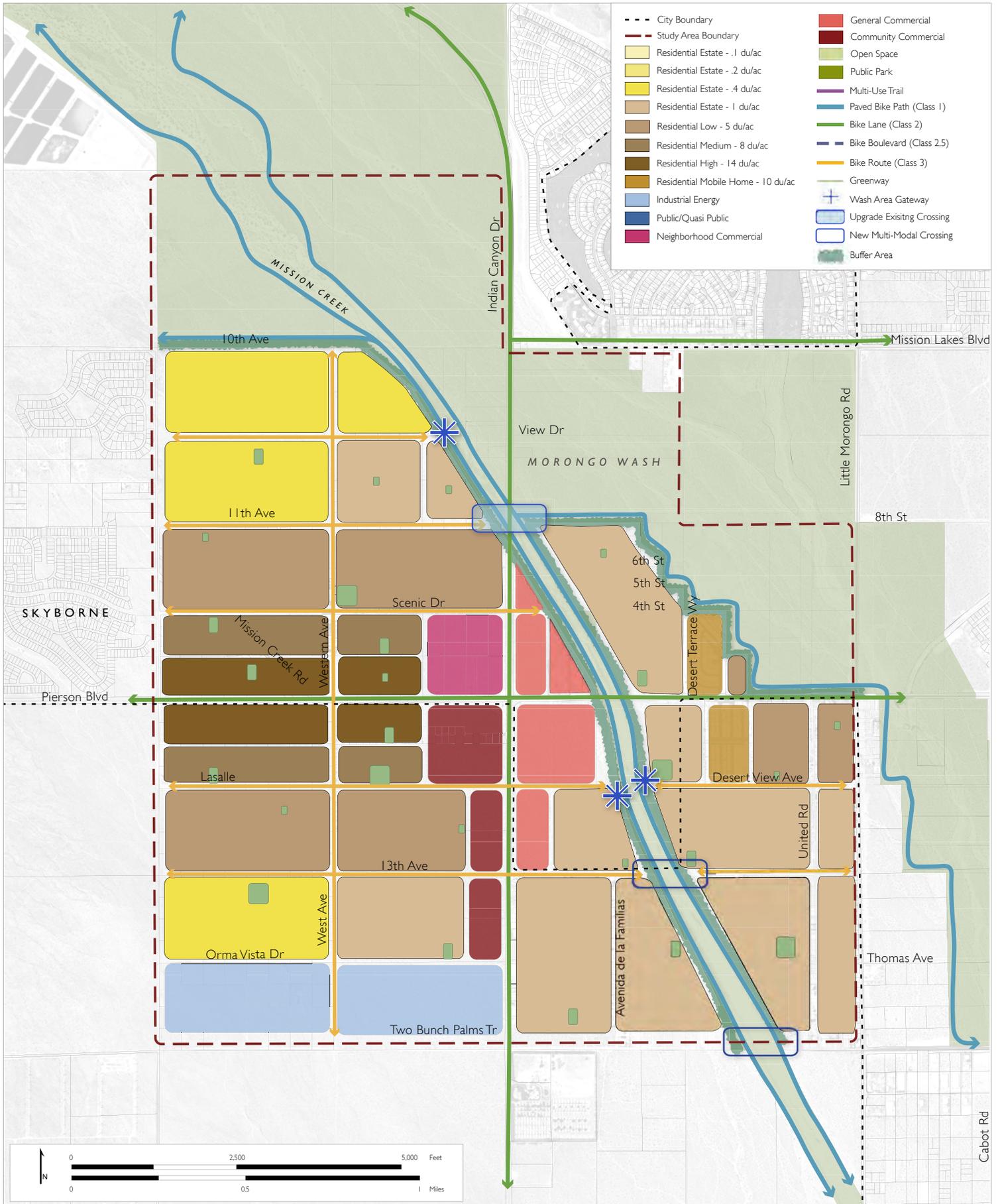
Prototype 3 comes closest to meeting the number of units currently planned under the existing General Plan for the Study Area, by mitigating the units lost to the conservation area through increases in density elsewhere in the Study Area. This prototype would suit the current economic profile of many Desert Hot Springs residents but would also push the intensity of traditional housing types in the city. Proportional to the increase in density, the commercial center is transformed into a commercial corridor within this prototype.

1. Residential

Illustrated in Figure 4-3, this land use scenario calls for increased density along the Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive Corridors. Pierson Boulevard, designated Residential High, is lined with small-lot homes similar in scale to Skyborne. Other residential areas extending to the north, south, and east are designated for Residential Low to Residential Estate, ranging in density from five dwelling units per acre down to one unit per 2.5-acre lots.

2. Commercial

Indian Canyon Drive is a commercial corridor with increased General Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial designations. Parking is located fronting the street, but the area is developed with a downtown, or village feel that embraces recreational uses and the conservation area. On the one hand, the commercial corridor plans for increases in the amount of pass-through traffic on Indian Canyon Drive in addition to assuming that the commercial



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, CIAC, Riverside County Assessor, CalAtlas



district could be a regional draw. On the other hand, the higher local densities will also provide more local rooftops to support commercial uses.

The commercial corridor transitions into an Industrial Energy designation extending southwest of Indian Canyon Drive at Two Bunch Palms Trail. As envisioned, this designation would draw upon the renewable energy theme provided by the wind turbines in the area to provide jobs in form of flexible research and design space, green technology manufacturing space, or energy-related job training/educational uses.

3. Parks and Open Space

The amount of park space provided in this alternative is similar to Prototype 2, but in this scenario the parks are centered around the Pierson Boulevard Corridor. This arrangement ensures nearby open space for the higher-density developments.

4. Circulation

Class I paved bike paths are located in buffer areas that line both sides of Mission Creek and the west side of the Morongo Wash. Class 2.5 bike boulevards that connect nearly all roads in Prototype 2 are upgraded to Class 3 bike routes. This means there are striped bike lanes so cyclists do not have to share the common roadway space with vehicles.

Bus routes are extended to run from Mission Lakes Boulevard down Indian Canyon Drive with a main station at the center of the commercial corridor. This alignment would provide service for retail and industrial energy employees.

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