



LAND USE ALTERNATIVES MEMORANDUM

Date: October 27, 2023

To: Jim Minnick, Imperial County Planning and Development Services Director

From: RICK Planning + Design

Topic: Lithium Valley Specific Plan Land Use Alternatives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memorandum consists of four chapters related to the creation of, make-up of, and comparison of the land use alternatives for the Lithium Valley Specific Plan (Specific Plan). Chapter 1, Introduction, provides an overview of the government actions leading to the Specific Plan, the Specific Plan vision and guiding principles, as well as brief descriptions of the key terms used throughout the document. Chapter 2, Methodology, outlines the steps taken to arrive at a Preferred Land Use Alternative, along with descriptions of the land use designations used. Chapter 3, Land Use Alternatives, provides an overview of each land use alternative, followed by the Preferred Land Use Alternative. Chapter 4, Land Use Alternatives Comparison, provides a qualitative analysis of the land use alternatives against a series of evaluation criteria, or objectives. This analysis concludes that the Preferred Alternative meets the most objectives, meeting thirteen of the seventeen objectives. By evaluating all Alternatives, there is greater clarity on where the Alternatives fall short and require additional attention and intervention. The Preferred Alternative has the potential to meet all evaluation criteria objectives through additional standards and regulations brought forth in the Specific Plan and PEIR.

Table ES-1, Land Use Alternatives Summary, provides a comprehensive summary of the different land use alternatives assessed for the Lithium Valley Specific Plan process.

Table ES-1 Land Use Alternatives Summary

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Preferred Alternative
Phase 1 Building Square Footage (SF)	70 Million	80 Million	72 Million	74 Million
Phase 2+ Building SF	54 Million	61 Million	106 Million	47 Million
Phase 1 Blue Collar Jobs	21,656	20,394	17,349	21,062
Phase 2+ Blue Collar Jobs	18,921	20,812	31,192	16,257
Phase 1 White Collar Jobs	12,412	11,799	10,197	12,720
Phase 2+ White Collar Jobs	15,544	13,189	23,192	8,688
Phase 1 Water Consumption	144,401 Acre Feet per Year (AFY)	123,917 AFY	136,999 AFY	92,881 AFY
Phase 2+ Water Consumption	18,775 AFY	52,925 AFY	133,292 AFY	42,633 AFY
Evaluation Criteria Objectives Met	Workforce Development; Water System; Financial Viability	Public Health; Access to Public Services; Public Safety; Disadvantaged Communities; Workforce Development; Economic Empowerment; Economic Diversity; Sensitive Receptors; Water System; Financial Viability; Policy Compliance	Workforce Development; Economic Diversity; Salton Sea; Climate Change; Traffic Congestion; Policy Compliance	Public Health; Access to Public Services; Public Safety; Disadvantaged Communities; Workforce Development; Economic Empowerment; Economic Diversity; Sensitive Receptors; Traffic Congestion; Water System; Public Infrastructure; Financial Viability; Policy Compliance

Note: Land Use Alternatives metrics are conceptual and subject to change; estimated based on assumptions informed by case studies and SCAG estimates.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Project History

Imperial County has long been a producer of geothermal energy helping power California's economy. However, it has often been seen as infeasible due to high costs to construct and operate a geothermal power plant. In 2018, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 100 that committed the State of California to achieving 100% clean (carbon-free energy by 2045. SB 100 commits a significant increase in geothermal energy production to meet this goal.

The State of California has been positioning itself to become a leading source of lithium through a process developed to recover lithium from geothermal brines in the Salton Sea region, an opportunity referred to as "Lithium Valley."

Imperial County is home to nine Known Geothermal Resource Areas (KGRAs) designated by the United States Geologic Survey. The Salton Sea Geothermal Field is one of the KGRAs and is located in the Salton Trough, near the southern end of the Salton Sea in the state of California, United States. It is approximately 103,221 acres, and one of the most productive geothermal fields in the world, and the second largest geothermal field in the United States. Numerous subsequent studies throughout the years have been performed to determine the nature of geothermal resources in the Salton Trough. It is estimated that Imperial County may hold as much as fifteen million metric tons of lithium, in addition to other rare minerals. This data has facilitated interest by the State to make geothermal energy a more economically viable resource and support the State's climate goals.

Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1657 in September 2020 creating the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction, known as the Lithium Valley Commission.¹ The Lithium Valley Commission was charged with investigating and analyzing a range of related issues, in collaboration with other government agencies and members of the public.¹

In 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 125 authorizing the state to assist in developing Imperial County's lithium resource in an area that is a part of the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area, known as Lithium Valley. Among other provisions, SB 125 appropriated funding to develop a Lithium Valley Specific Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and to distribute grants to local community-based organizations to conduct engagement related to the Specific Plan and PEIR.

1.1.2 What is a Specific Plan?

A Specific Plan is a regulatory planning document that lays out a general blueprint of a particular area of a jurisdiction. Specific Plans contain various scopes and scales; some follow corridors; some cover downtowns or areas with significant economic development potential. Specific Plans will take into consideration new land uses, the transportation network, design, infrastructure, and plan implementation. Once a Specific Plan is adopted by the local governing body, the Specific Plan becomes the legal regulatory document that developers and property owners must abide by when preparing new development applications or making significant changes to their properties within the

¹ California Energy Commission 2022. Lithium Valley Fact Sheet. <https://www.energy.ca.gov/filebrowser/download/4041>.

Specific Plan area. The overall intent of a Specific Plan is to guide development of a geographic area and regulate the land use, design, and community benefits that occur in the area.

In this case, the Lithium Valley Specific Plan area covers approximately 51,786-acre area adjacent to the Salton Sea. The Lithium Valley Specific Plan intends to map out land use designations for future development of additional industrial, manufacturing, logistics, and ancillary uses that collectively work toward decarbonizing the energy industry, within an approximately 51,786-acre area adjacent to the Salton Sea.

1.1.3 What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report?

The California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, requires the County to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) that discloses all foreseeable environmental impacts if the Lithium Valley Specific Plan were to be implemented. A programmatic approach means that instead of preparing a separate Environmental Impact Report for each individual project within a program or plan, a single PEIR is prepared to cover multiple projects. The PEIR will include mitigation, or ways to reduce or eliminate significant environmental impacts, as well as ways to monitor and report on the mitigation measures. As such, the PEIR will provide some level of CEQA clearance to future projects that are consistent with the standards and objectives of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan. This will reduce the duration and quantity of individual CEQA documents being processed in the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan and PEIR together can expedite the entitlement processing and permitting time for incoming projects.

1.1.4 Vision

The following three project vision statements were brought to the Community Workshops, where community members could indicate which they preferred and/or provide comments on the vision statement alternatives.

Project Vision Statement

The Project Vision Statement will be the foundation to the Specific Plan to inform the Preferred Land Use Alternative, the Specific Plan policies, and the project design standards

Vision Statement Option #1

Our vision for the Lithium Valley Specific Plan is to lead in renewable energy, creating quality jobs and economic growth. We aim to improve the ecologic health of the Salton Sea, utilize responsible development practices, and enhance infrastructure and public services for the community. Together, we'll foster an inclusive region, respecting all cultures and providing diverse opportunities for a better life.

Vision Statement Option #2

The vision is a dynamic renewable energy center in Lithium Valley, leading the clean energy industry and creating equitable jobs. We aim for an improved Salton Sea's ecosystem, enhanced infrastructure and amenities, and create vibrant, inclusive communities with a better quality of life.

Vision Statement Option #3

A vibrant and inclusive region that prioritizes environmental stewardship and social and environmental justice. We aim to create quality local jobs through long-term renewable energy industries, serving as a hub for clean energy technologies while preserving natural resources and sensitive habitats of the Salton Sea. Through a collaborative process, the Project will result in enhanced infrastructure and successful public services that accommodates intentional growth.

Engagement Activities

1. Place a colored dot below your preferred Project Vision Statement.
2. Are there other topics the Project Vision Statement should include?

The input received requested the vision statement emphasize public health, environmental justice, and transitioning to a net-zero economy. With this feedback in mind, Option #3 was used as a framework and altered to address the community's input for the following Project Vision Statement:

Lithium Valley is a dynamic and prosperous region that prioritizes environmental stewardship, public health, and environmental justice, aiming to lead the way in the transition to a net-zero emission economy by harnessing Imperial County's mineral resources. Lithium Valley creates local jobs in renewable energy, promotes innovative clean energy technologies, and protects the Salton Sea's natural resources and habitats. Through collaboration and inclusivity, Lithium Valley increases economic opportunity, enhances infrastructure and public facilities, and creates lasting benefits for the community.

1.1.5 Guiding Principles

1. **Leadership in Renewable Energy:** Become a world-class center for innovation and research related to net-zero emission and environmentally restorative renewable energy production, through attracting investment, promoting technology transfer, fostering collaboration among industry leaders, and serving as a hub for clean energy knowledge and expertise.
2. **Environmental Justice:** Prioritize the needs, interests, and health of the nearby affected communities, using thoughtful engagement and monitoring tools that provide resources and opportunities.
3. **Social Equity:** Foster a vibrant and inclusive region, that supports offering diverse training and employment options, quality education, and accessible amenities to enhance the quality of life for residents and workers in surrounding cities and unincorporated communities.
4. **Job Creation and Local Economy:** Focus on attracting long-term renewable energy industries that provide thousands of high-quality local jobs, while proactively enabling and empowering the local workforce to take advantage of these job opportunities.
5. **Environmental Stewardship and Responsible Growth:** Preserve natural resources and sensitive habitats in the planning process. Conduct thorough environmental assessments to minimize the impact of renewable energy projects on local ecosystems. Encourage ways to enhance natural resources through development. Serve as catalyst for revitalizing the Salton Sea ecosystem, incorporating innovative strategies that enhance its biological viability and restore its ecological balance. Aspire to be a model for responsible development, integrating sustainable practices and promoting environmental stewardship to minimize the ecological footprint while driving economic prosperity.
6. **Acknowledge and Respect Indigenous Lands:** Acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the indigenous people. Respect the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on this land and honor their contributions to our communities. Recognize the significance of this land and its history and strive to build a future of mutual respect and understanding.
7. **Community Engagement:** Actively involve the community throughout the planning process. Ensure that community concerns and preferences are considered when making decisions.

8. **Transformative and Innovative Planning:** Develop a long-term vision for the specific plan area that considers the evolving renewable energy landscape and emerging technologies. Anticipate future trends and potential challenges and incorporate flexibility into the plan to adapt to changing circumstances. Regularly review and update the plan to reflect advancements in renewable energy, industry practices, and community needs.
9. **Proactive Infrastructure and Services:** Identify and recommend public improvements to infrastructure such as transportation and drainage in the Specific Plan area that would enhance the quality of life for residents in the surrounding communities, in anticipation of future needs. Remediate deficiencies in the area, and creatively find efficiencies to consolidate the regional infrastructure systems.
10. **Distinctive Community Identity:** Develop a plan that incorporates physical features, such as urban green spaces and building design standards, to prevent the area from being a stark, industrialized complex of nondescript buildings.

1.1.6 What are Land Use Alternatives?

Land Use Alternatives represent distinct approaches to the application of land use designations in the Specific Plan Area. Land use designations are defined by land use types, such as Commercial, Industrial or Agricultural, which determine the level of density or building intensity allowed on applicable parcels of land. Land Use Alternatives provide varying options for land use plans with different distributions, locations, and densities of land uses. Each alternative presents a different configuration for the future development of the Lithium Valley Study Area, considering factors such as environmental impacts, community needs, goods movement, and long-term sustainability.

Land Use Alternatives (Alternatives) are intended to support the overall Project Vision and align with the County's long-term goals for the Specific Plan Area over the next 30 to 50 years. The process for creating these Alternatives incorporated and built upon the findings from previous project phases, including the Existing Conditions Analysis, public outreach, technical studies, and ongoing research. The Existing Conditions Analysis provided a high-level overview of the Specific Plan Area, identifying baseline conditions, related constraints, and potential opportunities for a variety of topics including land use, infrastructure, and environmental resources.

The Alternatives were initially informed by the baseline conditions provided by the Baseline Report (Report) and considered development constraints such as potential adverse environmental impacts, limited water supply and infrastructure. The Alternatives have since evolved with input from stakeholders, technical advisory groups, County staff and the public.

The Alternatives provide the County with flexibility for selecting and refining the Preferred Land Use Alternative, which will ultimately be the guiding land use plan included in the Specific Plan and further analyzed in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).

1.2 Project Process and Next Steps

Project Initiation and Data Collection

Upon the County's authorization to begin work on the plan, an initial kickoff meeting was held to discuss project information and introduce key staff, roles, and responsibilities. The meeting also served to establish the approach for completing the work in terms of defining the project schedule, milestones, and related tasks. Prior to the kickoff meeting, the project team identified information

gaps and prepared a comprehensive list outlining requested geographic information system (GIS) data, plans, and other data needs. The County provided the project team with an initial document package in response to the data request list. The project team gathered and distributed the contents of the document package to key staff members, prompting the development of robust GIS, CAD, and informational databases to contextualize the Specific Plan Area in conjunction with other relevant datasets provided.

Existing Conditions Reports and Community Engagement

Following the initial data collection and review process, the project team performed an Existing Conditions Analysis and prepared the Baseline Report and Infrastructure Assessment documents. The Baseline Report provided a high-level overview of the Specific Plan Area which analyzed existing conditions, identified constraints and opportunities, and offered recommendations for future development based on those findings. The existing conditions encompassed regulatory, physical, demographic, and industry related trends pertinent to the Specific Plan Area. The Infrastructure Assessment provided a comprehensive evaluation of the existing utility, transportation, and public infrastructure within and surrounding the Specific Plan Area to assist in determining the feasibility of the proposed project.

The documents were distributed to the project team, County staff and key decision makers following their preparation, to generate discussion on relevant findings and to inform later phases of the project. In tandem with the preparation of the Existing Conditions reports, the project team also conducted a variety of initial community engagement efforts including the Community Workshop, Technical Advisory Group Meetings, Environmental Justice Working Group Meeting, and the Niland Children's and Families Health Fair event. The key findings and themes which emerged from these engagement activities were documented in the Phase One Community Engagement Summary and considered during the development of Land Use Alternatives.

Land Use Alternatives

Upon review of the Existing Conditions reports and Community Engagement Summary, project stakeholders, County staff and the project team were invited to participate in the Land Use Alternatives Design Charette. During this collaborative working session, attendees were provided the opportunity to share their considerations and assist in drafting a Conceptual Land Use Plan Mock-Up for the Specific Plan Area. Based upon the input gathered from the Design Charette and Community Engagement efforts, the project team developed three land use alternatives which reflected significant land use, circulation, and environmental considerations.

This initiated the Phase Two Community Engagement effort, which involved the Second Community Workshop, Technical Advisory Group Meetings, and Environmental Justice Working Group Meetings. At each of these meetings, the proposed land use designations, the three Land Use Alternatives and the three draft Project Vision Statements were presented to project stakeholders and the community, providing meeting and workshop attendees with the opportunity to share their insights and concerns. Key findings and themes from this Workshop Series were documented in the Phase Two Community Engagement Summary and leveraged to inform the selection of the Preferred Land Use Alternative. Following this determination, the project team developed this Land Use Alternatives Memorandum which presents the three Land Use Alternatives, proposes Land Use Designations, and describes the methodology and process for developing them. The Memorandum

will also provide evaluation criteria for comparing the three Alternatives to corroborate the selection of the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Draft Specific Plan and Notice of Preparation

Once the Preferred Land Use Alternative is selected, the project team will begin the preparation of the Draft Specific Plan, which will cover a variety of topics including development and building design standards, circulation, infrastructure, policy programs and guidelines necessary for implementing the Specific Plan. This document will also include an implementation plan, phasing plan and administration procedures for Specific Plan amendments, Conditional Use Permits, and Specific Plan conformance.

The Specific Plan will also describe the criteria for projects applicable to leverage the PEIR or deemed exempt from additional CEQA processing. Consistent with the development of the Specific Plan, the CEQA Project Description will be developed identifying the environmental topics warranting further evaluation in the PEIR. Following this, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) shall be submitted to all responsible and trustee agencies and the public, informing them of the County's upcoming environmental review process required for executing the Specific Plan. A third community workshop will be held to present the Draft Specific Plan to the public and stakeholders.

Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report

Per CEQA guidelines, the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) will discuss the existing physical and regulatory setting and perform an impact analysis, focusing on the environmental issues resulting in potentially significant impacts during the NOP and scoping processes. The PEIR will address a minimum of two Land Use Alternatives presumed to feasibly attain the basic objectives of the Specific Plan. The Draft PEIR will be submitted to the County for review.

Public Review and Community Engagement

Following the review of the document by County staff and the incorporation of any comments and revisions requested, the project team will prepare a Draft PEIR for public review. In compliance with CEQA guidelines, the project team will support the County through the public hearing process to inform the community of the environmental review process being conducted for the Specific Plan. The project team will attend hearings, participate in County staff presentations, and develop materials to present the Specific Plan and PEIR deliverables to the Environmental Evaluation Committee (EEC), Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors, to garner their input.

Final Specific Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)

The Draft PEIR will be subject to review for a 50-day comment period. The project team will work with County staff to discern prudent or necessary changes to the Specific Plan to accommodate public or agency comments. After County review of the administrative draft Final PEIR and Responses to Comments, the project team will develop a Final PEIR for the County and provide notification to commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to each hearing. A final version of the Specific Plan will also be provided.

1.3 Terminology

Known Geothermal Resource Areas (KGRAs): An area in which the geology, nearby discoveries, competitive interests, or other indicia would, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Interior, engender a belief in those who are experienced in the subject matter that the prospects for extraction of geothermal steam or associated geothermal resources are good enough to warrant expenditures of money for that purpose.

Design Charette: A design charrette is a collaborative workshop aimed at developing a detailed design or land use plan to achieve an overall project vision. The process involves an intensive, interactive brainstorming session that unites individuals from diverse disciplines with (term seems exclusionary) community members. Unlike standard community engagement efforts, design charrettes focus on design and development of land use alternatives.

Land Use Alternatives: Within the context of developing a preferred land use plan for the Lithium Valley Specific Plan, land use alternatives refer to different potential scenarios or options for how land within the boundaries of the specific plan could be utilized to support the County's goals for geothermal development and appropriately incorporates comments from the community and interested parties. These alternatives propose various combinations of land use designations for residential, commercial, industrial, manufacturing, logistics, and conservation areas, among others.

Preferred Land Use Alternative: A specific scenario or plan for the allocation and development of land represents the desired or recommended land use pattern as determined through a comprehensive planning process. It typically takes into account input from the community, stakeholders, and factors such as social, environmental, economic, and infrastructure concerns. The Preferred Land Use Alternative is a key component of planning process, serving as a framework for the proceeding Specific Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report.

Allowed Use: The specific set of activities, functions, or purposes that are legally permitted within a designated land use area, or zone. Typically, a jurisdiction will define whether a use is permitted, conditionally permitted, or prohibited under that land use designation or zone.

Ancillary Use: Ancillary uses are a secondary or subordinate activity or function that is directly related to, supportive of, and typically smaller in scale than the primary use of a property. Ancillary uses are often allowed, provided they meet specific regulations and do not compromise the primary or principal use of the property.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 How We Got Here

Developing the Land Use Alternatives was a multi-step process, informed by research efforts, stakeholder meetings, and community engagement. These efforts act as the foundation to establishing the three different Land Use Alternatives.

2.1.1 Research Efforts

The process for developing Land Use Alternatives utilized the findings from the Existing Conditions Analysis, public outreach, technical studies, and the County's long-term goals for the Specific Plan Area. The preparation of the Baseline Report was accomplished during the initial phases of this project to establish an understanding of the existing conditions within the Lithium Valley Specific

Plan Area. It was drafted in tandem with the Infrastructure Assessment which provided a comprehensive overview of the existing infrastructure, identifying constraints and opportunities relevant to future development and circulation. The analysis conducted for these reports was supplemented by a series of detailed technical studies, each delving into specific aspects crucial for developing Land Use Alternatives. These studies encompassed a wide range of factors, including Transportation Studies, Biological Studies, Cultural Reports, Noise Resources, Airport Analysis, and Rail Studies. The extensive research efforts provided a strong foundation for aligning development strategies with the County's long-term goals, the County General Plan (and particularly the Renewables Energy and Transmission Element), ensuring a well-informed, effective, and community-oriented approach to planning and development in the Lithium Valley Specific Plan Area.

2.1.2 Stakeholder Meetings

The overall Lithium Valley community engagement program includes various outlets to receive expert input throughout the planning process. These outlets include an Infrastructure Technical Advisory Group, a Land Use and Development Technical Advisory Group, an Environmental Justice Working Group, and an Academic Task Force. The Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) were created in collaboration with the County who assisted in identifying members that could provide their expertise to advise on broader technical topics. The Infrastructure TAG is comprised of members from a variety of state and local agencies with expertise in topics such as transportation, water, wastewater, energy, goods movement, and telecommunications. The Land Use and Development TAG consists of agency officials, local representatives and organizational leaders which specialize in a variety of topics including land ownership, local government, environment, advocacy, agriculture, geothermal production, and lithium extraction. The Environmental Justice (EJ) Working Group engaged participants from local agencies, community-based organizations, academic institutions, and other groups with EJ interests. The Academic Task Force is comprised of technical experts and academicians specializing in lithium extraction from geothermal energy production, battery manufacturing systems, and Salton Sea public health concerns.

Meetings with these stakeholder groups have occurred during project milestones including:

- Data Collection and Existing Conditions,
- Draft Baseline Report and Infrastructure Assessment
- Draft Land Use Alternatives

Prior to the Draft Land Use Alternatives stakeholder group meetings, a Land Use Alternatives Design Charette was held to connect a variety of technical experts and project stakeholders through a collaborative land use planning and design process. The charette was intended to explore, scrutinize, and visualize solutions for land use alternatives in the Specific Plan Area. Incorporating findings from the Existing Conditions reports, the design process sought to address community needs, advance the goals of the project, and evaluate feasibility for implementation. Working collaboratively to develop alternative land use scenarios provided stakeholders with the opportunity to share their concerns, ideas, and knowledge, ensuring that the design process was inclusive and reflected the diverse perspectives of the group.

The working group discussed environmental, land use, circulation and industrial considerations in the Specific Plan Area which resulted in a Conceptual Land Use Plan Mock-Up. Three alternatives

were extrapolated from the ideas and recommendations generated during the charette which were then presented to the stakeholder groups and the community. This led to the selection of the Preferred Land Use Alternative which will serve as the basis for the Specific Plan and the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).

In addition to these formalized stakeholder group meetings, the Project Team met with Imperial Valley Transit Commission (ICTC), Union Pacific, and Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation (IVEDC), Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to discuss land use alternatives and transportation options. The Project Team also presented the draft Land Use Alternatives to the IID Board of Directors for input and discussion.

2.1.3 Community Engagement

Community engagement was a critical component for establishing an initial line of communication between the County, project stakeholders and the public during early phases of the project. The involvement of multiple groups and community members throughout the planning process has supported the County's goals for maintaining transparency and garnering public trust. The approach required coordination with a variety of project stakeholder groups, ongoing outreach with the community and development of informative materials which highlighted the project's findings.

Workshop #1: Existing Conditions

The first Community Workshop was held in-person at Calipatria High School on January 19th, 2023. Topics covered in the workshop presentation included land use, economics and jobs, public services, transportation, infrastructure, environmental justice, and environmental conditions. Through this workshop, community members were introduced to the project and became engaged in the planning process, lending their insights and perspectives which were integral to shaping the Draft Land Use Alternatives. The workshop provided a platform for community members to directly engage with the project team, voice their opinions, and share their aspirations for their community's development. The presentation, introduction to draft constraints and opportunities, and interactive Q&A session ensured that workshop participants gained an understanding of the project's context and possibilities. The open house covered topics from land use to environmental considerations and offered attendees the opportunity to discuss their areas of interest. By sharing their feedback on constraints, opportunities, and potential oversights, community members contributed critical input which shaped the creation of the Draft Land Use Alternatives. This input also ensured that the proposed land use designations aligned with the community's desires, needs, and priorities.

Outreach at Niland Children's and Families Health Fair

The 20th annual Niland Children's and Families Health Fair was held on March 15th, 2023, at Grace Smith Elementary School. The community event provided an opportunity for students, parents, and attendees to receive informational resources and engage with local organizations regarding community-centric health issues. Members of the project team hosted a booth at the event and distributed materials to help inform people of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan and PEIR. Booth visitors were encouraged to participate in a activity focused on their experiences and perspectives about the community and the project. They were also directed toward additional resources and online tools intended to support future engagement efforts.

The input received from the participants helped the project team identify what types of amenities, facilities and services are the most important for the community to be cultivated by the Specific Plan. This included improvements to recreational facilities, transportation infrastructure, and public health. Community members raised concerns for environmental hazards currently being experienced by the Niland community due to air, water, and industrial pollution.

Calipatria High School Presentations and Activity

On May 23rd, 2023, the project team collaborated with the staff from Imperial Valley College (IVC) to deliver a presentation at Calipatria High School. The purpose was to inform students about the development of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan and PEIR, shed light on the prospects for future employment, and introduce local workforce development programs students can participate in to prepare for roles in the emerging lithium industry.

Students participated in a collaborative group exercise to identify, prioritize, and locate land uses in the Specific Plan Area based on their importance to the community. This activity allowed the students to get involved in the land use planning and design process and directly voice their preferences for the location, intensity, and selection of land use designations. The project team recorded the findings of this engagement effort, gaining insights into the facilities, services, and resources most significant to the community. Student input contributed to the creation of Land Use Alternatives aligned with the proposed plan, community preferences and the unique identity of the area.

Workshop #2: Land Use Alternatives

The Land Use Alternatives Workshop series was held on July 19th at Lions Center Gymnasium in Brawley and on July 20th at West Shores Senior Citizens Club in Salton City. The purpose of the workshop focused on the presentation of three distinct Draft Land Use Alternatives, proposed land use designations and the Draft Project Vision Statements. The workshop showcased the proposed land use designations, Land Use Alternatives, and Project Vision Statements at various open house stations which were facilitated by project team members and County staff. Attendees floated around to the stations of their choosing and were invited to leave comments on outreach boards and provide input directly to workshop facilitators. The workshop served as an avenue for the community to get involved in the land use planning process, as it garnered input into refining not only the proposed alternatives but also the standards and guidelines for each land use designation, and the Project Vision Statement.

2.1.4 Comments Received on Land Use Alternatives

For a full summary of comments received on the Land Use Alternatives and for copies of public comment letters received, see Lithium Valley Community Engagement Phase 2 Summary. The following comment themes are categorized by topic or subject matter.

Economics and Employment

- Where and who will the jobs go to?
- How many jobs and in what sectors? Short-term vs long-term jobs?
- What physical, age, and educational barriers will there be for jobs?
- How will this impact agricultural jobs?

Community Opportunity Areas

- Community Opportunity Areas should be larger.
- Community Opportunity Areas should allow affordable housing.
- Community Opportunity Areas should allow health care type uses.
- Community Opportunity Areas should allow public facilities and public transit.
- Community Opportunity Areas should allow research and training facilities.

Conservation and Environmental Considerations

- The Conservation designation should consider protected species habitats in wetlands and drains.
- The Conservation designation should consider CNRA conservation projects areas.
- The Conservation designation should consider culturally significant areas.
- Consider the environmental impacts on the Salton Sea from proposed land uses.
- Consider analyzing a lower impact alternative that still fulfills economic objectives.

Environmental Justice

- Consider the impacts on public health from proposed land uses.
- Conduct an in-depth environmental assessment on the Salton Sea to gauge the consequences of any proposed changes related to air quality and public health.
- Ensure public health is emphasized.
- Ensure the directly affected communities described in SB125 are considered.

Manufacturing and Logistics

- Should consider adjacency issues with nearby sensitive receptors.
- Consider placing logistics in areas nearest I-10 and I-8, and an industrial transportation hub.
- What safety factors do we need to consider with battery manufacturing.
- Should allow for office space, research, and training facilities.

Green Industrial

- Should allow for campus projects to collocate manufacturing and other associated/supplemental uses.
- Consider renaming the designation to just "industrial" to properly describe the industrial activities to occur.
- Should allow supportive commercial/restaurants for workers.
- Consider the unintended consequences of biofuels and green hydrogen uses.

Playas Renewables & Restoration

- Should split into two designations to further clarify what may be developed and what will be protected.
- Should allow for public recreation.
- Further studies should be conducted on what sort of development should be allowed on the playas.
- Consider dust suppression strategies that are compatible with both wildlife and renewable energy.

Infrastructure & Public Services

- Consider microgrids.
- Need for telecom infrastructure.
- How do we conserve water use?
- Consider the need for schools, hospitals, waste facilities, fire, and emergency services.

Transportation

- Consider existing rights-of-way limitations with mobility network (utility easements, canals, etc.)
- Separate public transportation hub from industrial transportation hub.
- Include public transportation hubs in areas nearest existing communities.
- Should provide employee bus or shuttle services to nearby communities.
- Alternative 3 has the preferred/most comprehensive mobility network.
- Consider EV charging station locations.

Interim Agricultural Overlay

- Consider a longer-term underlying zoning that allows for a smoother transition to the County's long-term vision.
- Consider putting a timeframe on the transition from agriculture use.
- Consider incentives for more sustainable farming practices.

2.1.5 Responding to Comments Received on Land Use Alternatives

In response to the comment themes listed in Section 2.1.4, above, the following high-level response has been prepared. The Project team will be in communication with the individuals with substantial comments to collaborate and provide additional clarity.

As it relates to jobs, the plan includes the opportunity for tens of thousands of jobs both in the short and long term. However, these jobs all depend on the ability to establish the area as a key renewable energy center in California with lithium extraction and geothermal capture at its core and further development of manufacturing. Other opportunities that support the California vision of a carbon free future with the production of lithium batteries and electric vehicles includes needed logistics facilities and complementary land uses that are also provided for in the Specific Plan.

With regard to expanding the Community Opportunity Areas, the Preferred Alternative offers an additional 300-900 acres of Community Opportunity Areas. Other types of community-serving uses have been included as allowable uses in the other land use designations to accommodate community concerns.

Regarding conservation, environmental concerns, and environmental justice, these are key components of the plan and will be further explored through the PEIR. However, it should be noted that the Conservation land use has been expanded in the preferred land use plan based on coordination with both agencies and stakeholders.

Most of the comments related to the land use designations and their allowable uses have been incorporated into the land use designations described in Section 2.2 or noted for consideration in the Specific Plan or PEIR. However certain comments such as changing the name Green Industrial and eliminating uses such as Biofuels and Green Hydrogen we believe would limit the vision of the overall planning effort and branding of the area as a center for renewable energy.

There was a series of comments related to allowing affordable housing in the plan area. It was determined early on that the housing needs would be absorbed by the existing communities that already had the needed infrastructure plan. However, temporary worker housing has been made an allowable use in the Manufacturing and Logistics land use designations.

The Preferred Alternative has also been updated to allow for a mix of uses in the Playa Renewables, Green Industrial, Manufacturing, and Logistics land uses that will be subject to campus design standards established in the Specific Plan.

The Interim Agricultural Overlay, which focuses on the “prime” agricultural lands, has been updated to include ‘interim allowed uses’ and ‘subsequent phases allowed used’ to distinguish the immediate allowed uses from the future allowed uses once there is adequate infrastructure to support development in this area.

Several comments related to the number of alternatives and requesting a “lower impact” alternative require an additional explanation of the process. The three alternatives were the refinement of earlier concepts based on the “constraints and opportunities” defined in the Baseline Study. From these three alternatives we are developing a fourth preferred alternative to move forward to the environmental review process and be advertised with a Notice of Preparation. At that time the community and agencies will have an additional 45 days to review the preferred alternative and offer new alternatives if necessary. Also, the environmental consultant is required to develop an environmentally preferred alternative which will replicate a “low impact” land use plan.

2.2 Land Use Designations

The following land use designations were iteratively developed from a series of meetings and community engagement efforts. These land use designations have been applied in various formations within the three Land Use Alternatives presented to the community and included in Chapter 3 of this memorandum. These land use designations have since been refined per the feedback received from project stakeholders, community members, and community-based organizations. The land use designations used in the Preferred Land Use Alternative (Chapter 5) will supersede the existing General Plan land use designations once the final Specific Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report documents are adopted.

This section provides an overview of the land use designations by providing (1) the overarching goal of the land use designation, (2) the potential allowed uses under the designation, (3) campus standards, and (4) examples of the intended use. The campus standards would apply to large-scale projects that wish to provide multiple types of development within the project boundary.

2.2.1 Green Industrial

Goal

Promote industrial operations that work toward decarbonizing the energy industry.

Description

This designation has a focus on geothermal energy production plants, however, would allow for additional industrial uses that support the goal of decarbonizing the energy industry. This designation may allow for industrial plants, and storage, distribution, and administrative facilities, including uses conducted outside of an enclosed building. The Specific Plan may restrict the use of certain products, processes, or manufacturing equipment due to external effects.

Potential Allowed Uses

- All levels of geothermal
- Symbiotic mineral recovery operations and processing (such as lithium, zinc, magnesium, etc.)
- Biofuel generation and processing

- Green hydrogen
- Solar
- Restoration
- Utilities including solar-covered canals

Ancillary Uses

- *Manufacturing of electric batteries, capacitors, or other renewable energy-using technologies) (up to 30% of the developable area)
- Supportive commercial (up to 10% of the developable area)
- Commercial-scale EV charging stations
- Utility-scale battery storage facilities (up to 5% of the developable area)
- *Logistics and transportation facilities (up to 10% of the developable area)

*The project shall be subject to campus development standards set forth in the Specific Plan establishing open space and design requirements.

Examples

Hudson Ranch Geothermal Facility, Calipatria, CA; Viridos Biofuel Facility, Calipatria, CA.



2.2.2 Manufacturing

Goal

Support downstream assembly of clean energy products.

Description

The Manufacturing designation will provide suitable industrial, office, and warehouse space for manufacturers of goods. This designation may be described as the compounding, processing, assembling, packaging, treatment or fabrication of materials and products such as electric vehicle batteries. Generally, Manufacturing areas are located adjacent to major transportation systems and away from residential communities. The Specific Plan may restrict the processing or fabrication in these areas due to external effects. Additionally, the Specific Plan will establish specific standards which Manufacturing uses must comply, such as setbacks from residential designations or specific intersections.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Manufacturing
- Research and development

- Workforce training facility
- Business industrial parks
- Restoration
- Agriculture
- Utilities
- Emergency services
- Temporary construction housing

Ancillary Uses

- *Geothermal and mineral extraction operations (up to 50% of the developable area)
- *Logistics and transportation facilities (up to 20% of the developable area)
- Office
- Commercial
- Recycling centers for material and organic waste
- EV charging, battery storage, and integration to these systems

*The project shall be subject to campus development standards set forth in the Specific Plan establishing open space and design requirements.

Examples

Tesla Gigafactory, Reno, NV; Woodland Research & Technology Park, Woodland, CA; SK Innovation’s EV battery Plant, GA.



2.2.3 Logistics

Goal

Support the downstream supply chain of manufactured products for storage, management, and distribution to the rest of the Country.

Description

The Logistics designation will provide suitable space for the warehousing and distribution that allows for a variety of suppliers and services. Warehousing and logistics activities also may include outdoor storage of trucks, trailers, and shipping containers. Logistics warehouse facilities may range from 100,000 to 1 million square feet; depending on the quantity of buildings. Generally, these lands are located adjacent to major transportation systems and away from residential communities. Additionally, the Specific Plan will establish specific standards which Logistics uses must comply, such as setbacks from residential designations or specific intersections.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Logistics
- Outdoor storage of trucks, trailers, and shipping containers,
- Transportation Hub
- Temporary construction housing
- Airport

Ancillary Uses

- *Geothermal and mineral extraction operations (up to 50% of the developable area)
- *Manufacturing facilities (up to 20% of the developable area)
- Commercial
- Office
- Employee services and property management facilities

*The project shall be subject to campus development standards set forth in the Specific Plan establishing open space and design requirements.

Examples

Piper Ranch Industrial Building, Otay Mesa, CA, Airway Logistics Center, San Diego, CA



2.2.4 Playas Renewables

Goal

Promote green industrial uses in limited forms in ways that are compatible with environmental factors of the Salton Sea and its playas.

Description

This designation recognizes the unique relationship to the Salton Sea and the possibly restrictive geologic conditions, including the clays and seismic activity. As such, geologic testing will be needed with any proposed structures within the Playas Renewables designation to determine the viability of development on the proposed site. This will be further defined in the Specific Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. This designation will also support habitat restoration, dust suppression, and active environmental programs.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Geothermal energy operations
- Raised structures for geothermal energy production
- Limited manufacturing
- Underground wells and pipes
- Subsurface mineral rights
- Habitat restoration projects
- Cultural resource preservation

Ancillary Uses

- Solar photovoltaic (structured or floating)

Examples

Examples: Energy Source Hudson Ranch, Imperial County, CA; CalEnergy Geothermal Facility, Imperial County, CA



2.2.5 Playas Restoration

Goal

Support and develop creative programs for resource preservation, habitat restoration, dust suppression while allowing subsurface access to geothermal resources.

Description

Due to the sensitive resources, valuable habitat, and public health needs to limit dust, this land use only allows for subsurface geothermal activities and above-surface environmental restoration activities.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Above-surface environmental restoration activities and projects
- Subsurface geothermal and exploration wells
- Subsurface mineral rights
- Air quality monitoring structures
- Floatovoltaics

Examples

Salton Sea Management Program Vegetation Enhancement Projects



2.2.6 Renewables

Goal

Facilitate sustainable energy generation from a renewable source and establish a long-term use compatible with the surrounding land uses

Description

The Renewables land use designation is located over two existing and planned solar farm developments. As this use is aligned with the overall intent of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan vision, the use of solar is intended to remain until the end of its project lifespan. Once the project life span has past the subsequent land use shall revert to the land use designation surrounding the majority of the area.

Interim Allowed Uses

- Solar farm

Subsequent Phases Allowed Uses

- Logistics*
- Manufacturing*

*Depending on the land use designation surrounding the majority of the area.

Examples

Ormat Wister Solar, Imperial County, CA; Midway Solar Farm, Imperial County, CA



2.2.7 Conservation

Goal

To strategically preserve areas for conservation, preservation, restoration, and mitigation projects; intended to be retained for restoration efforts along the Salton Sea or other areas with environmental benefits. Identifies existing and new areas for mitigation, restoration projects, State and Federal land management areas.

Description

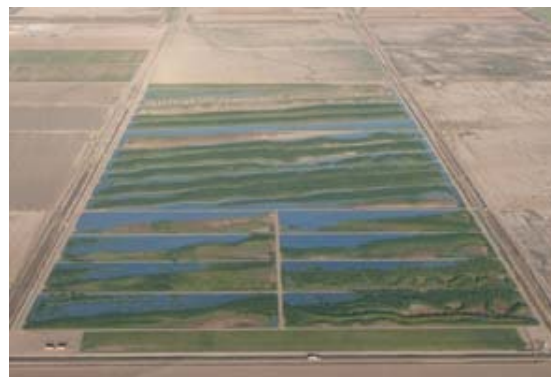
The Conservation land use designation is intended to fully protect conserved and/or restored critical habitat and mitigation lands. The designation would contain areas under existing contract by the Imperial Irrigation District for restoration and mitigation efforts. IID mitigation lands are predominantly adjacent to the Salton Sea, however there is another area south of Niland. The Conservation land use designation may also include new areas to be utilized for Salton Sea rehabilitation projects, mitigation lands, and restorative initiatives.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Conservation
- Restoration
- Mitigation land
- Subsurface geothermal wells
- Subsurface mineral rights
- Active use trail to provide community connection to Salton Sea

Examples

Species Conservation Habitat Project, Salton Sea, CA; IID Mitigation Lands, Calipatria, CA



2.2.8 Floodway

Goal

To preserve and enhance floodplains and floodways to improve storm water quality and environmental health, and protect future development from hydrologic events.

Description

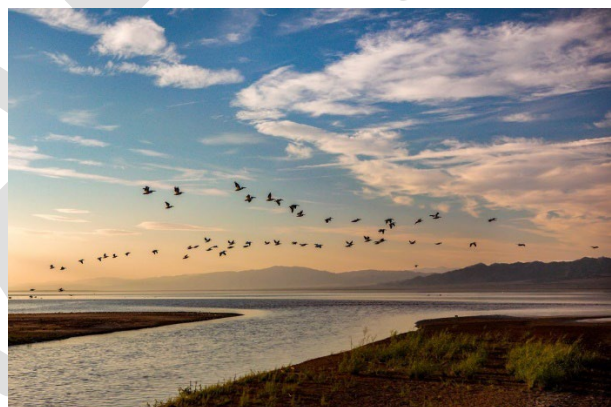
The Floodway designation identifies a floodplain area associated with the New River and Alamo River which flow south to north into the Salton Sea. The Floodway designation covers an approximately 950-foot buffer (475 feet on each side) on the Alamo River and a 785-foot buffer (392.5 feet on each side) on the New River. This designation will serve as permanent open space within the Specific Plan area.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Riparian restoration
- Native riparian habitat
- Passive recreation such as picnic areas and trails

Examples

New River, Imperial County, CA, Alamo River, Imperial County, CA



2.2.9 Community Opportunity Areas

Goal

Support community needs from the nearby residential areas while providing needed uses for the workforce and incoming industry.

Description

The Community Opportunity Areas will cater to the needs of the surrounding communities and the demands of incoming industry. This designation will allow for a variety of uses that may act as pedestrian friendly business cores and social gathering areas for the Lithium Valley employee population. The Community Opportunity Areas may be further refined and planned in collaboration with the neighboring communities of Niland and Calipatria through the Specific Plan process to ensure these area properly meet the community's needs.

The Community Opportunity Areas may offer recreational uses. The size and extent of the recreation facilities and park land may be based on both the extent of the workforce projected for the area and the needs of the communities. Uses could include outdoor recreation such as parks,

campgrounds, hunting grounds, nature areas, as well as indoor recreation such as recreation centers and indoor sport facilities.

The Community Opportunity Areas may offer future public infrastructure facilities like water and wastewater facilities depending on project needs. These could include a site to build a new wastewater facility that handles all sewage treatment from the various land uses identified in the Specific Plan. It may also include a water treatment plant for potable water for future workers at the various renewable energy, industrial and other land uses.

The Community Opportunity Areas may also offer public services such as a fire station. The precise timing and location for the construction of necessary public services will be determined by several factors, including the phasing of development, and the location and size of existing facilities.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Restaurants and catering
- Markets
- Parks
- Civic uses
- Commercial Recreational (gyms, family recreation establishments)
- Health care facilities
- Childcare facilities
- Public services
- Workforce education and training center
- Employment office
- Convention center
- Temporary construction housing
- Hotels
- Entertainment
- Passive Open Space
- Public transit hub
- Government agency satellite offices for coordination and monitoring
- Public art installations

Ancillary Uses

- Gas stations
- EV charging, infrastructure battery storage, and integration with these systems

Examples

Shopping Center, Las Vegas, NV, Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Pavilion, El Centro, CA; Wastewater Treatment Plant, El Centro, CA, Red Hill Marina County Park, Calipatria, CA



2.2.10 Interim Agricultural Overlay

Goal

Designate a large area to be retained as agriculture until there is a need to transition to industry-driven uses outside their initial land use designated areas.

Description

Includes existing agricultural lands that are actively involved with agricultural crop production and animal keeping, including aquaculture, dairies, feed lots, and animal sales yards as a primary use. Implementing zoning may regulate numbers of animals per acre, minimum lot size for animal keeping, or setbacks from property lines for animal enclosures.

Under the Specific Plan, the County may establish policies that temporarily modify development standards for interim uses provided a sunset date is established and findings are made that the interim use does not impact permanent development within Lithium Valley.

Allowed uses for this designation are broken into Interim Allowed Uses and Subsequent Phases Allowed Uses. Subsequent phases allowed uses will be considered once infrastructure has been expanded to support such uses.

Interim Allowed Uses

- Uses allowed under the Imperial County Heavy Agriculture land use
- Solar
- Agrivoltaics

Subsequent Phases Allowed Uses

- Green Industrial
- Manufacturing
- Commercial along Forrester Road

Examples

Agricultural Farming Operations, Brawley, CA; Mount Signal Solar Power Plant, Imperial County



2.2.11 Industrial Transportation and Rail Hub

Goal

To provide a central location for an exchange of cargo between rail and trucks.

Description

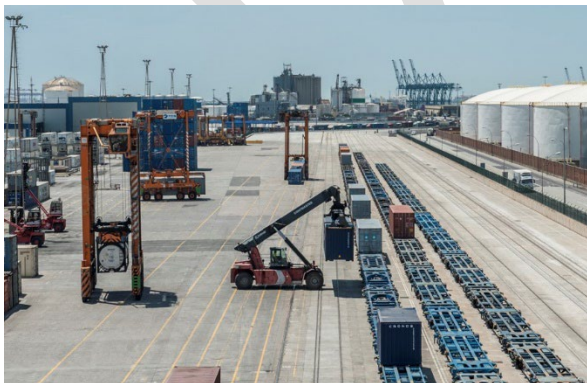
A central location for rail connections either along the existing rail line or a spur extension. A place where cargo is exchanged between transport modes. Another type of transportation hub may be utilized for passenger travel such as buses and shuttles that connect north end communities to training and job centers.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Rail, truck, and transit connections to occur in a convenient location.
- EV charging, battery storage, and integration with these systems

Examples

APM Terminals, Barcelona, ESP, Maschen Marshalling Yard, Seevetal, GER



2.2.12 Public Transportation Hub

Goal

To provide central locations for public transportation that can serve the workforce and surrounding communities.

Description

Another type of transportation hub may be utilized for passenger travel such as buses and shuttles that connect north end communities to training and job centers.

Potential Allowed Uses

- Bus shuttles
- Bus stops
- Supportive commercial
- Park and ride facilities
- EV charging, battery storage, and integration to these systems

Examples

San Joaquin RTD All-Electric Bus, Stockton, CA, Imperial Valley Transit, Imperial, CA



2.3 Phasing

Given the scale of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan Area and unpredictable market demands, employing a phased approach for development is essential for the project's successful implementation. Phasing involves dividing the project area into manageable stages for select land use designations, ensuring that subsequent phases are contingent upon the completion of specific milestones, such as a certain percentage of the preliminary phase being built out. This phased strategy acts as a dynamic incentive for focusing development and investment into key areas. This approach helps channel resources and efforts strategically, facilitating a more focused, efficient, and cohesive development process.

In the context of goods movement, connected infrastructure, and community development, phasing is critical. By concentrating initial efforts in designated focus areas near transportation hubs and key transportation corridors, goods movement can be optimized, and communities will have improved access to employment centers. This interconnectedness is critical for efficient transportation and streamlined supply chain logistics. This also represents the more cost-effective and environmentally conscious circulation alternative. Additionally, community development initiatives, such as healthcare facilities, recreational spaces, and temporary workforce housing can be integrated into these focus areas.

By conditioning subsequent phases on the completion of necessary infrastructure, which will be formally outlined in the Specific Plan, the project can adapt to evolving market demand and economic interest. This adaptive approach ensures that development aligns with dynamic market trends and demands, making the Lithium Valley Specific Plan a more proactive and resilient initiative.

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3. LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Land Use Alternative #1: North-South Circulation/Manufacturing-focused

Land Use Alternative #1 emphasizes a North-South circulation and goods movement transportation system leveraged by manufacturing focused development adjacent to existing geothermal sites within the Specific Plan Area. The land use plan proposes a rail spur from the existing freight line located along Highway 111 which would run North-South parallel to and in between English Road and Brandt Road. South of Sinclair Road, the proposed rail spur turns East to West, connecting Green Industrial and Manufacturing land use designations. English Road would serve as a main North-South transportation corridor for commercial trucking vehicles transporting goods from manufacturing sites located adjacent to Sinclair Road. Phase Two manufacturing designations are located between the proposed rail line and English Road, intended to leverage the corridors to transport manufactured goods north toward Highway 111.

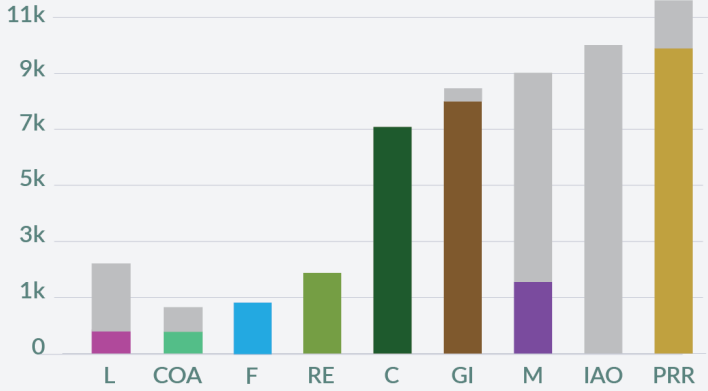
Sinclair Road would serve as the main East-West transportation corridor which would connect Green Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics Development land use designations. Logistics Development land use designations are located between the rail line which borders the Specific Plan Area and Highway 111. Logistics warehouses, intended for the storage, assembly, and processing of manufactured products, would leverage Highway 111 and the freight network to distribute goods. The Commercial Hub would be located at the intersection of Sinclair Road and Highway 111, providing a central business location for industrial, manufacturing and logistics workers to purchase goods along the circulation routes.

A Transportation Hub would be located at the intersection of Sinclair Road and the rail spur, facilitating intermodal exchange of goods between rail and commercial trucking vehicles. The Playas Renewables & Restoration designation focuses on preserving and restoring sensitive biological and cultural resources along the Salton Sea while promoting renewable energy operations within the Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA). Divided by the 2025 Salton Sea shoreline projection, Phase One and Two Playas designations are located west of the Green Industrial zones. In the southwestern portion of the Specific Plan Area, this alternative includes an Interim Agricultural Overlay, preserving Prime Farmland, allowing for agricultural operations and pre-zoning for alternative uses as development progresses. Community Opportunity Areas, placed nearby Calipatria and Niland along Highway 111, cater to the needs of the communities and the demands of incoming industry. As requested by community members during outreach efforts, these areas were increased throughout all three alternatives as the plans evolved. Conservation lands and Renewable Energy operations within the Specific Plan Area are preserved through their appropriate designations throughout all three alternatives.

Land Use Chart

The following chart displays acreages of the proposed land uses. Colored segments are anticipated phase 1 development and grey segments are phase 2+ development.

- L = Logistics
- COA = Community Opportunity Areas
- F = Floodway
- RE = Renewable Energy
- C = Conservation
- GI = Green Industrial
- M = Manufacturing
- IAO = Interim Agricultural Overlay
- PRR = Playas Renewables & Restoration



Phase 1 Metrics

70 M



Building SF

21,656



Blue Collar Jobs

12,412



White Collar Jobs

144,401



Water Consumption
AFY

Phase 2+ Metrics

54 M

18,921

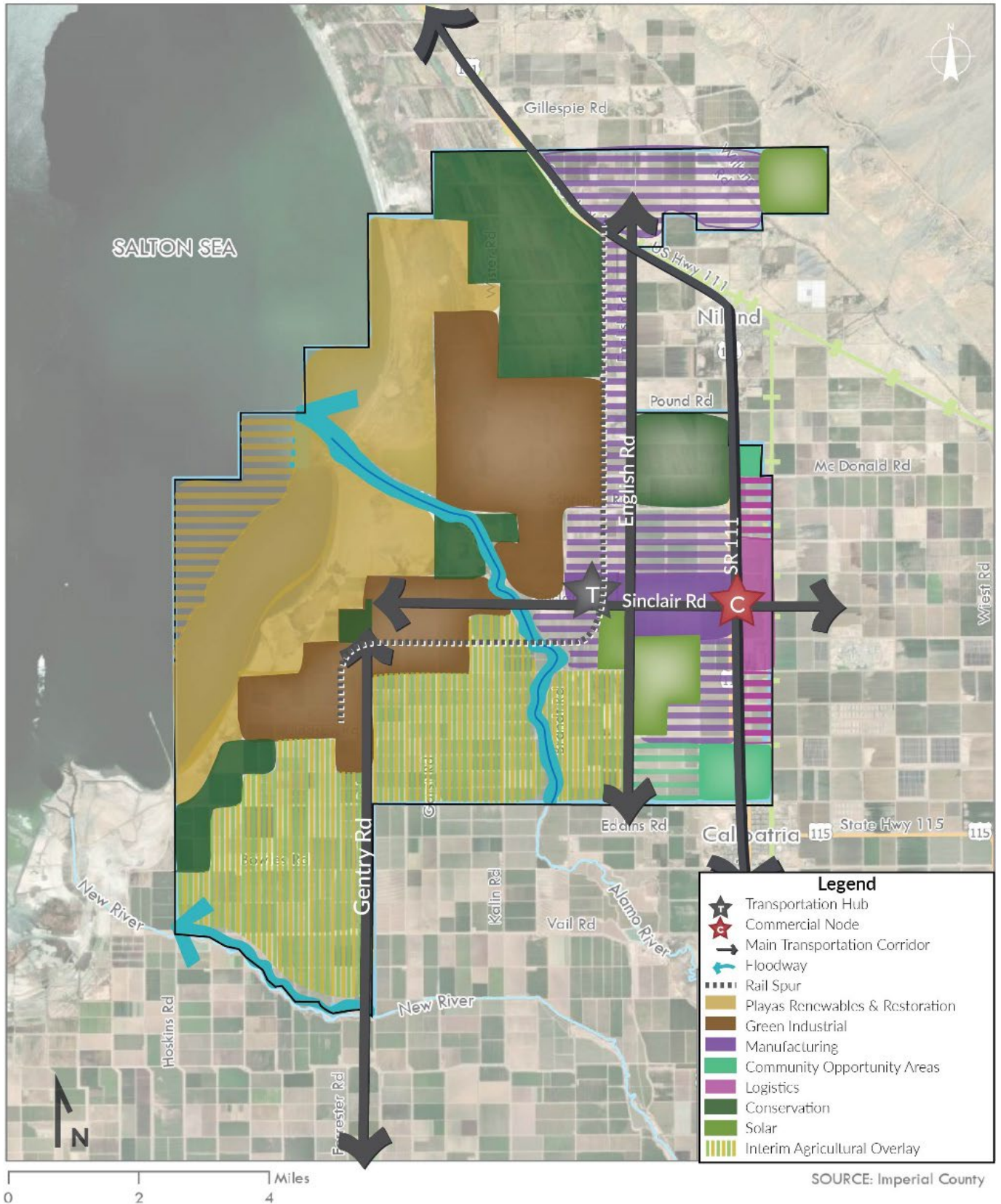
15,544

18,775

Land Use Alternative metrics are conceptual and subject to change; estimated based on assumptions informed by case studies and SCAG estimates.

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Alternative #1



3.2 Land Use Alternative #2: East-West Circulation/Logistics and Manufacturing Balanced

Land Use Alternative #2 takes a distinctive direction by emphasizing an East-West transportation and rail system, assuming demand for logistics will be predominantly addressed onsite. This alternative places a prominent focus on synergies between the project's industrial, manufacturing, and logistical components, promoting the project's economic feasibility. In this alternative, transportation dynamics shift through a proposed horizontal rail spur along Hazard Road between Brandt Road and the existing rail line on the eastern side of the Specific Plan Area. This alternative also establishes a Transportation Hub at the junction of Brandt Road and the proposed rail spur, serving as a nexus for goods exchange between rail and commercial trucking vehicles.

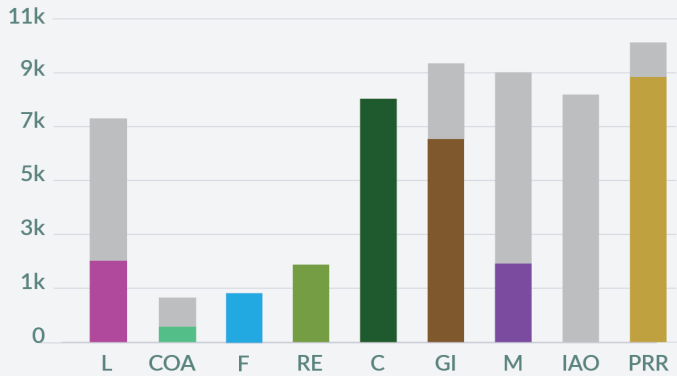
In this scenario, Davis Road is identified as a main North-South transportation corridor, linking Sinclair Road and Highway 111 through the proposed Green Industrial zones. This strategic connection allows trucks to transport goods from industrial activities without entering Niland, also reducing traffic on Highway 111 between Calipatria and Niland. Pound Road is proposed as another East-West transportation connection between Highway 111 and Davis Road, creating additional routes for trucks to bypass Niland. Eddins Road is also proposed as an East-West conduit just south of the Specific Plan Area, connecting Gentry Road with Calipatria. This road's identification as a main corridor demonstrates a commitment to creating an integrated transportation network which improves access and connectivity between communities and industrial sites.

Alternative #2 strategically places commercial hubs within the Community Opportunity Areas, promoting business and increasing job opportunities for the communities of Calipatria and Niland. This scenario maintains the Interim Agricultural Overlay for existing Prime Farmland but expands areas for alternative uses, assuming increased buildout for development. The Playas Renewables and Restoration, Conservation and Renewable Energy designations remain consistent in this plan. Overall, Land Use Alternative #2 promotes the goals of the Specific Plan through a transportation network which balances industrial growth, accessibility, and community-centric development.

Land Use Chart

The following chart displays acreages of the proposed land uses. Colored segments are anticipated phase 1 development and grey segments are phase 2+ development.

L = Logistics
 COA = Community Opportunity Areas
 F = Floodway
 RE = Renewable Energy
 C = Conservation
 GI = Green Industrial
 M = Manufacturing
 IAO = Interim Agricultural Overlay
 PRR = Playas Renewables & Restoration



Phase 1 Metrics

80 M



Building SF

20,394



Blue Collar Jobs

11,799



White Collar Jobs

123,917



Water Consumption
AFY

Phase 2+ Metrics

61 M

20,812

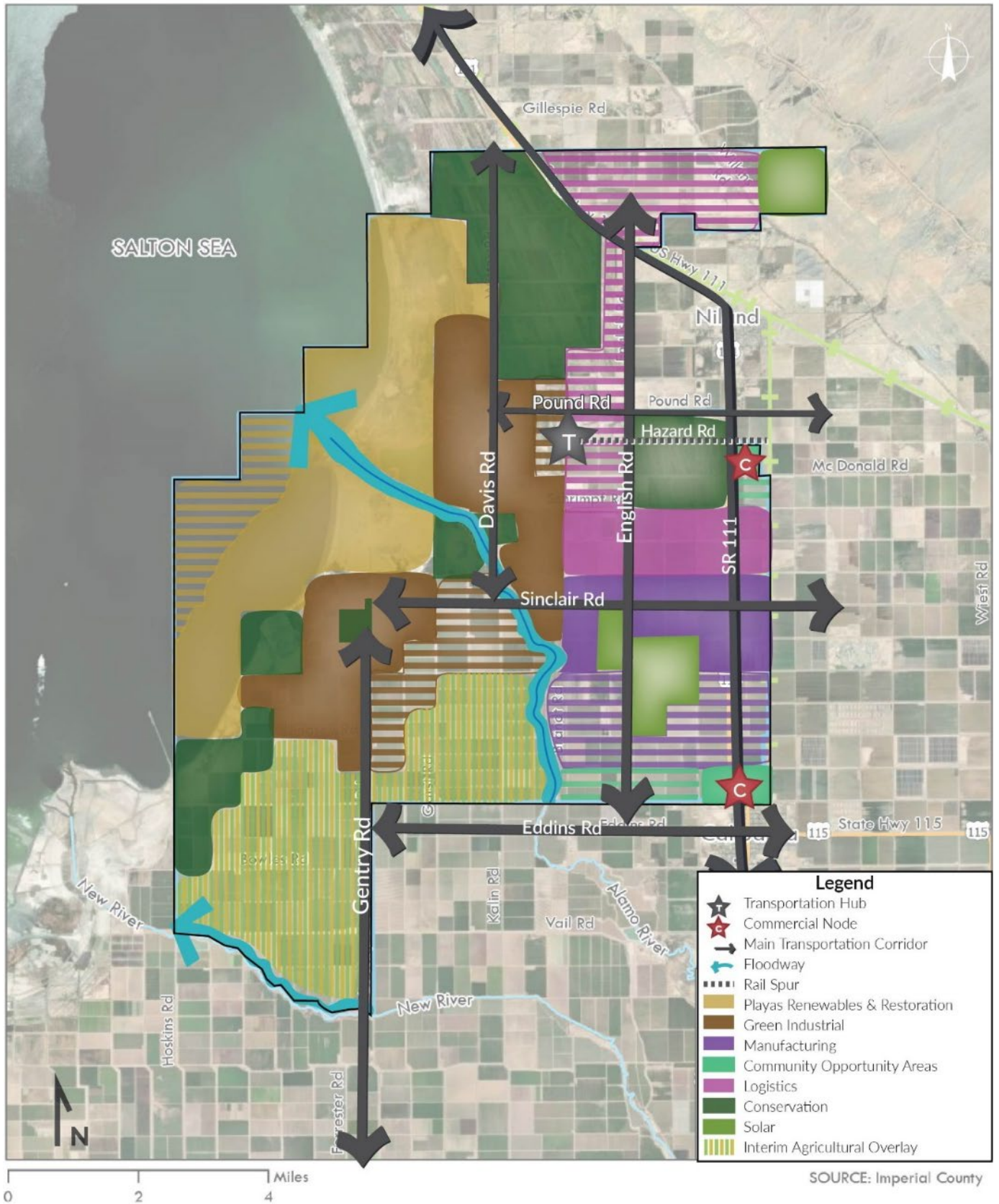
13,189

52,925

Land Use Alternative metrics are conceptual and subject to change; estimated based on assumptions informed by case studies and SCAG estimates.

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Alternative #2



3.3 Land Use Alternative #3: North-South and East-West Connections, Highest Manufacturing and Logistics Buildout

Building upon the principles of Land Use Alternative #2, Land Use Alternative #3 proposes the highest assumed buildout scenario which leverages the same main transportation corridors as Alternative #2, but introduces distinct features intended to diversify options for development. Notably, this alternative proposes a rail spur which travels East-West from the existing rail line along Hazard Road then turns North-South toward Highway 111 west of English Road. The junction leverages a Transportation Hub intended for goods exchange between rail and commercial trucking vehicles. A primary benefit of this proposed rail spur is proximity to lithium and battery facilities planned to be established in the northern portion of the Specific Plan Area near the Salton Sea. The rail spur is integral for industrial facilities to streamline distribution of lithium and battery products with minimal interruption by other manufacturing and logistics components of the supply chain.

Much like Alternative #2, Alternative #3 proposes a circulation system intended to optimize synergies between industrial, manufacturing, and logistics uses, while also creating a variety of travel routes for nearby communities to access jobs. Davis Road continues to serve as a main North-South transportation corridor, strategically connecting Sinclair Road and Highway 111 via the proposed Green Industrial zones. This corridor not only streamlines the movement of goods but also minimizes traffic through Niland, contributing to smoother local traffic flow. Pound Road retains its function as a main East-West transportation corridor, providing alternative routes for trucks to bypass Niland and access the Transportation Hub. Eddins Road is proposed as a main East-West transportation corridor, facilitating connectivity between Gentry Road and Calipatria toward Green Industrial zones. This enhances access to industrial jobs and creates alternative routes for commuters to access without increasing traffic in the critical Phase One Manufacturing and Logistics zones.

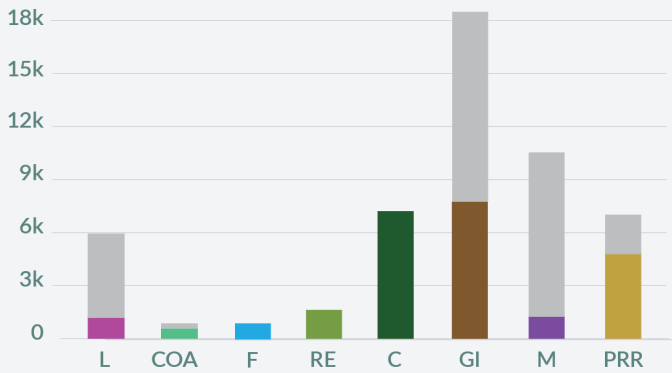
A Commercial Hub is proposed at the intersection of Sinclair Road and English Road, the most centralized proposed location of all three alternatives with respect to the Specific Plan Area. The location of this business node provides the most proximal access for Green Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics workers to purchase goods during Phase One. Another defining characteristic of this alternative is the exclusion of the Interim Agricultural Overlay present in the previous alternatives. Alternative #3 assumes agriculture will be the interim use for all Phase Two areas, however this scenario pre-zones those areas for a specific use to support long-term planning efforts and ensure compatibility between development projects.

Alternative #3 upholds the Playas Renewables and Restoration, Conservation, and Renewable Energy designations. Per the request of conservation and wildlife stakeholders, this alternative proposes a connected conservation area near the Salton Sea, promoting habitat connectivity for sensitive species. Overall, Alternative #3 represents the most ambitious long-term buildout approach with respect to industrial, manufacturing and logistics uses. The concept is supported by an innovative transportation system intended to support the movement of goods through the supply chain and create efficient routes for commuters accessing the Specific Plan Area.

Land Use Chart

The following chart displays acreages of the proposed land uses. Colored segments are anticipated phase 1 development and grey segments are phase 2+ development.

- L = Logistics
- COA = Community Opportunity Areas
- F = Floodway
- RE = Renewable Energy
- C = Conservation
- GI = Green Industrial
- M = Manufacturing
- IAO = Interim Agricultural Overlay
- PRR = Playas Renewables & Restoration



Phase 1 Metrics

72 M

17,349

10,197

136,999

Phase 2+ Metrics

106 M

31,974

23,192

133,292



Building SF



Blue Collar Jobs



White Collar Jobs

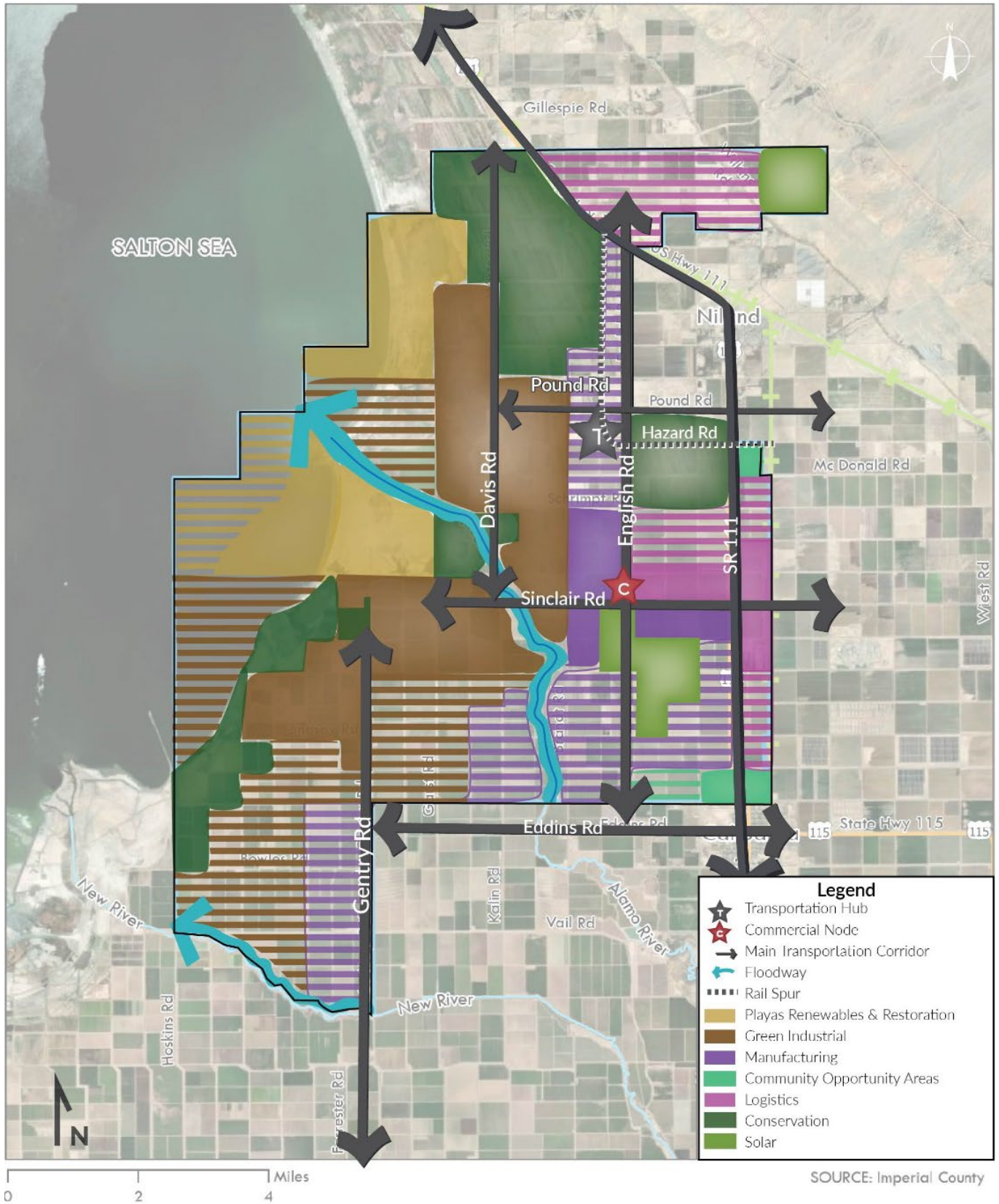


Water Consumption
AFY

Land Use Alternative metrics are conceptual and subject to change; estimated based on assumptions informed by case studies and SCAG estimates.

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Alternative #3



3.4 Preferred Land Use Alternative

The Preferred Land Use Alternative applies the most effective attributes of all the alternatives while addressing the comments of the stakeholders and community members. The Preferred Land Use Alternative applies the Interim Agricultural Overlay configuration of Land Use Alternative 1 because it extends east to English Road, over heavily utilized prime agricultural land. It applies the logistics and manufacturing configuration of Alternative 2 to provide Logistics with easy access to SR-111 due to its relatively high truck trip generation, while also provides the Manufacturing area easy access to SR-111 and Sinclair due to its relatively high job generation. The Preferred Alternative applies the comprehensive mobility network from Alternative 3. It also applies interim allowed uses and secondary phases allowed uses for the Interim Agricultural Overlay to allow for green industrial and manufacturing in secondary phases, similar to Alternative 3.

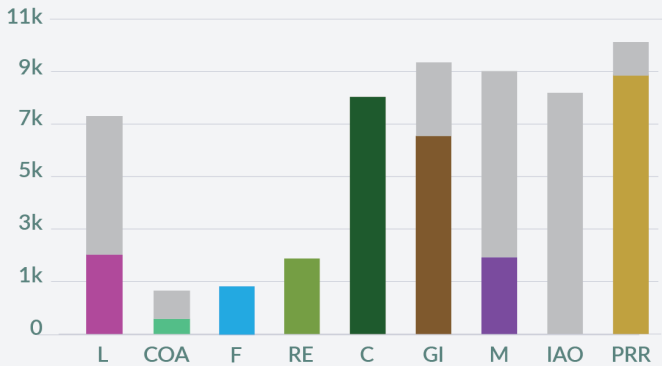
To address the stakeholder and community feedback, the Preferred Land Use Alternative:

1. Increases the Community Opportunity Areas by 300-900 acres.
2. Provides a conceptual Recreation Easement that connects Niland to the Salton Sea.
3. Includes two types of Transportation Hubs, one Industry Transportation Hub where the two rail spur options connect, and two Public Transportation Hubs near Niland and Calipatria in the Community Opportunity Areas.
4. Adds many potential allowed uses to the land use designations such as health care facilities, workforce education and training center, convention center, and temporary construction housing to the Community Opportunity Areas, and supportive commercial to the Green Industrial areas.
5. Increases the Conservation Area to cover culturally significant areas and future Salton Sea Management Program sites.
6. Separates the Playas Renewables and Restoration designation into two separate land uses; one that allowed limited geothermal operations development, and one that is retained for restoration, mitigation lands, and conservation.
7. Designates Commercial Hubs within the Niland and Calipatria Community Opportunity Areas, as well as a centralized Commercial Hub at Sinclair and English Road, within the employment 'epicenter'.
8. Provides a mechanism to develop campuses with multiple types of land uses.
9. Locates the Industry Transportation Hub within the Logistics designation for more efficient distribution.

Land Use Chart

The following chart displays acreages of the proposed land uses. Colored segments are anticipated phase 1 development and grey segments are phase 2+ development.

L = Logistics
 COA = Community Opportunity Areas
 F = Floodway
 RE = Renewable Energy
 C = Conservation
 GI = Green Industrial
 M = Manufacturing
 IAO = Interim Agricultural Overlay
 PRR = Playas Renewables & Restoration



Phase 1 Metrics

74 M



Building SF

21,062



Blue Collar Jobs

12,720



White Collar Jobs

92,881



Water Consumption
AFY

Phase 2+ Metrics

47 M

16,257

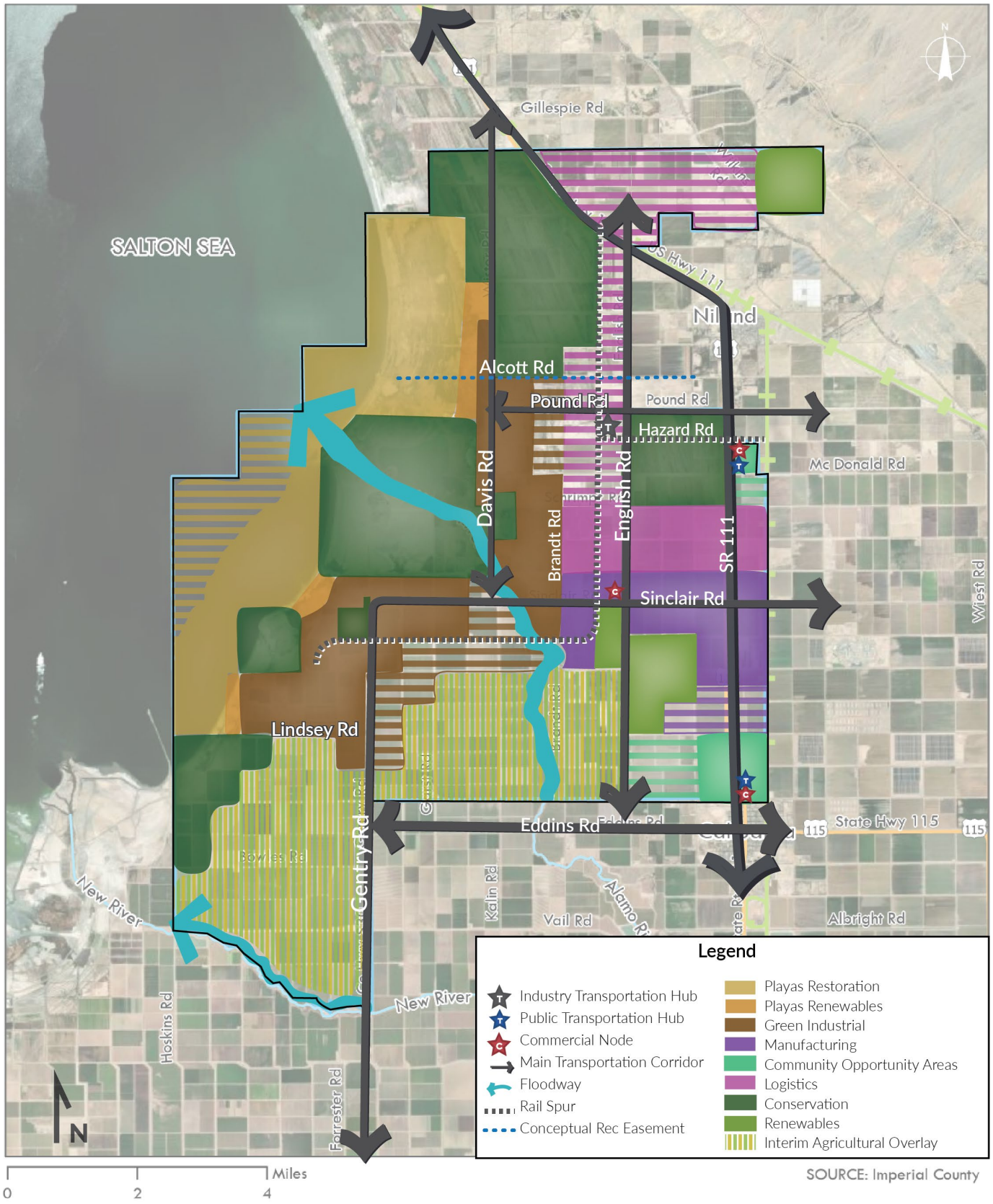
8,688

42,633

Land Use Alternative metrics are conceptual and subject to change; estimated based on assumptions informed by case studies and SCAG estimates.

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Preferred Alternative



4. LAND USE ALTERNATIVES COMPARISON

4.1 Evaluation Criteria and Methodology

To adequately compare and contrast the three land use alternatives, the Project Team came up with multiple evaluation criteria to objectively apply to each alternative.

These criteria were developed based on the project vision and guiding principles, and stakeholder and community input during phase two engagement efforts. As further detailed in Chapter 4, Land Use Alternatives Comparison, a qualitative analysis is provided for each alternative against each of the evaluation criteria to provide an objective, research-based comparison of alternatives that helped the Project Team develop the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

The analysis included in Table 4-1, Qualitative Comparison Matrix, evaluates whether the alternative accomplishes the objective of the evaluation criteria included in this section. To objectively, compare and weigh the alternatives, each alternative is assessed on whether the alternative “meets objective,” “somewhat meets objective,” or “does not meet objective.”

- “Meets objective” means that the land use alternative has full potential to achieve the objective through the physical arrangement of the land uses, and the environmental, social, and economic implications of those land uses.
- “Somewhat meets objective” means that the land use alternative has potential to achieve the objective with additional intervention or measures.
- “Does not meet objective” means that the land use alternative would not achieve the objective without significant additional intervention to meet that objective.

While this evaluation is qualitative in nature, thorough qualitative analyses will be conducted on the Preferred Land Use Alternative as part of the PEIR. The intent of the comparison matrix is to offer an objective way qualitatively offer guidance towards a Preferred Land Use Alternative and Specific Plan. The land use alternative evaluation criterion are included below:

4.1.1 Social Equity and Environmental Justice

Public Health Objective: A land use plan that protects nearby existing and future communities from public health concerns as they relate to air and water quality, limiting the pollutants entering the waterways and air.

Access to Public Services Objective: A land use plan that provides equitable access to essential services and amenities such as healthcare, public transportation, and parks. Removing additional burdens on existing healthcare facilities.

Public Safety Objective: A land use plan that accommodates peak performance for first responders, limiting response times to the plan area.

Disadvantaged Communities Objective: A land use plan that works to rectify existing inequalities for the nearby disadvantaged community through access to quality jobs, community resources, and opportunities for physical activity.

4.1.2 Economic and Workforce Development

Workforce Development Objective: A land use plan that has the potential to provide enough long-term jobs to substantially improve unemployment in surrounding disadvantaged communities.

Economic Empowerment Objective: A land use plan that provides the nearby communities with opportunities for economic growth, community ownership, and increased self-sufficiency.

Economic Diversity Objective: A land use plan that fosters economic diversity by supporting a mix of industries and sectors to reduce vulnerability to economic downturns.

4.1.3 Environmental Considerations

Salton Sea Objective: Avoids harmful environmental effects on the Salton Sea and rivers that flow into it.

Sensitive Receptor Objective: Consider the proposed land uses' environmental impacts on nearby receptors as it relates to air quality, dust, and noise.

Climate Change Objective: Incorporates climate change adaptation and resilience strategies into the land use plan by avoiding high-risk areas, expanding wetland opportunities, and incentivizes uses that reduce the economy's reliance on fossil fuels.

4.1.4 Infrastructure Demands

Traffic Congestion Objective: A mobility network that can accommodate the demand of the proposed land uses and alleviate congestion.

Water System Objective: Results in water demands that are obtainable under existing water supply allocations.

Energy Transmission Objective: A land use and mobility plan that is rooted in operational efficiency, supports energy-efficient building types, and can be accommodated by improved transmission infrastructure.

Public Infrastructure Objective: Improves public infrastructure including roads, public transportation, and storm water capture.

4.1.5 Feasibility

Land Ownership Objective: A land use plan that considers the availability of land, land acquisition costs, and potential legal or ownership issues that may arise.

Financial Viability Objective: A land use plan that balances the potential revenue stream with the initial investment costs. The land use plan should prioritize market-driven land uses in a concentrated and obtainable area and designates secondary phases in less obtainable/desirable areas.

Policy Compliance Objective: A land use plan that directly supports Senate Bill (SB) 100 and SB 125 through incentivizing renewable energy production and developing Imperial County's lithium resource.

Table 4-1, Qualitative Comparison Matrix

	Social Equity and Environmental Justice	Economic and Workforce Development	Environmental Considerations	Infrastructure Demands	Feasibility
Alternative #1	<p>Public Health Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 1 designates approximately 832 acres as Community Opportunity Areas (COAs) near urbanized clusters, serving as buffers between intensive land uses and communities. Relative to the other alternatives, this is a smaller area which limits the potential for development of public facilities and services intended to address public health disparities. Design standards in combination with the Floodway designation would significantly reduce the entry of pollutants from new land uses, contributing to improved water quality for the overall well-being of nearby communities.</p> <p>Access to Public Services Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 1 designates 832 acres, the smallest amount of land, as COA which limits potential for development of key public services and facilities adjacent to communities. The proposed circulation plan identifies fewer key transportation corridors which are essential for increasing access to key public services and resources.</p> <p>Public Safety Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 1 proposes the least comprehensive circulation plan, identifying fewer key transportation corridors. Maintaining a variety of route options is essential for deploying efficient emergency response services.</p> <p>Disadvantaged Communities Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 1 designates 832 acres, the smallest amount of land, as COA which encourages development of public facilities and services near</p>	<p>Workforce Development Objective: Meets objective; This alternative provides substantial additional employment to improve unemployment in the local area.</p> <p>Economic Empowerment Objective: Somewhat meets objective; This alternative provides economic opportunity for the surrounding communities, but to a lesser extent than Alternative 2 and may require additional intervention to provide meaningful economic development for the communities.</p> <p>Economic Diversity: Somewhat meets objective; This alternative provides for a variety of land uses and growth through different economic sectors, although to a lesser extent than Alternatives 2 and 3.</p>	<p>Salton Sea Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 1 proposes the floodway designation which is intended to buffer and limit pollutants entering the New River and Alamo River, which empty into the Salton Sea. Alternative 1, however, assigns the highest amount of land for the Interim Agricultural Overlay. Agricultural runoff has posed a significant challenge for Salton Sea mitigation, introducing high volumes of harmful pollutants into the sea.</p> <p>Sensitive Receptor Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 1 proposes the smallest amount of land allocated for COAs which are essential buffers between communities and sources of air pollution, dust, and noise. However, this alternative proposes the most total land for the Playas Renewables & Restoration designation, 12,209 acres, which can encourage implementation of dust suppression mitigation measures intended to improve air quality.</p> <p>Climate Change Objective: Somewhat meets objective; The land use plan for Alternative 1 designates a reduced portion of land for Green Industrial Uses which, at maximum buildout, would only introduce 30 total geothermal facilities. This will lead to less overall geothermal energy production, an essential component to addressing climate change through achieving clean energy production targets. However, the proposed transportation and rail system connects industrial and manufacturing land uses to key transportation corridors, lessening the influx of emissions from diesel truck traffic.</p>	<p>Traffic Congestion Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 1 identifies fewer major transportation corridors than all other alternatives, thus increasing the potential for traffic congestion on the four major corridors identified.</p> <p>Water System Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 1 includes the least amount of green industrial which is the highest water consumer. Based on water consumption metrics provided by IID, Alternative 1 would result in water demand within the existing IID water allocation for the Specific Plan Area.</p> <p>Energy Transmission Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 1 locates Green Industrial intended for generation of geothermal energy around the existing geothermal plants to utilize the existing transmission lines. Alternative 1 locates Manufacturing, the highest energy consumer, predominantly along Sinclair and English Road that would need transmission infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Public Infrastructure Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 1 identifies fewer major transportation corridors than all other alternatives, thus resulting in inadequate roadway improvements. Alternative 1 includes a Transportation Hub in the center of the development that would likely not be utilized for public transportation.</p>	<p>Land Ownership Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 1 designates a large majority of Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owned land to be Playas Renewables & Restoration, as well as designates most State-owned land as Conservation. There are areas, however, that designate IID-owned lands as Green Industrial. The Project Team is in coordination with IID with regards to the land use plan. Alternative 1 also allows for Agricultural Uses west of the Alamo River between Brandt Road and English Road which may avoid tension with existing agriculture farms and cattle farms.</p> <p>Financial Viability Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides a balance of potential land uses (and associated revenue streams) with initial public investment costs (in terms of roads and infrastructure). The plan located more market-driven uses closer to the SR-111 corridor and locates secondary phases in less desirable areas (closer to floodplains or prime agricultural areas).</p> <p>Policy Compliance Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides approximately 8,034 acres of Green Industrial and 1,768 acres of solar facilities, which directly supports SB 100 and SB125 through incentivizing renewable energy production and development Imperial County's lithium resources.</p>

	<p>communities. Conservation and floodway designations proposed by this plan will generate additional recreation opportunities which are critical for serving disadvantaged communities. The transportation plan proposed by this alternative also limits route options for commuters accessing employment centers.</p>				
<p>Alternative #2</p>	<p>Public Health Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 proposes a significant 1,416-acre allocation of land for COAs to promote the development of critical public facilities and services to support public health near the communities of Niland and Calipatria. This plan would also include design standards in combination with the Floodway designation that would significantly reduce the entry of pollutants from new land uses, contributing to improved water quality for the overall well-being of nearby communities. Overall, this plan would implement significant measures to protect communities from pollutants and increase access to healthcare services.</p> <p>Access to Public Services Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 proposes a significant amount of land, totaling 1,416 acres, for COAs allowing for development of additional public services and facilities near surrounding communities. This alternative also utilizes the a more comprehensive transportation system, which is critical for first responders.</p> <p>Public Safety Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 utilizes a more comprehensive transportation system, which is critical for first responders to access high-risk areas for emergency response services. This alternative also still identified a high allocation of land for COAs which could encourage development of public facilities near</p>	<p>Workforce Development Objective: Meets objective. This alternative provides for substantial improvement in unemployment and employment opportunities in the local area.</p> <p>Economic Empowerment Objective: Meets objective. The inclusion of commercial hubs (and community opportunity areas) in close proximity to the two nearby communities provides added opportunities for economic empowerment for the communities of Niland and Calipatria.</p> <p>Economic Diversity: Meets objective. This alternative provides for synergies between different uses and thus promotes economic diversity.</p>	<p>Salton Sea Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 2 offers the floodway designation which is intended to provide a buffer between waterways and more intense land uses. This alternative still includes a slightly reduced Interim Agricultural Overlay, which promotes continued agricultural operations despite polluting impacts affecting the Salton Sea.</p> <p>Sensitive Receptor Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 proposes a 1,416 acre portion of land designated as COAs, which would reduce the effects from air quality, dust, and noise by establishing a larger buffer between communities and intense activities. In addition, this plan also includes the largest apportionment of land for the Playas Renewables & Restoration designation, 10,747 acres, which can introduce more dust suppression mitigation measures to improve air quality.</p> <p>Climate Change Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 2 allocates a slightly higher portion of land for Green Industrial and Conservation uses, which would contribute to higher renewable energy production and less emissions from other uses. Both efforts working in tandem would serve to address climate change objectives through this project. However, the shorter proposed rail spur could contribute to more trips from diesel trucks which would increase the influx of emissions from heavier uses.</p>	<p>Traffic Congestion Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 2 identifies seven major transportation corridors, thus decreasing the potential for traffic congestion throughout the Specific Plan Area. Alternative 2 positions the logistic land uses (most vehicle trip intensive) along English Road and SR-111 which would reduce additional trips on arterial and local roadways.</p> <p>Water System Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 includes slightly more green industrial acreage which is the highest water consumer. Based on water consumption metrics provided by IID, Alternative 2 would result in water demand just within the existing IID water allocation for the Specific Plan Area.</p> <p>Energy Transmission Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 2 locates Green Industrial intended for generation of geothermal energy around the existing geothermal plants to utilize the existing transmission lines. Alternative 2 locates Manufacturing, the highest energy consumer, predominantly along Sinclair Road and SR-111 that would need transmission infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Public Infrastructure Objective: Somewhat meet objective; Alternative 2 identifies a comprehensive network of major transportation corridors to be improved. However, Alternative 2 includes a Transportation Hub in the</p>	<p>Land Ownership Objective: Does not meets objective; Alternative 2 designates a large majority of Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owned land to be Playas Renewables & Restoration, as well as designates most State-owned land as Conservation. There are areas, however, that designate IID-owned lands as Green Industrial. The Project Team is in coordination with IID with regards to the land use plan. Alternative 2 designates the area west of the Alamo River between Brandt Road and English Road as Manufacturing which may be contested by existing agriculture and cattle farms.</p> <p>Financial Viability Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides a balance of potential land uses (and associated revenue streams) with initial public investment costs (in terms of roads and infrastructure). The plan located more market-driven uses closer to the SR-111 corridor, and between Niland and Calipatria, and locates secondary phases in less desirable areas to the west and south (closer to the Salton Sea prime agricultural areas).</p> <p>Policy Compliance Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides approximately 9,088 acres of Green Industrial and 1,768 acres of solar facilities, which directly supports SB 100 and SB125 through incentivizing renewable energy production and development Imperial County's lithium resources.</p>

	<p>communities to assist with emergency response.</p> <p>Disadvantaged Communities Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 2 utilizes a robust transportation system, which is critical for increasing travel options for commuters accessing employment centers. This alternative also allocates 1,416 acres for COAs, which will allow for the development of essential public facilities to enhance access to community resources.</p>			<p>center of the development that would likely not be utilized for public transportation.</p>	
<p>Alternative #3</p>	<p>Public Health Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 3 includes COAs near the communities of Niland and Calipatria, however these designations only total 832 acres, which is relatively small compared to the other land use alternatives. The COA designation promotes the development of critical public facilities and services to support public health near the communities of Niland and Calipatria. Alternative 3 also has the highest total acreage for the more intense activities allowed by Green Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics uses which could impact local air quality from emissions. Acreages for Alternative 3 nearly double the total land assigned for Green Industrial uses.</p> <p>Access to Public Services Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 3 also proposes a smaller amount of land (832 acres) for COAs which may limit areas for public facilities and services. However, this alternative does leverage a robust circulation system for emergency vehicles and first responders to quickly access the area.</p> <p>Public Safety Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 3 leverages the most robust circulation system for emergency vehicles and first responders to access the area. However, with the reduced area designated for COAs there may be less</p>	<p>Workforce Development Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides improved employment opportunities across the region.</p> <p>Economic Empowerment Objective: Somewhat meets objective; this alternative provides for economic empowerment for the surrounding communities but may require additional intervention.</p> <p>Economic Diversity: Meets objective; this alternative provides for a diversity of land uses and thus supports economic diversity across the region.</p>	<p>Salton Sea Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 3 does not include an Interim Agricultural Overlay which is significant for limiting agricultural operations and associated pollution impacts toward the Salton Sea. This alternative also includes floodway designations to prevent the influx of pollutants into waterways which empty into the Salton Sea.</p> <p>Sensitive Receptor Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 3 proposes the least allocation of land for COAs at 832 acres, which will reduce the buffer between communities and more intense land uses. Additionally, this plan only designates 6,671 acres for Playas Renewables & Restoration which may hinder possibilities for implementing effective dust suppression mitigation measures for sensitive receptors in local communities.</p> <p>Climate Change Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 3 proposes the highest allocation of land (18,337 acres) for Green Industrial uses which support geothermal energy production and lithium extraction for climate change mitigation. At maximum buildout, this could lead to the development of nearly 68.5 geothermal facilities. Additionally, Alternative 3 offers a similar allocation of land designated for conservation to reduce</p>	<p>Traffic Congestion Objective: Meets objective; Alternative 3 identifies seven major transportation corridors, thus decreasing the potential for traffic congestion throughout the Specific Plan Area. Alternative 3 positions the logistic land uses (most vehicle trip intensive) nearest to the SR-111 which would reduce or eliminate additional trips on arterial and local roadways.</p> <p>Water System Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 3 includes the most green industrial acreage which is the highest water consumer. Based on water consumption metrics provided by IID, Alternative 3 would result in water demand that exceeds the existing IID water allocation for the Specific Plan Area.</p> <p>Energy Transmission Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 3 locates Green Industrial intended for generation of geothermal energy around the existing geothermal plants but also further south and west, away from existing transmission lines. Alternative 3 also locates Manufacturing, the highest energy consumer, further to the south and west that would require significant long-term transmission infrastructure improvements.</p>	<p>Land Ownership Objective: Does not meet objective; Alternative 3 designates a large majority of Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owned land to be Playas Renewables & Restoration and Green Industrial. The Project Team is in coordination with IID with regards to the land use plan. Alternative 3 designates the area west of the Alamo River between Brandt Road and English Road as Manufacturing which may be contested by existing agriculture and cattle farms.</p> <p>Financial Viability Objective: Somewhat meets objective; this alternative provides a balance of potential land uses (and associated revenue streams) with initial public investment costs (in terms of roads and infrastructure). However, given the much larger area anticipated for development as manufacturing and industrial (including areas to the south and west), compared to the other two alternatives, this alternative runs the risk of expending significant funds for infrastructure in anticipation of a larger development program, and then the development of the anticipated uses taking longer to reach fruition. This alternative has the potential to create greater overall financial benefit to the area, but also runs the risk of overextending on a much larger infrastructure program to</p>

	<p>development potential for emergency facilities near surrounding communities.</p> <p>Disadvantaged Communities Objective: Somewhat meets objective; Alternative 3 proposes a smaller portion of land to be allocated for COAs which would limit access to public facilities and services near communities. However, this alternative does introduce a commuter-friendly transportation system to increase access to jobs.</p>		<p>impacts from alternative uses. The proposed rail spur would also be heavily utilized for manufacturing uses, which would limit the amount of truck trips.</p>	<p>Public Infrastructure Objective: Somewhat meet objective; Alternative 3 identifies a comprehensive network of major transportation corridors to be improved. However, Alternative 3 includes a Transportation Hub in the center of the development that would likely not be utilized for public transportation.</p>	<p>service the anticipated development areas.</p> <p>Policy Compliance Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides approximately 18,337 acres of Green Industrial and 1,768 acres of solar facilities, which directly supports SB 100 and SB125 through incentivizing renewable energy production and development Imperial County's lithium resources.</p>
Preferred Alternative	<p>Public Health Objective: Meets objective; The Preferred Alternative proposes the largest allocation of land intended for the COA land use designation, totaling 1,724 acres, which buffers communities from heavier uses and reduces proximity to polluting sources. This alternative includes the largest area for Playas Renewables & Restoration, which can serve to protect the sensitive playas and suppress dust to protect nearby communities. This alternative also has the smallest land acreage for Green Industrial uses, totaling 7,768 acres.</p> <p>Access to Public Services Objective: Meets objective; The Preferred Alternative provides the most access to public facilities and services, allocating 1,724 acres dedicated to increase resources for nearby communities. This alternative also leverages the most robust transportation system, which enhances access to public facilities and services for the community.</p> <p>Public Safety Objective: Meets objective; The Preferred Alternative provides a variety of access routes for emergency responders leveraging the plan's proposed transportation system, decreasing emergency response times.</p>	<p>Workforce Development Objective: Meets objective; the preferred plan provides for improved employment opportunities across the region. It includes community hubs of economic opportunity in close proximity to both Niland and Calipatria. It will encourage a variety of employment opportunities related to distribution and logistics, manufacturing, and renewable energy production, while also retaining areas for agricultural employment and economic activity.</p> <p>Economic Empowerment Objective: Meets objective; the preferred plan provides for economic empowerment for the surrounding communities, through the development of community hubs near Niland and Calipatria, along with the creation of transit hubs near the communities that will help residents of the communities access employment opportunities. The plan provides areas for economic development across a range of industries and spin-off activity resulting from logistics, manufacturing, and distribution industries. The preferred plan also includes an industry hub in the middle of the plan area, to further encourage economic development.</p> <p>Economic Diversity: Meets objective; the preferred plan, as outlined above, provides for a diversity of land uses and thus supports economic diversity across the</p>	<p>Salton Sea Objective: Somewhat meets objective; the Preferred Alternative proposes the Interim Agricultural Overlay designation, which encourages continued agricultural operations but may lead to more pollutants entering the Salton Sea through agricultural runoff. This plan does include the floodway designation which will create a buffer between intense land uses and waterways within the Study Area.</p> <p>Sensitive Receptor Objective: Meets objective; the Preferred Alternative offers the largest 1,724 acre area of separation between communities and intense land uses, lessening effects from air quality, dust, and noise. Additionally, this plan proposes distinct land use designations between Playas Renewables and Playas Restoration, which will limit development of geothermal facilities and lessen the impacts from air quality, dust, and noise toward local communities.</p> <p>Climate Change Objective: Somewhat meets objective; the Preferred Alternative designates the least amount of land for Green Industrial uses, 7,768 acres, which will reduce the area allowing for geothermal energy and lithium extraction operations to take place. These activities are essential for reducing impacts from climate change</p>	<p>Traffic Congestion Objective: Meets objective; the Preferred Land Use Alternative identifies seven major transportation corridors, thus decreasing the potential for traffic congestion throughout the Specific Plan Area. This Alternative positions the logistic land uses (most vehicle trip intensive) along English Road and SR-111 which would reduce additional trips on arterial and local roadways. However, manufacturing has a higher rate of employee trips per facility, so it is beneficial to balance access to SR-111 between logistics and manufacturing.</p> <p>Water System Objective: Meets objective; the Preferred Land Use Alternative includes the least amount of green industrial which is the highest water consumer. Based on water consumption metrics provided by IID, Preferred Alternative would result in water demand well within the existing IID water allocation for the Specific Plan Area.</p> <p>Energy Transmission Objective: Somewhat meets objective; the Preferred Alternative locates Green Industrial intended for generation of geothermal energy around the existing geothermal plants to utilize the existing transmission lines. The</p>	<p>Land Ownership Objective: Somewhat meets objective; the Preferred Land Use Alternative designates a large majority of Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owned land to be Playas Renewables and Playas Restoration, as well as designates most State-owned land as Conservation. There are areas, however, that designate IID-owned lands as Green Industrial. The Project Team is in coordination with IID with regards to the land use plan. Alternative 1 also allows for Agricultural Uses west of the Alamo River between Brandt Road and English Road which may avoid tension with existing agriculture farms and cattle farms.</p> <p>Financial Viability Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides a balance of potential land uses (and associated revenue streams) with initial public investment costs (in terms of roads and infrastructure). The plan located more market-driven uses closer to the SR-111 corridor, and between Niland and Calipatria, and locates secondary phases in less desirable areas to the west and south (closer to the Salton Sea prime agricultural areas). It also provides for a greater variety of potential land uses compared to some of the alternatives (including various local-serving commercial uses in addition to industrial and logistics). This greater emphasis on having a balanced</p>

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	<p>Disadvantaged Communities Objective: Meets objective; The Preferred Alternative allocates the highest amount of land (1,724 acres) for COAs which will encourage development of public facilities and services near communities. It also utilizes the most efficient transportation system for moving goods and creating alternative routes for workers accessing jobs.</p>	<p>region. The preferred plan provides significant areas for different types of manufacturing, green industry, logistics, and distribution operations. It also provides for a range of renewable energy generation activities across the plan area, further providing for the diversification of economic development across this part of Imperial County.</p>	<p>to achieve clean energy targets. This alternative, however, would designate the largest portion of land at 10,792 acres for conservation, which could limit intense operations which contribute significantly to atmospheric greenhouse gas levels which influence climate change. Finally, the Preferred Alternative also introduces a Public Transportation Hub in COAs, which would encourage transit ridership for surrounding communities to access employment centers, reducing overall emissions from commuter traffic.</p>	<p>Preferred Alternative locates Manufacturing, the highest energy consumer, predominantly along Sinclair Road and SR-111 that would need transmission infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Public Infrastructure Objective: Meet objective; the Preferred Alternative identifies a comprehensive network of major transportation corridors to be improved. It also includes two public Transportation Hubs within the Community Opportunity Areas that would call for public transportation improvements.</p>	<p>land use program will likely result in greater overall financial returns from the preferred land use plan.</p> <p>Policy Compliance Objective: Meets objective; this alternative provides approximately 7,768 acres of Green Industrial and 1,768 acres of solar facilities, which directly supports SB 100 and SB125 through incentivizing renewable energy production and development Imperial County's lithium resources.</p>
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4.1.6 Comparison Matrix Summary

In summary, the Preferred Alternative meets the most objectives, with meeting thirteen objectives and somewhat meeting four objectives. Following the Preferred Alternative, Alternative #2 meets the second-most objectives with ten objectives, followed by Alternative #3, with five objectives, and Alternative #1 with four objectives. By evaluating all Alternatives, it is more clear on where the Alternatives fall short and require additional attention and intervention. For example, the Preferred Alternative does not fully meet the Salton Sea objective as it maintains a large portion of Specific Plan area as agriculture which historically has polluted the Salton Sea. However, the Salton Sea objective can be met through additional standards and regulations brought forth in the Specific Plan and PEIR. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative falls short on considering property ownership of the entire Specific Plan area. While it is important to recognize the reality that property owners decide the future of their individual property, it is against the law to designate individual parcels of land for a use classification totally different from that of the surrounding area for the benefit of the owner of such property and to the detriment of other owners. As such, property owners will continue to be involved in the planning process, however the Specific Plan area must be looked at as a whole, and in the public's best interest.