

CITY OF NEEDLES



2019 Housing Element Update

Draft Initial Study and Negative Declaration

August 2019

City of Needles
Planning Department
817 Third Street | Needles, California 92363

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
A. Background	1
B. Project Description.....	2
C. Determination.....	22
D. Project Setting.....	23
E. Other Agencies Approval	23
F. Environmental Impacts	23
1. Aesthetics	24
2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources	27
3. Air Quality.....	29
4. Biological Resources	33
5. Cultural Resources.....	39
6. Energy.....	43
7. Geology And Soils.....	46
8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....	51
9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	54
10. Hydrology and Water Quality	60
11. Land Use and Planning	65
12. Mineral Resources	68
13. Noise.....	70
14. Population and Housing	74
15. Public Services	77
16. Recreation	82
17. Transportation/Traffic.....	84
18. Tribal Cultural Resources	87
19. Utilities and Service Systems	90
20. Wildfire	96
21. Mandatory Findings of Significance	99
G. Discussion of Environmental Evaluation	101
H. Potentially Significant.....	101
I. Mitigation of Potentially Significant Impacts	102
J. References.....	102

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Regional Location map.....	3
2 City of Needles – Jurisdictional Boundary	4

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Housing Types Permitted by the Zoning District.....	8
2 City of Needles 2014-2021 Regional Housing Needs Assessment.....	12
3 Summary of Amended and Deleted Programs in the 2019 Housing Element.....	13
4 Regional Housing Needles Allocation Progress.....	65

LIST OF APPENDICES

A Tribal Consultation and Responses	
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INITIAL STUDY AND NEGATIVE DECLARATION

A. BACKGROUND

Project Title: City of Needles 2019 Housing Element Update

Assessor's Parcel Number: Citywide

Lead agency name and address:

City of Needles
Planning Department
817 Third Street
Needles, California 92363

Contact person and phone number:

Cindy Semione, Associate Planner
phone: (760) 326-5740 x127
email: csemione@cityofneedles.com **Project Location:** Citywide

Project sponsor's name and address:

City of Needles
Planning Department
817 Third Street
Needles, California 92363

General plan description: Citywide

Zoning: Citywide

Project Description Summary: The Project is the 2019 Housing Element Update of the City of Needles General Plan. See further discussion under section B, "Project Description."

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Needles is located in eastern San Bernardino County, California, United States. It lies on the western banks of the Colorado River in the Mohave Valley subregion of the Mojave Desert, near the borders of Arizona and Nevada and roughly 110 miles from the Las Vegas Strip as shown in **Figure 1: Regional Location**. The City is the easternmost city of the San Bernardino-Riverside metropolitan area. Needles is geographically isolated from other cities in the County. Barstow, the nearest city within the County, is separated from Needles by over 140 miles of desert and 2 mountain ranges. The city is accessible via Interstate 40 and U.S. Route 95.

The City is proposing to adopt the 2019 Housing Element Update as part of its General Plan and an update to its current 2005 Housing Element. The proposed 2019 Housing Element Update (Project) defines policies and goals for future housing within the corporate boundary limits of the City. The jurisdictional boundary of the Project includes the entirety of the jurisdictional limits of the City of Needles as shown in **Figure 2: City of Needles – Jurisdictional Boundary**.

The Housing Element lists policies and programs in order to accommodate a variety of housing types for all income levels and needs of special population groups defined under State law (California Government Code Section 65583); analyzes governmental constraints to housing maintenance, improvement, and development; addresses conservation and improvement of the condition of the existing affordable housing stock; and outlines policies to promote housing opportunities for all persons.

The Housing Element is adopted as part of the General Plan. The City adopted its current General Plan in 1986. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 1986 General Plan¹ was also completed and identified mitigation measures associated with the development and growth proposed in the General Plan.² The City last updated and adopted their Housing Element in 2005.³

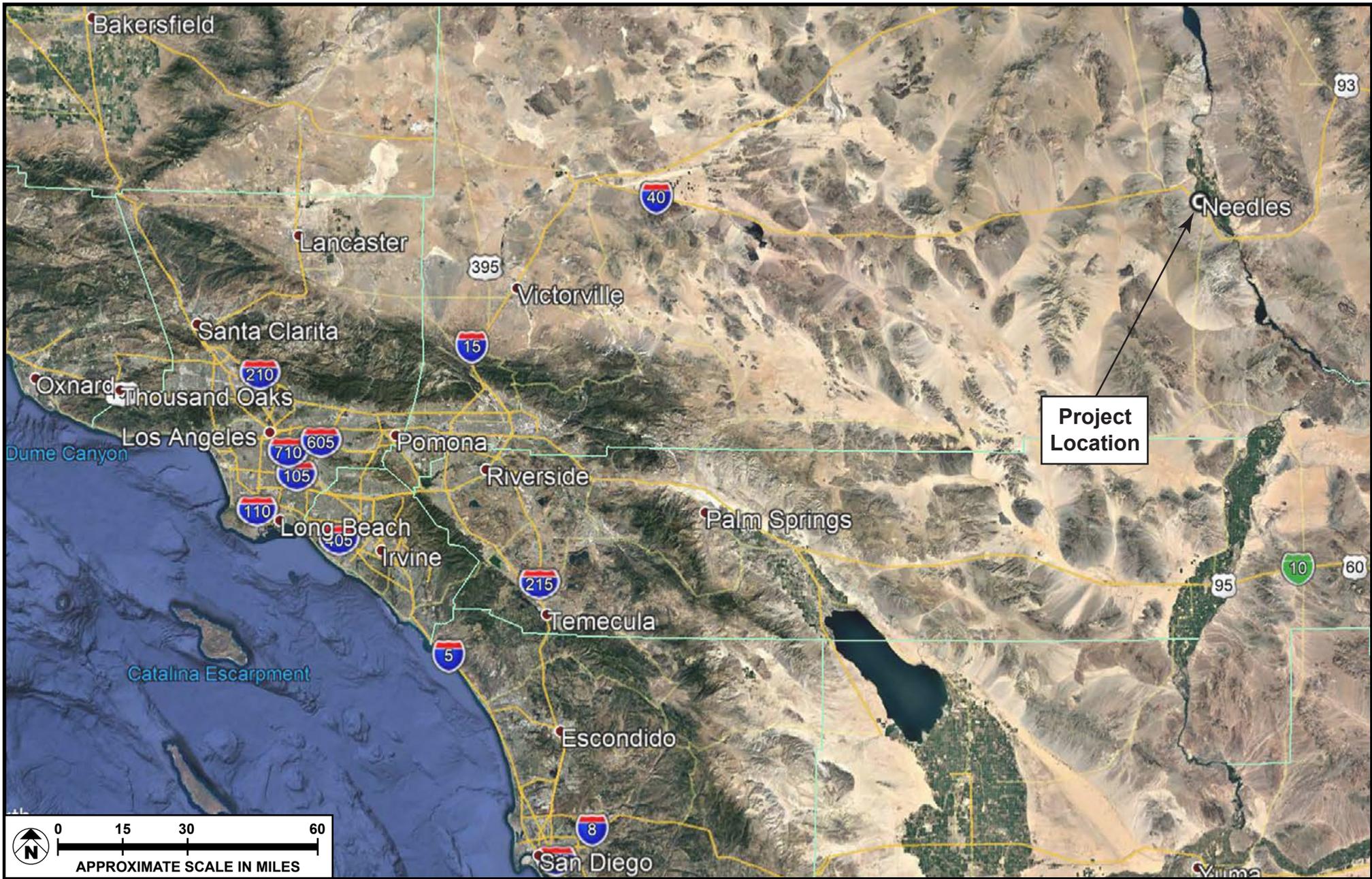
State law requires that each city in the State of California update their Housing Element every five years (California Government Code Section 65580-65589.8). The City last updated their Housing Element in 2005,⁴ and on December 14, 2018, the City received a “Notice of Non-Compliance” from the Department of Housing and Community Development.

1 The Environmental Assessment, Policy Document, and Technical Background Reports together constitute the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under CEQA.

2 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

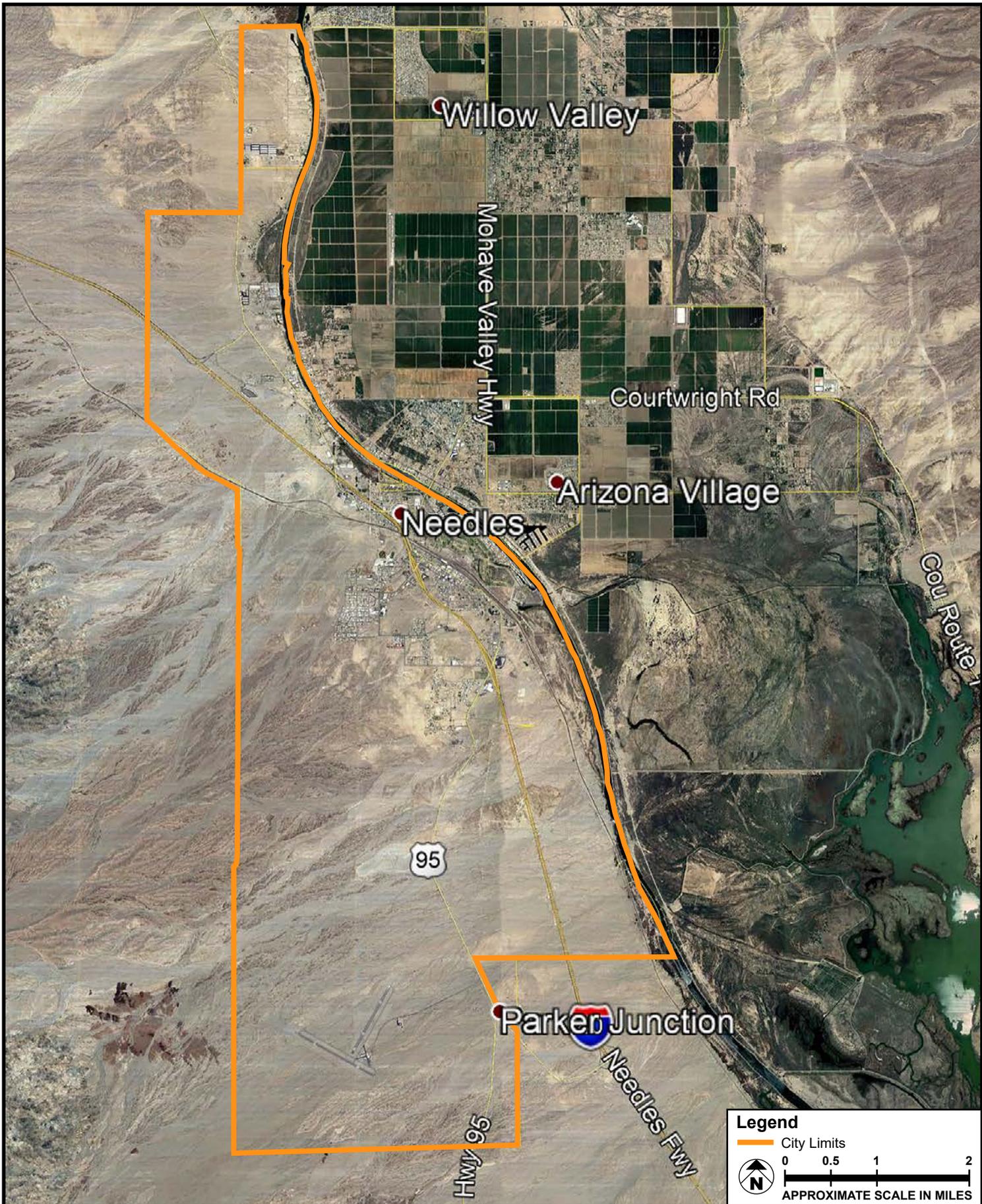
3 Housing Element (Updated) of the City of Needles General Plan (next due 2007)(Ord. 473-AC, April 12, 2005).

4 Housing Element (Updated) of the City of Needles General Plan (next due 2007)(Ord. 473-AC, April 12, 2005).



SOURCE: Google Earth - 2019

FIGURE 1



SOURCE: Google Earth - July 2019

FIGURE 2

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the General Plan. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies sites designated for residential development. The 2019 Housing Element Update does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities,.

This IS/ND provides compliance with the CEQA Guidelines required for the City to implement the 2019 Housing Element Update, focuses on whether the Project may cause significant effects on the environment. In particular, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 21083.3, this IS/ND is intended to assess any effects on the environment that are specific to the 2019 Housing Element Update.

Housing Element Overview

California law requires that all elements of the General Plan, including the Housing Element, be consistent. The City periodically reviews both its Housing element and other elements of the General Plan and proposes General Plan Amendments, as allowed by law, when a change in one element could cause inconsistencies in others. This procedure will continue to be undertaken on a regular basis by the City.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is one of seven mandatory elements to a local jurisdiction's General Plan. California Government Code Section 65583, as amended, requires a jurisdiction's Housing Element include the following components:

- (1) An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. The analysis should include the following:
 - a. Population and employment trends and projections,
 - b. Existing and projected housing needs for all income levels including the determined local share of the regional housing needs,
 - c. Analysis of household characteristics such as cost compared to ability to pay, overcrowding and housing condition,
 - d. Inventory of land suitable for residential development including vacant land and property suitable for redevelopment as well as the public services availability,
 - e. Potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels and for persons with special needs including persons with disabilities. Such analysis should include current land use controls, building codes, enforcement, site improvement requirements and fees and other exactions required of developers, permit processing procedures and availability of financing, and any efforts by the local government to reduce such constraints,
 - f. An analysis of special needs housing including that presently in existence, and projected needs, and

- g. An analysis of existing housing, if any, that is eligible to change from low-income during the next ten years due to termination of subsidy contract, etc.
- (2) A statement of the community's goals and objectives and policies relating to maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing.
- (3) A program which sets forth an eight-year schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the housing element.

The 2019 Housing Element Update presents the City of Needles' goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the development, improvement, and maintenance of housing within the incorporated areas of the City, during the period of 2013 to 2021.

The City's housing goals are ideals that have been determined by the citizens as desirable and deserving of community time and resources to obtain. Statements of objectives are more specific and shorter range. They provide the opportunity to evaluate the progress made toward the realization of the long-range goals. In conformance with state law, objectives have been quantified. Policy statements are more specific still and provide well-defined guidelines for decision making. Program actions are intended to carry out the goals, objectives, and policies.

The element's goals, objectives, policies, and programs establish close coordination between the City, the County of San Bernardino, other local and regional organizations involved with providing housing and housing services, the State of California, and federal agencies, so that the City's residents can be assured of a safe, adequate place to live. It is necessary to establish ties at all levels of government because of the interdependence of these agencies for programs, funding, and technical assistance.

The 2019 Housing Element Update includes a description of existing housing types, the condition of existing units, overcrowding, overpayment, homelessness, and special needs housing, and the demand for affordable housing in the City. The element also includes an analysis of the progress made since the drafting of the 2005 Housing Element and projections of needs for the next five years.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is organized into five parts:

- **Purpose**—presents the City of Needles' goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the development, improvement, and maintenance of housing within the incorporated areas of the City, during the period of 2013 to 2021.

- **Public Participation**—Details the events and comments from the community workshops that were held to seek public participation on May 21, 2019 and May 30, 2019.
- **Previous Housing Element Evaluation**—examines the goals of the 2005 Housing Element, and whether the City has been effective in meeting those goals. See below for information regarding changes from the 2005 Housing Element.
- **Demographic Information**—contains relevant demographic, household, and socioeconomic data. This information is primarily based on data provided in the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from 2005 to 2009 and 2013 to 2017. Other data sources include the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) data as well as the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development’s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy 2006-2015 data sets.
- **Current Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**—lists the current goals, policies, and programs for the City’s 2019 Housing Element Update. This section also includes target dates, the responsible agency, and funding for each program.

2019 Housing Element Update Housing Provisions

The 2019 Housing Element Update provides for a variety of housing. **Table 1: Housing Types Permitted by Zoning District**, summarizes the housing types permitted in the community by zoning district. Each use is designated by a letter noting whether the use requires a zoning permit (Z), requires a special use permit (S) via Planning Commission approval, or is conditionally permitted (C) by City Council.

Conventional Housing

Single-family homes are permitted by right in all three residential zones, the Single-Family Residential (R-1) zone, Two-Family Residential (R-2) zone, and Multiple Family Residential (R-3) zone. Single-family homes are also permitted in some mixed use and commercial zones, including by right in the Commercial, Residential, Resort (CRR) zone and the Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) zone. Multifamily housing of fewer than five units is permitted by right in the R-2 and R-3 zones as well as the mixed-use CRR zone. Multifamily housing of five or more units is permitted by right in the R-3 and CRR zones.

Manufactured Homes and Mobile Homes

Mobile and manufactured homes offer an affordable housing option to many low- and moderate-income households. A mobile home is defined in the zoning code as a transportable, factory-built home designed as a year-round residential dwelling and permitted in all residential zoning districts in the City, according to the same development standards applied to site-built single-family homes.

The City does not allow mobile homes built prior to enactment of the Federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974. Pursuant to state law, manufactured housing placed on a permanent foundation is considered a single-family dwelling and is permitted in all zoning districts that

allow single-family housing. Both manufactured homes and mobile homes are permitted by right in all three residential zones and in some mixed use and commercial zones, specifically the CRR and C-1 zones.

**Table 1
Housing Types Permitted by Zoning District**

Housing Type	R-1 Zone	R-2 Zone	R-3 Zone	CRR Zone	C-1 Zone	C-2 Zone	M-1 Zone	M-2 Zone
Single-Family Attached	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—
Single-Family Detached	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—
Duplexes	—	Z	Z	S	—	S	—	—
Multifamily (5+ units)	—	—	Z	C	—	S	—	—
Mobile Homes	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—
Manufactured Homes	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—
Accessory Dwelling Units	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—
Emergency Shelters	—	—	—	—	—	—	Z	Z
Transitional Housing	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—	—
Supportive Housing	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—	—	—
Single-Room Occupancy Units	C	C	C	C	C	C	—	—
Residential Care Facilities (6 or fewer people)	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	—
Residential Care Facilities (7 or more persons)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employee Housing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Source: City of Needles, 2019.

Notes: R1=Single-Family Residential, R-2= Two Family Residential, R-3=Multiple Family Residential, CRR= Commercial, Residential, Resort, C-1=Neighborhood Commercial, C-2=General Commercial, C-3=Highway Commercial, PD= Planned Unit Development, P=Public Facilities, M-1=Light Manufacturing, M-2 General Manufacturing.

Mixed-Use Development

The City allows mixed-use development via the CRR zone in several areas of Needles. As identified in the City of Needles Zoning Code, the intent of the CRR zone is to provide for a variety of uses along the

Colorado River, including apartments, hotels, motels, restaurants, boat clubs, marinas, specialty and gift shops, convenience services, and goods and supplies for boat owners, water skiers, scuba divers, and the visiting public using marina and aquatic recreational facilities, uses that would be relatable to a resort environment. Depending on the nature of the developments, this zone can support a full range of residential and commercial densities as appropriate per the zoning code. This zone allows sufficient diversity of land use types while avoiding the dangers of overcrowding and a haphazard mixing of land uses and providing new employment and housing opportunities for residents.

Single-Room Occupancy Units

Single-room occupancy facilities contain housing units that may have kitchen and/or bathroom facilities and are guest rooms or efficiency units as defined by the State Health and Safety Code. Each housing unit is occupied by no more than two persons and is offered on a monthly rental basis or longer. Single-room occupancy facilities are allowed with a Zoning Permit in all three residential zones (R-1, R-2, and R-3) as well as the CRR zone, and C-1 zone,.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory dwelling units are permitted in all residential zones. An accessory dwelling unit must meet specified development standards consistent with Government Code Section 65852.2; they may be either attached to the primary dwelling or separate from the primary dwelling. A manufactured or modular unit placed on a permanent foundation may also be used as an accessory unit. Accessory dwelling units may be rented separately unless the primary dwelling is rented, and the sale of an accessory dwelling unit separate from the primary unit is prohibited. The City processed a zoning code amendment to comply with recent changes to Government Code Section 65852.2 in July 2019.⁵

Housing for Farmworkers

California law (Government Code Section 65583(c)(1)(C)) requires the adequate provision of sites to accommodate the housing needs of farmworkers. Housing elements should ensure that local zoning, development standards, and permitting processes comply with Health and Safety Code Sections 17021.5 and 17021.6. Section 17021.5 generally requires employee housing for six or fewer persons to be treated as a single-family structure and residential use. A jurisdiction cannot require any conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other zoning clearance for this type of employee housing that is not required of a family dwelling of the same type in the same zone. Section 17021.6 generally requires employee housing

5 Ordinance Number 619-AC amended Needles Municipal Code (NMC) Section 96.08 "Dwelling Unit" adding "Accessory Dwelling Unit" and Section 96.00 "Table of Permissible Uses."

consisting of not more than 36 beds in group quarters or 12 units or less designed for use by a single family or household to be treated as an agricultural use. A jurisdiction cannot require a conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other zoning clearance for this type of employee housing that is not required of any other agricultural activity in the same zone.

Emergency Shelters

The California Health and Safety Code (Section 50801) defines an emergency shelter as “housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person. No individual or households may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.”

Legislation (Senate Bill 2 [Cedillo, 2007]) requires jurisdictions to allow emergency shelters without a conditional use permit in at least one zone or sufficiently sized site in the city to meet the city’s homeless need. The City of Needles updated its zoning ordinance in July 2019 to allow emergency shelters in the Light Manufacturing (M-1) and General Manufacturing (M-2) zones.⁶

Supportive and Transitional Housing

Supportive housing is defined by Health and Safety Code Section 50675.14 as housing with linked on-site or off-site services with no limit on the length of stay and that is occupied by a target population as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 53260 (i.e., low-income person with mental disabilities, AIDS, substance abuse or chronic health conditions, or persons whose disabilities originated before the age of 18). Services linked to supportive housing usually focus on retaining housing, living, and working in the community, and/or health improvement.

Transitional housing is defined in Health and Safety Code Section 50675.2 as rental housing for stays of at least six months, but where the units are recirculated to another program recipient after a set period. It may be designated for a homeless individual or family transitioning to permanent housing. This housing can take many structural forms, such as group housing and multifamily units, and may include supportive services to allow individuals to gain necessary life skills in support of independent living.

Pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 2, transitional and supportive housing types are required to be treated as residential uses and subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type

⁶ Ordinance Number 622-AC amended NMC Article XII, Section 112.06 adding “Emergency Shelters and Supportive and Transitional Housing” and Section 96.07 “Table of Permissible Uses.”

in the same zone. In addition, pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2162, supportive housing is a use by right in zones where multifamily and mixed uses are permitted, including nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses. The City’s zoning codes are silent on the provision for transitional and supportive housing. To ensure consistency with state law, the City amended its zoning ordinance in July 2019 to allow transitional and supportive housing consistent with SB 2.⁷

Density Bonus

Density bonuses are permitted in the City of Needles when affordable or elderly housing is included. The density bonus percentage cannot exceed the percentage of affordable housing units in the development. For example, if the development includes 15 percent affordable housing units, then the density bonus cannot exceed a 15 percent increase. The bonus extends to allow up to a 25 percent increase in density and requires that the affordable units be constrained to affordability restrictions for at least 15 years. In elderly housing developments, the bonus allows up to a 100 percent increase in density. When the density bonus exceeds 25 percent for elderly housing developments, those additional units are required to remain available to elderly households for at least 15 years.

Numerous legislative actions have been passed since 2008 that amended the state density bonus program, including AB 2280, AB 2222, and AB 744. The City’s zoning requirements were updated to be consistent with the most current state laws in July 2019.⁸

On- and Off-Site Improvements

Existing vacant residential parcels require sewage disposal, water, and access. Single-home builders are required to improve streets and put in curb, gutter, and sidewalks along property lines. Residential developments are required to complete on-site improvements that are necessary to extend the sewer, water, and power lines to the property lines if not already available to the site. In addition, there is a requirement to connect to sewer if the parcel is within 200 feet of City services.

Most sites have such services already available. Residential subdivisions must comply with the City street and pedestrian standards for minimum street widths, setbacks, lighting, curbs and gutters, water and sewer connections, and pedestrian circulation, if appropriate. Although the City codes allow the

7 Ordinance Number 621-AC amended NMC Article IV, Section 94 adding “Reasonable Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities.”
8 Ordinance Number 620-AC amended NMC rescinding Article VII Section 97.01 “Affordable and Elderly Housing Bonus” and replacing it with a new Section 97.01 “Density Bonus and Related Incentives and Concessions Program.”

imposition of all of the above improvements, the staff will assess the particular property and determine the level of improvements that are necessary. For instance, depending upon the stormwater flow during a rain event, curbs may be required to be straight-back curbs, or if the runoff is less, rolled curbs may be allowed. These may impact the cost of housing but are absolutely necessary to the Project to set a minimum standard for improvements within the City.

Compliance with Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The City’s future housing need is based on population and employment growth projections over the 2013-2021 period. Based on these projections, the state assigns each region in California a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), which requires regions to address housing issues and needs (California Government Code Section 65584).

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) developed the RHNA for the City of Needles. It allocates to each jurisdiction its “fair share” of the projected housing need, based on household income groupings over the eight-year planning period. The RHNA also identifies and quantifies the existing housing needs for each jurisdiction. The quantification in the 2019 Housing Element Update is for the 5th cycle RHNA allocation and is based on a RHNA cycle from January 1, 2014, to October 1, 2021. This RHNA time period addresses the housing element planning period from October 2013 to October 2021. SCAG is in the process of developing the 6th cycle RHNA allocation plan, which will cover the planning period from October 2021 through October 2029. It is planned for adoption by SCAG in October 2020.

Table 2: City of Needles 2014-2021 Regional Housing Needs Assessment Goals shows the adjusted RHNA target for the time period from 2014 to 2021 for each of the five household income groups for the City.

**Table 2
City of Needles 2014-2021 Regional Housing Needs Assessment Goals**

Income Group	Number of Units	Percentage
Extremely Low*	19	10.5%
Very Low	19	10.5%
Low	29	16.0%
Moderate	34	18.8%
Above Moderate	80	44.2%
Total	181	100.0%

Source: SCAG, 5th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment Final Allocation Plan, 1/1/2014–10/1/2021, 2018.

Changes from 2005 Housing Element

The 2019 Housing Element Update provided an evaluation of the previous housing element which examines the goals of the 2005 Housing Element and whether or not the City has been effective in meeting those goals. The 2019 Housing Element Update also provides a list of which policies and programs from the 2005 Housing Element are being continued, amended, or deleted in the 2019 Housing Element (Table 1 in the 2019 Housing Element Update).

Many of the programs from the 2005 Housing Element are being continued in the 2019 Housing Element Update, however, **Table 3: Summary of Amended and Deleted Programs in the 2019 Housing Element Update**, provides a list of the programs that will be changed or deleted in the 2013-2021 Housing Element.

**Table 3
Summary of Amended and Deleted Programs in the 2019 Housing Element Update**

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
Goal 1.0: Allow every resident of the City of Needles the opportunity to have a decent home and satisfying environment regardless of age, sex, marital status, ethnic background, income, special needs, or other arbitrary factors.		
Policy 1.2: Improve and conserve existing residential neighborhoods.		
Program 1.2.1 Continue efforts at Code Enforcement as well as completing the process of establishing a CHODO to grant low-interest loans for rehabilitation of properties. Target Date: December 2004, ongoing. Responsible Agency: Code Enforcement/Community Development.	The City has continued code enforcement efforts. The City has increased code enforcement staffing to two individuals. In addition, a catalog of uninhabited for-sale properties has been created and is being distributed to developers. The CHODO was disbanded but our code enforcement efforts continue.	Amend to continue code enforcement efforts and delete CHODO.
Program 1.2.2 Continue efforts with the Redevelopment Agency to determine appropriate targets for redevelopment funds. Target Date: 2004, ongoing Responsible Agency: Redevelopment Agency and Community Development Department	The Redevelopment Agency is no longer operational due to the dissolution of redevelopment statewide and no funds are available. This program will be deleted.	Delete

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
<p>Program 1.2.3 Develop programs to preserve and continuously monitor affordable housing in projects with affordability restrictions that will expire within the next 15-20 years.</p> <p>Target Date: 2006</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Housing Authority/CHODO</p>	<p>The City has not developed programs to preserve and monitor affordable housing projects at risk of subsidy expiration. The existing affordable housing will start to convert to market rate in 2055, 2067, and 2068.</p>	<p>Amend to address recent updates to state law and combine with Policy 6.6 and continue.</p>
<p>Policy 1.4: Promote the provision or rehabilitation of an adequate number of rental units that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households within the City.</p>		
<p>Program 1.4.1 Reach out to local contractors and advise them of incentives for the creation of low to moderate income rental units.</p> <p>Target Date: 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development, Redevelopment Agency See also Program 1.7.</p>	<p>Yes, City staff has created a catalog of uninhabited for-sale properties and provides it to developers and parties interested in rehabilitation of housing inventory. We constantly market our surplus City-owned property for sale. We have 207 acres of land for sale to develop homes available. An economic development incentive program has been initiated to pay for fees and off-site improvements for homebuilders.</p>	<p>Amend to remove Redevelopment Agency from responsible agencies and continue</p>
<p>Program 1.4.2 Formation of a City Housing CHODO to act in addition to the Housing Authority, to develop guidelines for loan and grant assistance and to act as a conduit for housing funds so that they can be leveraged for the creation or rehabilitation of affordable housing.</p> <p>Target Date: 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development and newly formed Housing Organization, when formed.</p>	<p>No, the nonprofit associated with CHODO has been disbanded. The City is no longer pursuing formation of a CHODO.</p>	<p>Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and delete</p>

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
<p>Policy 1.5: The City has created a City housing non-profit organization to attract funds from the State and Federal Government, to use as leveraging to obtain grant funds from the private sector.</p>		
<p>Program 1.5.1 The Corporation has been formed; we have obtained Non-Profit status with the IRS and State. We are looking for funding sources to get the program off the ground.</p> <p>Target Date: March 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: City Council, NCEC Corporation</p>	<p>The nonprofit has been disbanded, and the responsibility has been assumed by the City.</p>	<p>Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and delete. Delete Policy 1.5.</p>
<p>Program 1.5.2 Determine eligibility requirements and plans for types of loans and repayment plans.</p> <p>Target Date: January 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Board of Directors and staff of Corporation</p>	<p>The nonprofit has disbanded, but the City will initiate a program to replace it similar to the Palm Desert BEGIN Program. The City is considering a program similar to the BEGIN Program (the "Program") which provides a deferred repayment loan of up to \$30,000 to low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers to facilitate the purchase of a new single-family home. The Palm Desert program provides first time homebuyer loans for homes at Falcon Crest, a residential community in the City of Palm Desert which has been recognized by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as a BEGIN project.</p>	<p>Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and amend to revise to focus on a BEGIN program and delete.</p>
<p>Program 1.5.3 Solicit funds from San Bernardino County, The State of California, and the Federal Government to act as the base funds to begin funding the program.</p> <p>Target Date: May 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Board of Directors and staff of Corporation</p>	<p>The nonprofit has been disbanded and the City would like to initiate a program that would capture funds from listed entities.</p>	<p>Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and delete.</p>
<p>Program 1.5.4 Make people aware of the availability of this program.</p> <p>Target Date: June 2005 ongoing</p>	<p>Program has been disbanded, but the City would like to begin sharing a new program in its place that the City would need to create.</p>	<p>Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program</p>

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
<p>Responsible Agency: Board of Directors and staff of Corporation</p>		under Policy 1.4 and delete.
<p>Policy 1.6: Continue to uphold the requirements of the Fair Housing Act to ensure equal housing opportunities for all Needles residents regardless of age, sex, race, marital status, ethnic background, income, or other arbitrary factors.</p>		
<p>Target Date: Ongoing</p> <p>Responsible Agency: All Departments-lead agency Community Development</p>		
<p>Program 1.6.1 Disseminate materials to inform the public of Fair Housing laws by displaying them at the materials at the public library, senior center, and City Administrative offices.</p>	<p>Yes, the City works with the Housing Authority to spread materials. The materials are available at the library and City Hall Administrative offices.</p>	<p>Amend to combine with Program 1.6.2 and continue.</p>
<p>Target Date: November 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development Department</p>		
<p>Program 1.6.2 Include within the materials disseminated, information of the agency to contact if a violation of fair housing is alleged.</p>	<p>Yes, the City works with the Housing Authority to spread materials that include information about the agency to contact in the case of an alleged violation of fair housing laws.</p>	<p>Combine into Program 1.6.1 and delete.</p>
<p>Target Date: November 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development Department</p>		
<p>Program 1.6.3 Review the City regulations to analyze and determine whether there are potential constraints on the development, maintenance and improvement of housing intended for persons with disabilities, elderly, large families, and persons in need of emergency shelter. This analysis will include an evaluation of existing land use controls, permit and processing procedures and building codes. If any constraints are found in these areas, the</p>	<p>The City adopted reasonable accommodation procedure into its zoning in July 2019. During our recent community outreach for the Housing Element it was mentioned that there were no potential constraints in our current zoning. With numerous acres available for new housing we are currently not constrained by land use. Instead, we are constrained mainly by investment.</p>	<p>Delete.</p>

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
<p>city will initiate actions to address these constraints, including removing the constraints or providing reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Target Date: 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development Department</p>		
<p>Policy 1.7: Continue to offer incentives aimed at production of new housing within the City of Needles. Such incentives include offering sites for construction and little or no cost to the developer if the project is compatible with the needs of the community and this element. Other incentives can include fee waivers. When offering incentives, it is important to determine the appropriate use of the specific land being offered as to whether it is appropriate for multifamily or low-income projects. Determinations will be based upon what other properties have recently developed within the time frame of the Housing Element of the General Plan, how is the property located in relation to schools, bus services, shopping, or other services, and what are the uses surrounding the property being analyzed.</p>	<p>In 2018 the City reduced its Development Impact Fee (DIF) for both North and South Needles for residential housing development. For 10 years the DIF was frozen (holiday) to attract new residential development. The City held talks with the School District, which resulted in removing the DIF for residential development. The City has not increased its entitlement fee. The City has initiated the sale of vacant surplus property to generate revenue. The City has initiated an economic development incentive program that would pay for fees and off-site infrastructure for homebuilders.</p>	<p>Amend to make scope of program consistent with current City efforts and continue.</p>
<p>Goal 2.0: Encourage sound growth in the City by designating suitable sites for residential development.</p>		
<p>Policy 2.4: Encourage the development of larger unit sizes in multifamily rental projects and second units on single-family lots in order to alleviate overcrowding. Encouragement of larger units will be accomplished by only allowing density bonuses to projects that build at least half of their units as larger 3-bedroom units.</p>	<p>The City has not had any requests for multifamily development, and no permits have been issued. The City has an ordinance that allows second family dwellings on single-family lots (Zoning Code Section 96.08). The City updated the accessory dwelling unit and density bonus</p>	<p>Amend to reflect updates to zoning and continue.</p>

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
	zoning regulations in July 2019. Granting of density bonuses are not limited to projects with units larger than 3 bedrooms.	
Goal 3.0 Improve and conserve existing residential neighborhoods.		
Policy 3.3: Protect architecturally significant residences and neighborhoods.		
Program 3.3.1		
<p>Assist with providing information on availability of assistance for architecturally significant residences</p> <p>Target Date: ongoing</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development</p>	<p>The City hasn't yet created information about the availability of assistance for architecturally significant residences.</p>	<p>Delete.</p>
Program 3.3.2		
<p>Creation of a historic inventory and formation of appropriate ordinances to preserve the historic structures where feasible.</p> <p>Target Date: ongoing</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Community Development</p>	<p>The City hasn't yet created a historic inventory or adopted historic preservation ordinances.</p>	<p>Delete.</p>
Policy 3.5: Create programs through the Redevelopment Agency and Housing Authority to grant low interest loans or other programs to encourage the repair of substandard residences.		
<p>Target Date: 2005</p> <p>Responsible Agency: Development Services Department, Redevelopment Agency, Housing Authority</p>	<p>The City works with the County using Community Development Block Grants. The City will initiate a program to replace the programs previously supplied by the Redevelopment Agency. The City is considering a program similar to the Palm Desert BEGIN Program. The BEGIN the Program provides a deferred repayment loan of up to \$30,000 to low and moderate income first time homebuyers to facilitate the purchase of a new single-family home at Falcon Crest, a residential community in the City of Palm Desert which has been recognized by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as a BEGIN project.</p>	<p>Amend to remove reference to Redevelopment Agency and continue.</p>

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
Goal 5.0: Create Programs to Conserve Energy to assist in the reduction of housing costs.		
Policy 5.2:	The City shall strive to make all City-owned buildings as energy efficient as possible.	
Target Date: ongoing	Yes, the City strives to make all City-owned buildings as energy efficient as possible with the funding that is available for this activity. The City can seek grant funds to secure any needed additional funding.	Combine into Policy 5.1 and delete.
Responsible Agency: Building Department and Utility Department		
Policy 5.4:	The City will form a program to assist homeowners to identify areas in their home or practices that waste energy and will attempt to offer incentives for rectifying such problems.	
Target Date: ongoing	Yes, the City participates in numerous programs to conserve energy with programs that provide Energy Star appliances, solar screens, HVAC systems, toilet replacement, windows, and doors.	Combine into Program 1.3.1 and delete.
Responsible Agency: Utility Department		
Policy 5.5:	The City will take every opportunity reasonably possible to educate the public about energy use within the City.	
Target Date: ongoing	Yes, the City works closely with the school district to provide energy efficiency. The City provides marketing materials and also educates the public through community meetings and guest speakers.	Combine into Program 1.3.1 and delete.
Responsible Agency: Utility Department		
Policy 5.6:	The City will create an alternative energy ordinance and encourage other viable forms of alternative energy and will seek grants to be able to offer incentives.	
Target Date: September 2005	Yes, the City created Ordinance 572-AC to streamline the permitting process for solar energy systems. The City also encourages solar and wind as alternative forms of energy. The City seeks grants to offer incentives for alternative energy use.	Delete.
Responsible Agency: Utility Department.		
Goal 6.0: Implement a housing program through the newly formed 501(c)(3) created to become a CHODO.		
Policy 6.1:	Form board of directors that will qualify the corporation as a CHODO to enable the CHODO to solicit grants and funds to finance the housing programs.	
Target Date: November 2005	The nonprofit was disbanded and a CHODO was not formed.	Delete.
Responsible Agency: Needles Community Enhancement Corporation through the Community Development Department		

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
Policy 6.2: Work with the Board of Directors to formulate a housing program that will include adoption of inclusionary zoning to require new development to participate in the provision of affordable housing.		
Target Date: December 2005	The City is working to initiate a new program to adopt inclusionary zoning.	Amend to remove CHODO related portions and continue.
Policy 6.3: Work with the Board of Directors to set forth housing policies that will allow the CHODO to become a funding source for the rehabilitation of older homes within the City of Needles for Affordable Housing.		
Target Date: March 2006 and ongoing.	The nonprofit was disbanded and a CHODO was not formed.	Delete.
Responsible Agency: CHODO		
Policy 6.4: Work with the CHODO to create a housing program to assist and encourage the provision of affordable housing for all income levels within the City including home ownership, rental, and rehabilitation loans at very low interest.		
Target Date: June 2006	The nonprofit has disbanded, but the City will initiate a program to replace it. The City is considering a program similar to the Palm Desert BEGIN Program.	Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and delete.
Responsible Agency: CHODO and the Community Development Department		
Policy 6.5: Fund loans for rehabilitating at least 5 homes in the City of Needles to preserve existing affordable housing.		
Target Date: December 2006 and ongoing with a target of 5 homes by December 2006.	The nonprofit has disbanded, but the City will initiate a program to replace it. The City is considering a program similar to the Palm Desert BEGIN Program.	Combine portions of this program that still apply to activities the City is conducting into one program under Policy 1.4 and delete.
Responsible Agency: CHODO		
Policy 6.6: Require the efforts of the CHODO to monitor any at-risk units and determine a program to preserve the units as affordable housing.		
Target Date: June 2006	The nonprofit was disbanded and a CHODO was not formed.	Combine into Program 1.2.3 and delete.
Responsible Agency: CHODO		

2005 Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs	Achievement	Amend/Delete in 2019 Housing Element Update
Goal 7.0: Coordinate efforts of the City's Redevelopment Agency with the goals of this Housing Element of the General Plan, to develop or rehabilitate and conserve the number of units as described in Section 2.7 above.		
Policy 7.1:	Determine what funds will be available from the Redevelopment Agency to assist with the goals of the housing element. At the present time it appears that most funds have been used either for debt service or to acquire properties at tax sale for use to encourage builders to build affordable housing or to rehabilitate older affordable housing. Since the debt service has been using up most of the funds available, until the tax base has grown and allows for additional funds, the Redevelopment Agency cannot participate more fully except to continue to pay for debt service and acquire tax sale properties to be used as incentives for affordable housing of a size and type needed within the community.	
	The Redevelopment Agency is no longer operational due to the dissolution of redevelopment statewide and no funds are available. This program will be deleted.	Delete.
Policy 7.2:	Work with the Redevelopment Agency to coordinate the assistance and use of previously purchased lots and homes to insure rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing in the proportion as identified in the chart at Section 2.7.	
	The Redevelopment Agency is no longer operational due to the dissolution of redevelopment statewide and no funds are available. This program will be deleted.	Delete.
Policy 7.3:	Apply for HELP funds from the CalHFA and any CalHome program as soon as this element has been accepted by the State to make low interest loans to existing property owners to rehabilitate the existing run-down homes in the community. All such loans must be made to either homeowners that qualify as low to moderate income or to owners that are willing to commit to renting to low- to moderate-income renters for a period of ten years. Low to Moderate income will be defined based upon the median household income levels used for such purposes in the County of San Bernardino for that year.	
	The City has not applied for these funds. The homeowners would be responsible for applying. This program will not be continued.	Delete.

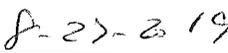
C. DETERMINATION:

(To be completed by the Lead Agency) On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Cindy Semione
Associate Planner
City of Needles



Date

D. PROJECT SETTING

The 2019 Housing Element Update will be the adopted policy and program document applicable to housing issues throughout the incorporated city limit of Needles.

The City is located in the Mohave Valley area of the Mojave Desert, a predominantly desert and mountainous region with a variety of contrasting and dramatic geographic features. The Mohave Valley is ringed by the major landforms of the Sacramento and Dead Mountains to the west and the Black Mountains to the east; these mountain ranges are the predominant natural and visual resources in the area.

E. OTHER AGENCIES APPROVAL

None.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following section adapts and completes the environmental checklist form presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The checklist is used to describe the impacts of the Project. For this checklist, the following designations are used:

Potentially Significant Impact: An impact that could be significant, and for which no mitigation has been identified. If any potentially significant impacts are identified, an EIR must be prepared.

Potentially Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: An impact that requires mitigation to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Less-Than-Significant Impact: Any impact that would not be considered significant under CEQA relative to existing standards.

No Impact: The Project would not have any impact.

1. AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Scenic resources in the area of the City include the Colorado River, which flows for approximately 10 miles along the eastern side of the City, and the Needles Highway (Interstate 40), formerly part of the historic U.S. Route 66 and currently eligible for inclusion in the State Scenic Highway System, but it is not officially designated as such.⁹

The Conservation and Historic Preservation Element of the City’s 1986 General Plan¹⁰ describes the natural and aesthetic value of the Needles area and outlines goals, policies, and measures to preserve and enhance these resources, including considerations for development. The City’s Land Use Element¹¹ establishes the type and intensity of land uses and the amount and location of development permitted

9 California Department of Transportation, “Officially Designated State Scenic Highways and Historic Parkways,” http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/, August 2019.

10 City of Needles General Plan “Conservation and Historic Preservation Element” (February 18, 1986).

11 City of Needles General Plan, “Land Use Element” (February 18, 1986).

within the City. The anticipated development capacity of the General Plan was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹²

The 2019 Housing Element Update describes the current status of housing across the City, progress made since the drafting of the 2005 Housing Element, and projections of needs for the next five years. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹³

Analysis:

a–b) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact to scenic vistas or scenic resources within a State scenic highway.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Further, the 2019 Housing Element Update includes policies intended to continue to make the City a nice place to work and live such as efforts to amend the zoning code with an aim toward beautification, including, but not limited to signage and landscaping requirements, among others.

All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. As stated, no officially designated State scenic highway is located in Needles. Potential aesthetic-related impacts are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. Any future development would be subject to the City's zoning requirements, and any potential impacts identified would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

13 City of Needles General Plan, "Land Use Element" (February 18, 1986).

13 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact to the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Discussion: As previously mentioned, the 2019 Housing Element Update includes policies intended to continue to make the City a nice place to work and live such as efforts to amend the zoning code with an aim toward beautification, including, but not limited to signage and landscaping requirements, among others. The City's current Zoning Code¹⁴ contains standards intended to preserve the natural beauty of the City and to maintain visual orderliness, including provisions related to building standards (height, setbacks, intensities), signage, screening of utilities in development, and outdoor improvements. All future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Zoning Code and undergo project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.

- d) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact to the creation of light or glare that would adversely affect views.

Discussion: Sources of light present throughout the City include urban uses and both interior and exterior lighting, streetlights, signage, and vehicular traffic, while sources of glare include highly finished building materials such as glass and steel, street furniture, and roadway traffic. The Project is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development. Nevertheless, all future residential development enabled by the City's General Plan is anticipated to introduce light and glare sources typical of existing development, and all future development in the City would be subject to the City's zoning requirements. The City's current Zoning Code¹⁵ contains lighting requirements intended to maintain public health, safety, and welfare from noxious or offensive illumination, glare, or similar effects. All future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Zoning Code and undergo project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.

14 City of Needles, Municipal Zoning Code, 2008.

15 City of Needles, Municipal Zoning Code, 2008.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</p>				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use, or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City’s Land Use Element¹⁶ establishes the type, amount, and intensity of land uses permitted within the City, and the Land Use Map¹⁷ shows the desired distribution and location of development. The City’s

16 City of Needles General Plan, “Land Use Element” (February 18, 1986).
17 City of Needles General Plan Land Use Map, redrawn February 28, 1998.

General Plan Land Use Map does not designate any portion of the City for farmland, agriculture, forestland, or timberland.¹⁸

The City is primarily characterized by urban and vacant lands, with no portion of the City used for agriculture, forestland, or timber property. The City and its environs do not contain any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, or any farmland subject to a Williamson Act contract.¹⁹

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.

Analysis:

a–e) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact to Farmland, agricultural uses, or lands subject to a Williamson Act contract, nor would it conflict with cause rezoning of, forestland, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. The Project would result in No Impacts related to the loss or potential loss of forestland or Farmland, nor would the Project result in the conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural uses or forestland to nonforest uses.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update involves an update of the City's 2005 Housing Element. There are no provisions contained in the 2019 Housing Element Update to convert Prime Farmland or any farmland of unique or Statewide importance. In addition, there are no changes to land use designations or zoning, or development proposed on forestland or land or timber property zoned Timberland Production. There are also no proposals that would conflict with existing agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract, or result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use, or conversion or loss of forest land.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

¹⁸ City of Needles General Plan Land Use Map, redrawn February 28, 1998.

¹⁹ California Department of Conservation, California Important Farmland Finder, interactive map, accessed July 2019, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>.

3. AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City is located within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (Air Basin), which consists of the eastern portions of San Bernardino, Riverside counties as well as portions of Kern and Los Angeles Counties. The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) has primary responsibility for regulating stationary sources of air pollution within the Air Basin. The MDAQMD is geographically the second largest of the State’s 35 air districts. As the air pollution control agency for San Bernardino County’s High Desert and Riverside County’s Palo Verde Valley, the District has primary responsibility for regulating stationary sources of air pollution located within its jurisdictional boundaries. Air Monitoring staff operates and maintains six monitoring stations (Barstow, Hesperia, Phelan, Trona, Twentynine Palms, & Victorville) within the District’s 20,000+ mile jurisdiction. Regulatory oversight for air quality is provided by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) at the State level and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IX office at the federal level.²⁰

Air quality is affected by various emissions sources (mobile, industry, etc.) and by atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, temperature, and rainfall. The EPA has established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for seven air pollution constituents. As permitted by the federal Clean Air Act, California has adopted more stringent air emissions standards and expanded the number of regulated

²⁰ California Air Resources Board (CARB), Annual Network Plan, (June 2016).

air constituents. CARB is required to designate areas of the State as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for any State standard. An “attainment” designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations do not violate the standard for that pollutant in that area. A “nonattainment” designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once. The City is located in the southeastern portion of the Air Basin; this portion of the Air Basin is currently listed as “non-attainment” for the federal air quality standard related to respirable particulate matter (PM₁₀) and the State air quality standards related to PM₁₀ and ozone (O₃).²¹ Both ozone and PM₁₀ are considered regional pollutants, because their concentrations are not determined by proximity to individual sources, but show a relative uniformity over a region.

The federal and California Clean Air Acts require MDAQMD achieve certain standards for PM₁₀ and O₃. MDAQMD prepared its *PM₁₀ Attainment Plan Final Report* in July 1995 and its *Ozone Attainment Plan (State and Federal)* in April 2004.²² MDAQMD’s *PM₁₀ Attainment Plan Final Report* includes requirements for construction activities to mitigate PM₁₀ emissions and its *Ozone Attainment Plan (State and Federal)* references the district’s control measures in place affecting ozone precursor emissions.

The City’s Land Use Element²³ contains policies and measures related to maintaining air quality in residential neighborhoods, including protecting neighborhoods from air pollution- and odor-generating activities through site-specific environmental review and appropriate development buffers.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.²⁴

Analysis:

a–b) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact related to conflict with or obstruction of implementation of any applicable air quality plan, nor would it result in a cumulatively

21 CARB, Area Designations Maps / State and National, accessed July 2019, <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/desig/adm/adm.htm>.

22 Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD), “Rules & Regulations,” accessed July 2019, <http://mdaqmd.ca.gov/rules/overview>.

23 City of Needles General Plan, “Land Use Element” (February 18, 1986).

24 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.

Discussion: The City is located within a portion of the Air Basin that is currently designated non-attainment for ozone and PM₁₀, and MDAQMD has prepared air quality management plans for both pollutants. The Project would not directly result in construction or development activity, nor would it enable development beyond that which is currently provided for in the City's General Plan. The number of residential units that could be developed under the 2019 Housing Element Update are consistent with the City's current General Plan and zoning designations. Potential air quality-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site is known. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development air quality standards, and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact. Short-term air quality impacts resulting from construction activities, such as dust generated by clearing and grading activities, exhaust emissions from gas- and diesel-powered construction equipment, and vehicular emissions associated with the commuting of construction workers will be subject to MDAQMD air quality management plans identified above and all other relevant MDAQMD rules and regulations.

As such, implementation of the 2019 Housing Element Update would not create any significant or adverse impacts related to conflict with or obstruction of implementation of any applicable air quality plan and would therefore not contribute to any cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the region is nonattainment.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Discussion: As mentioned, the 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities, or residential densities, nor does it directly enable construction or development activities. Potential air quality-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site is known. The City's Land Use Element²⁵ contains policies and measures related to maintaining air quality in residential neighborhoods, including protecting

25 City of Needles General Plan, "Land Use Element" (February 18, 1986).

neighborhoods from air pollution-generating activities through site-specific environmental review and appropriate development buffers. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to the development review process and any potential impacts identified would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

- d) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related nor would it result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Discussion: Impacts would be considered potentially significant if the Project were to result in the creation of objectionable odors with the potential to affect substantial numbers of people, or if construction or operation of the Project would result in the creation of nuisance odors that would be noxious to a substantial number of people. The City's Land Use Element²⁶ contains policies and measures related to maintaining air quality in residential neighborhoods, including protecting neighborhoods from odor-generating activities through site-specific environmental review and appropriate development buffers.

Residential development, such as that described in the 2019 Housing Element Update, is not a land use typically associated with odor complaints or noxious emissions. The Project would not directly enable construction or development activities upon implementation. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to the development review process and any potential impacts identified would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

26 City of Needles General Plan, "Land Use Element" (February 18, 1986).

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including but not limited to marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City is located in the Mohave Valley area of the Mojave Desert. The Conservation and Historic Preservation Element of the City’s General Plan notes that the Needles area contains important desert vegetation and wildlife habitats.²⁷

²⁷ City of Needles General Plan “Conservation and Historic Preservation Element” (February 18, 1986).

The Colorado River, which borders the eastern side of the City, supports a range of vegetation types and species near its banks, including Mesquite and Tamarisk thickets, Creosote Bush, Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia*), Catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), alfileria, cacti, and Galleta Grass and other grasses. A number of wildlife species are known to occur in the Needles area, including fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species as identified in the Technical Background Reports for the City's General Plan, including sensitive and State and federally listed species.²⁸ The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB)²⁹ was used to conduct a 9-quadrant survey across Needles and its environs (Needles, Needles NE, Needles SW, Needles NW, Needles SW, Bannock, Flattop Mountain, Monumental Pass, Stepladder Mountains NE, and Whale Mountain quadrants) to determine the presence of sensitive biological resources, including State and federally listed species and/or candidate, sensitive, or special status species. Across these quadrants, 133 such plant and wildlife species were previously identified.³⁰ eBird,³¹ a collaborative enterprise managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is the world's largest biodiversity-related citizen science project, with more than 100 million bird sightings contributed each year by eBirders around the world.³² Common bird species historically observed in the Project area as noted in the eBird database include American Coot (*Fulica americana*), Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*), Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*).³³ Some of these species are protected by State and federal law.

The City's General Plan Environmental Assessment³⁴ states that future development and increasing urbanization may result in the loss of natural resources unless policies and programs are designed to preserve these resources. Accordingly, the Conservation and Historic Preservation Element³⁵ contains

28 City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, February 18, 1986.

29 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), BIOS, accessed August 2019, <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios/?tool=cnddbQuick>.

30 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), BIOS, accessed August 2019, <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios/?tool=cnddbQuick>.

31 Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird, <https://ebird.org/about>.

32 Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird, "Hotspot Map," accessed August 2019, <https://ebird.org/home>.

33 Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird, "Hotspot Map," accessed August 2019, <https://ebird.org/home>.

34 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

35 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

goals, policies, and measures intended to mitigate potential impacts to natural resources in the area. Among these are policies to minimize water pollution and urban runoff into the Colorado River and to conserve critical habitat.

The City is under the purview of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program³⁶ (LCR MSCP), which implements a Habitat Conservation Plan created to balance the use of the Colorado River water resources with the conservation of native species and their habitats. The LCR MSCP covers over 400 miles of the lower Colorado River from Lake Mead to the southernmost border with Mexico, and includes lakes Mead, Mohave, and Havasu, as well as the 100-year floodplain along the main stem of the lower Colorado River. The LCR MSCP is intended to benefit at least 27 species, most of which are State or federally listed endangered, threatened, or sensitive species.³⁷ The LCR MSCP contains conservation measures to both minimize and mitigate the incidental take of listed species as well as contribute to the recovery of listed species and reduce the likelihood for future listing of nonlisted species.³⁸ Among these conservation measures are provisions related to habitat acquisition and protection, presence or absence and clearance surveys, species removal and relocation, species stocking/augmentation, and monitoring and research, among others.³⁹

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁴⁰

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

36 Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, "General Program," https://www.lcrmscp.gov/general_program.html, accessed August 2019.

37 Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, "General Program," https://www.lcrmscp.gov/general_program.html, accessed August 2019.

38 Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Final Habitat Conservation Plan, Volume II, page 1-6, December 17, 2004, https://www.lcrmscp.gov/publications/hcp_volii_2004.pdf, accessed August 2019.

39 Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Final Habitat Conservation Plan, Volume II, December 17, 2004, https://www.lcrmscp.gov/publications/hcp_volii_2004.pdf, accessed August 2019.

40 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Discussion: As discussed, the Needles environs has the capacity to house a range of plant and wildlife species, including State and federally listed species. All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Potential impacts related to biological resources are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. Any future development would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulatory requirements related to biological resources.

Further, the 2019 Housing Element Update includes policies intended to lessen impacts to biological resources, including policies to minimize housing construction in environmentally sensitive areas. Policies to maximize energy conservation and efficiency help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the effects of which are borne globally (including the loss of biodiversity). Additionally, future projects would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to mitigate potential impacts to natural and biological resources, including those contained in the Conservation and Historic Preservation Element as described previously.⁴¹ Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) Finding:** The Project would have No Impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS.

Discussion: As mentioned previously, the Needles area is recognized to contain important desert vegetation and wildlife habitats. Additionally, the Colorado River flows for approximately 10 miles along the eastern side of the City and contains a number of complex estuary and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as riparian habitat.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development activity. All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future

41 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including but not limited to marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.

Discussion: The Colorado River flows for approximately 10 miles along the eastern side of the City and contains a number of complex estuary and terrestrial ecosystems, including wetland ecosystems.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development activity. All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- d) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to substantial interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

Discussion: The City contains a considerable amount of natural desert vegetation with vacant lands interspersed with urban development. As such, the potential exists for nesting birds and other species to occur. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not proposed any land use or zoning changes, nor would it introduce new or intensified impacts beyond those evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- e) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.

Discussion: There is no applicable local policy or ordinance protecting biological resources that will be in conflict with the Project.

- f) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan.

Discussion: The City is under the purview of the LCR MSCP which governs the Lower Colorado River. As mentioned, the LCR MSCP contains conservation measures to both minimize and mitigate the incidental take of listed species as well as contribute to the recovery of listed species and reduce the likelihood for future listing of nonlisted species.⁴² The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development activity. Any proposed future development would require site-specific evaluation for the presence or absence of biological resources and any potential environmental impacts identified would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project is considered by the City, including required measures outlined in the LCR MSCP, as appropriate. Depending on the species listed in LCR MSCP, these measures include provisions for habitat acquisition and protection, presence or absence and clearance surveys, species removal and relocation, species stocking/augmentation, and monitoring and research, among others.

Additionally, all future development projects would be evaluated for their compliance with the aforementioned goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan, including the Conservation and Historic Preservation Element,⁴³ intended to mitigate potential impacts to natural resources in the area. All future individual projects would require adherence with these local and regional policies and measures related to biological resources. Incorporation of necessary and appropriate conservation measures contained in the LCR MSCP as part of any future development project would ensure compliance with the provisions of the LCR MSCP.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

42 Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, *Final Habitat Conservation Plan*, Volume II, page 1-6, December 17, 2004, https://www.lcrmscp.gov/publications/hcp_volii_2004.pdf, accessed August 2019.

43 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Human presence in the desert regions of California has been estimated to date as far back as 50,000 years or more; firm evidence of human occupation does not occur until about 15,000 years ago.⁴⁴ Historically, the Mohave people lived in scattered settlements along the Colorado River, including the Needles region, prior to European contact. Spanish exploration of the area first occurred in 1540 with the establishment of the mission system later commencing in 1769; the Needles region came under the jurisdiction of the San Gabriel mission founded in 1771. American presence in the area began with the establishment of Fort Mohave (circa 1848) 20 miles north of present-day Needles, and with later surveys for railroad routes and settlement activity.

Needles and its environs currently contain four resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and two additional resources listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).⁴⁵ These resources are listed as follows:

- Archaeological Site No. D-4 (#N1395, listed in the National Register);
- El Garces (950 Front St., #N2170, historic railroad hotel, listed in the National Register);
- Piute Pass Archeological District (#N255, an area encompassing the historic Fort Piute, listed in the National Register);

⁴⁴ City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, February 18, 1986.

⁴⁵ California State Parks, Office of Historic Preservation, "Listed California Historical Resources," accessed July 2019, <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=36>.

- Topock Maze Archeological Site (#N678, site hypothesized to be a geoglyph, listed in the National Register);
- National Old Trails Monument (#781, Native American route later followed by Spanish explorer Garcés and his Mojave guides in 1776 and by Jedediah Smith in 1826, listed in the California Register); and
- Von Schmidt State Boundary Monument (#859, a cast iron column erected in 1873 marking the southern terminus of the California-Nevada State boundary, later corrected to the present line, 3/4 mile to the north, listed in the California Register).

Archaeological and historical sites are protected pursuant to a wide variety of State policies and regulations enumerated under the California Public Resources Code (PRC). PRC Sections 5097.9-5097.998 also require notification of discoveries of Native American human remains, descendants and provide for treatment and disposition of human remains and associated grave goods.⁴⁶ The discovery of human remains is regulated per California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5.⁴⁷

The City's General Plan Environmental Assessment⁴⁸ states that future development and increasing urbanization may result in the loss of cultural resources within the City. Accordingly, the Land Use⁴⁹ and Conservation and Historic Preservation Elements⁵⁰ contain goals, policies, and measures intended to mitigate potential impacts to cultural resources in the area and preserve and rejuvenate historic structures and sites within the City. Among these are policies to protect the individual and collective architectural and historical heritage of Needles and to upgrade historical resources as viable.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁵¹

46 California Public Resources Code (PRC), Sections 5097.9-5097.998.

47 California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5.

48 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

49 City of Needles General Plan, "Land Use Element" (February 18, 1986).

50 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

51 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.⁵²

Discussion: All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Potential impacts related to cultural resources are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined.

The 2019 Housing Element Update includes policies intended to continue efforts to make the City a nice place to work and live through continued efforts to amend the zoning code with an aim toward beautification through planning considerations, including historic preservation measures. Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the discovery and proper handling of cultural and historic resources, including PRC Section 211083.2,⁵³ which requires avoidance and other measures in the event of discovery. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.

Discussion: Much of the prehistoric occupation of the Mohave Valley appears to be correlated with the presence of the Colorado River, with most of the earliest known sites in the valley located at or near the river. As such, these areas have the potential to contain archaeological resources or sites. Potential impacts related to archaeological resources are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined.

Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the discovery and proper handling of archaeological resources, including PRC Section 211083.2, which requires avoidance and other measures in the event of discovery. Additionally, future projects would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and

52 California PRC, Section 15064.5.

53 California PRC, Section 211083.2.

measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to mitigate potential impacts to archaeological resources. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to the disturbance of human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Discussion: The Mohave Valley, including the Needles environs, has contained human settlement that has been estimated to date as far back as 50,000 years or more; firm evidence of human occupation does not occur until about 15,000 years ago. Potential impacts related to the disturbance of human remains are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. While the Project would not directly enable construction or development activity, based on the cultural sensitivity of the area there is the potential to find human remains during subsurface grading activities associated with future residential development in the City.

Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the discovery and proper handling of human remains, including California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5. If the remains are determined to be those of a Native American, the County coroner shall notify the NAHC, who would ensure compliance with PRC Section 5097.98. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

6. ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Energy is commonly consumed in the form of electricity, natural gas, and petroleum-based fuels. According to the California Energy Commission’s (CEC) California Energy Consumption Database, the State consumed 281,120 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity in 2018,⁵⁴ with mid-level electricity demand projected to rise to 320,375 GWh by 2025,⁵⁵ the closest available projection year to the 2019 Housing Element Update’s planning horizon of 2021. The State is estimated to have required approximately 5,871 million cubic feet (MMcf) of natural gas per day in 2018;⁵⁶ Statewide annual gas requirements are projected to decline to 5,542 MMcf per day by 2021.⁵⁷ The County of San Bernardino (County) consumed approximately 15,323 GWh of electricity in 2018.⁵⁸

54 California Energy Commission (CEC), California Energy Consumption Database, “Electricity Consumption by County,” accessed July 2019, <http://ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbycounty.aspx>.

55 California Energy Commission, Demand Analysis Office, “California Energy Demand 2018-2030 Revised Forecast” (January 22, 2018), accessed July 2019, available at <http://www.energy.ca.gov/> (January 2017).

56 California Public Utilities Commission, *2018 California Gas Report*, pg. 20, accessed June 2019, <https://www.sdge.com/sites/default/files/regulatory/2018%20California%20Gas%20Report.pdf>.

57 California Public Utilities Commission, *2018 California Gas Report*, pg. 20, accessed June 2019, <https://www.sdge.com/sites/default/files/regulatory/2018%20California%20Gas%20Report.pdf>.

58 California Energy Commission (CEC), California Energy Consumption Database, “Electricity Consumption by County,” accessed July 2019, <http://ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbycounty.aspx>.

Electric service in the City is provided by the Needles Public Utility Authority (NPUA) and natural gas service is provided by Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest Gas). The City’s General Plan notes that energy providers have more than enough capacity to provide services to future growth and development.⁵⁹

A number of State and regional energy efficiency standards affect conservation, efficiency use, and management of energy resources and the long-term viability of limited and nonrenewable resources. Chief among these are Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the Building Energy Efficiency Standards.⁶⁰ Title 24 also includes Part 11, known as California’s Green Building Standards (CALGreen),⁶¹ which institute mandatory minimum environmental performance standards. The City’s Conservation and Historic Preservation Element⁶² contains principles and standards ensuring compliance with all State energy conservation requirements in future developments.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁶³

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during Project construction or operation.

Discussion: All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Potential impacts related to energy resources are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. The City’s Conservation and Historic Preservation Element⁶⁴ contains principles and standards intended to conserve energy resources through ensuring compliance with all State energy conservation requirements in future developments.

59 City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, Community Development, IV-17, February 18, 1986.

60 California Code of Regulations, Title 24.

61 California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11.

62 City of Needles General Plan “Conservation and Historic Preservation Element” (February 18, 1986).

63 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

64 City of Needles General Plan “Conservation and Historic Preservation Element” (February 18, 1986).

The 2019 Housing Element Update is consistent with the City's General Plan, including the Conservation and Historic Preservation Element,⁶⁵ by containing policies to conserve energy resources such as a requirement for all new City buildings to be constructed to meet or exceed the energy conservation standards in force at the time of their construction. The 2019 Housing Element Update also seeks to conserve energy through public education on the reduction of residential energy use.

Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to energy efficiency. Further, future development projects would be anticipated to incorporate site-specific infrastructure improvements, as necessary, and be reviewed by relevant energy providers to identify necessary energy facility and service connections. Additionally, future projects would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to mitigate potential impacts to energy resources. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to conflict with or obstruction of a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Discussion: Any future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to energy efficiency. Additionally, goals, policies, and programs related to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (as discussed in *Section F.8: Greenhouse Gas Emissions*) are closely related to reducing energy consumption, through the use of alternative forms of energy or sustainable design features.

Future projects would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to mitigate potential impacts to energy resources. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

65 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City is located within the Mohave Valley region, an area defined by gently sloping terrain. The Mohave Valley is bisected by the Colorado River and surrounded by mountain ranges characterized by desiccated alluvial fans and washes with gradients of 2–5 percent.⁶⁶

The City generally ranges in elevation from approximately 700 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to approximately 470 feet amsl near the Colorado River. There are no known active or potentially active earthquake faults in the Needles area. Faults are considered active if they contain evidence of movement in the last 10,000 years. Similar to most of Southern California, the broader area is a seismically active area and is subject to some level of ground shaking as a result of movement along the major active (and potentially active) fault zones that characterize this region. The San Andreas fault system, located approximately 200 miles to the west, could cause severe ground shaking in the City if the magnitude was severe.

The soils in the Needles area are the result of alluvium deposit of the Colorado River. Younger alluvium soils near the eastern side of the City consist of sand, gravel, and silt and offer excellent stability and drainage. Older alluvium soils underlie the majority of the City and are composed of sand, gravel, silt, clay, and piedmont gravels; these soils offer fair to good stability when loaded and fair to poor drainage. There is potential for the presence of substantial paleontological resources within the City, especially in fine-grained lacustrine sediments (clays, silts, and fine sands) that occur in aged river terrace deposits adjacent to the flood plain of the Colorado River.

Paleontological resources are protected pursuant to a wide variety of State policies and regulations enumerated under the PRC, including PRC Section 5097.5. The Safety Element of the City’s General Plan addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from natural and people-made hazards, including seismic issues, through a number of goals, policies, implementation programs, principles, and standards.⁶⁷ Chief among these are measures to ensure structures are brought up to the highest possible level of safety as determined in State and local building codes. Title 24 of the CCR, the

66 City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, Natural, Cultural, and Aesthetic Resources, V-10, February 18, 1986.

67 City of Needles General Plan, “Safety Element” (February 18, 1986).

California Building Standards Code,⁶⁸ establishes Statewide standards for development, including constructing with seismic concerns.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁶⁹

Analysis:

a.i-iv) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact related to the direct or indirect cause of potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, or landslides.

Discussion: No portion of the City is near an active fault or within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone mapped by the State Geologist and the California Geological Survey,⁷⁰ nor is it within an earthquake fault zone boundary or County-designated fault zone.⁷¹ All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Any potential impacts identified would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact related to soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Discussion: The Project is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development activities. Any future development in the City would be subject to State, regional, and local requirements related to the prevention of erosion of on-site soils, as well as discharge

68 California Code of Regulations, Title 24.

69 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

70 California Department of Conservation, California, Geological Survey, "CGS Information Warehouse: Regulatory Maps," interactive map, accessed July 2019, available at <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/regulatorymaps/>.

71 County of San Bernardino General Plan, San Bernardino County Land Use Plan, Geologic Hazard Overlays, plotted May 30, 2007, accessed July 2019, available at <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeoHazMaps/EKFKC.pdf>.

of other construction related pollutants, through the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Best Management Practices (BMPs). Additionally, future projects would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan Safety Element⁷² intended to protect lives and property. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to location on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

Discussion: The relatively flat topography of the City and its environs precludes both stability problems and the potential for lurching, which is earth movement at right angles to a cliff or steep slope during ground shaking. As described previously, the soils in the City offer fair to excellent stability. Any future development would be evaluated on a site-specific basis and subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- d) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to location on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994).⁷³

Discussion: Expansive soils are characterized as fine-grained, such as silts and clays, or soils with variable amounts of expansive clay minerals that can change in volume due to changes in water content. Collapsible soils typically occur in recently deposited soils that tend to be drier and more granular. Some of these soils may be present in the vicinity of the Colorado River. Nevertheless, any future development would be evaluated on a site-specific basis and subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-

72 City of Needles General Plan, "Safety Element" (February 18, 1986).

73 Federal Emergency Management Agency, "Expansive Soil Explanations," https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1825-25045-8152/expansive_soils_explanations.txt, accessed August 2019.

specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- e) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to having soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not propose any land use or zoning changes. There are more than 3,900 acres of land which are presently zoned for residential uses that have access to existing municipal services or could install septic systems.

Many residences in North Needles are required to use septic systems due to the lack of nearby sewer connections and actively utilize septic systems. If homes are able to connect to public services and do not, residents cannot be in the home. While soils in these environs are capable of supporting septic systems, the City has initiated a water and sewer study to extend water and sewer services to North Needles.

Nevertheless, any future development would be evaluated on a site-specific basis and subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- f) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to the direct or indirect destruction of a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

Discussion: All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Potential impacts related to paleontological and geologic resources are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. In the event that paleontological resources are discovered during future development projects, applicants will be required to comply with regulatory standards enumerated under in PRC Section 5097.5⁷⁴ which sets the protocol for proper handling. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future

74 California PRC, Section 5097.5.

development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Greenhouse gases (GHG) are global pollutants that have long atmospheric lifetimes (1 year to several thousand years) and persist in the atmosphere for a long enough time to be dispersed around the globe. GHGs are the result of both natural and anthropogenic activities. The quantity of GHGs that it takes to ultimately result in climate change is not precisely known, but that quantity is enormous.

No single project would be expected to measurably contribute to a noticeable incremental change in the global average temperature, or to global, local, or microclimates. However, it is the combined GHG contributions per project that create an impact. With respect to anthropogenic activities, motor vehicle travel, air travel, consumption of fossil fuels for power generation, industrial processes, heating and cooling, landfills, agriculture, and wildfire are the primary sources of GHG emissions. GHGs are a group of emissions that include CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, SF₆, and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃). The effects of GHGs are borne globally (sea-level rise, hurricanes, droughts, etc.), as opposed to the localized air quality effects of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants (TACs).

A number of State and local legislative initiatives, plans, and strategies have been adopted with the intent of curbing GHG emissions. In 2006, the State enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, which required the State to establish a GHG emissions cap for 2020 based on 1990 emissions. Senate Bill (SB) 375 was signed into law in 2008, which links transportation and land use planning with the CEQA process to help achieve the GHG emission reduction targets set by AB 32. As part of SB 375, regional transportation planning agencies are required to include a sustainable community strategy (SCS) in regional transportation plans. The SCS must contain a planned growth scenario that is integrated with the transportation network and policies in such a way that it is feasible to achieve AB 32 goals on a regional level.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the metropolitan planning agency for the Southern California region. SCAG’s 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy⁷⁵ is its relevant long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals. It is designed to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles by 8 percent per capita by 2020, 18 percent by 2035, and 21 percent by 2040.

As required by AB 32, CARB approved a Climate Change Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan) on December 11, 2008, as required by AB 32. The Scoping Plan proposed a “comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall carbon GHG emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, create new jobs, and enhance public health.”⁷⁶ The Scoping Plan has a range of GHG reduction actions, including direct regulations; alternative compliance mechanisms; monetary and nonmonetary incentives; voluntary actions; market-based mechanisms, such as a cap-and-trade system; and an AB 32 implementation regulation to fund the program.

SB 100, amended California’s Renewables Portfolio Standard to achieve a 50 percent renewable energy portfolio across the State by the end of 2026, a 60 percent target by 2030, and a 100 percent target by 2045. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁷⁷

Analysis:

- a) Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to the generation of GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.

Discussion: All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Existing

75 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), *Final 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, adopted April 2016, <http://scagrtpscs.net/Documents/2016/final/f2016RTPSCS.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

76 CARB, *Climate Change Scoping Plan: A Framework for Change (December 2008)*, https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/adopted_scoping_plan.pdf, accessed August 2019.

77 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

regulations and standards that would apply to any future residential development, summarized above, would significantly reduce GHG emissions associated with future projects. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to potential conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of GHGs.

Discussion: Any future development in the City would be required to comply with the latest California Building Code, including the CALGreen code, which help reduce GHG emissions through sustainable design and renewable energy considerations. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

At the federal level, the principal agency regulating the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous substances is the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), under the authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). RCRA established an all-encompassing federal regulatory program for hazardous substances that is administered by USEPA. Under RCRA, USEPA regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous substances. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulates transportation of hazardous materials between states.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulates hazardous waste in California primarily under the authority of the federal RCRA of 1976, and the California Health and Safety Code.⁷⁸ The Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL)⁷⁹ is the primary hazardous waste statute in the State of California and implements RCRA as a “cradle-to-grave” waste management system. The HWCL specifies that generators have the primary duty to determine whether their wastes are hazardous and to ensure their proper management. The HWCL also establishes criteria for the reuse and recycling of hazardous wastes used or reused as raw materials. The HWCL exceeds federal requirements by mandating source reduction planning, and a much broader requirement for permitting facilities that treat hazardous waste. It also regulates a number of types of waste and waste management activities that are not covered by federal law with RCRA.

The San Bernardino County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is an all-hazard plan consistent with the laws, regulations, plans, and policies listed above, and describes how the County will organize and respond to incidents.⁸⁰ The EOP describes how various agencies and organizations in the County will coordinate resources and activities with other Federal, State, County, local, and private-sector partners.

The Hazardous Waste and Substance Sites (Cortese) List is a planning document used by the State, local agencies, and developers to comply with the CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to develop at least annually an updated Cortese List. The City has two sites on the Cortese list.⁸¹ One is located 21 miles northwest of Needles and is from an old firing range, however this site was certified cleaned up as of 1/6/2009; the other site is located at 799 North L Street and is from illegal dumping and land disposal. This case is still active.

The DTSC’s online EnviroStor database and the State Water Resources Control Board’s online GeoTracker database are the primary information resources related to hazardous materials release sites in the State.

78 California Health and Safety Code (HSC).

79 California HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.5.

80 San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Plan, February 26, 2013, accessed July 2019, http://cms.sbcounty.gov/portals/58/Documents/Emergency_Services/Emergency-Operations-Plan.pdf.

81 Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, Cortese List, https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site_type=CSITES,FUDS&status=ACT,BKLG,COM&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+%28CORTESE%29.

The City contains a number of both closed and ongoing hazardous site cleanup cases,^{82,83} typically associated with former industrial or commercial uses.

The Safety Element of the City's General Plan addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and people-made hazards through a number of goals, policies, implementation programs, principles, and standards.⁸⁴ Among these are measures to mitigate the risk from the hazards of flooding, seismic, and fire; provide and maintain an emergency response system for the City; and ensure the protection of people and wildlife from hazardous materials in the community.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.⁸⁵

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not directly enable construction or development activity. Residential development, such as that described in the 2019 Housing Element Update, is not typically associated with heavy use of hazardous materials. Construction activities associated with future individual development projects would likely involve the temporary transportation, management and use of oils, fuels and other potentially flammable substances, such as paints, solvents and cleaners.

Any hazardous materials that may be present during operation of future individual projects are usually associated with landscaping and building maintenance. Nevertheless, any future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Any potential environmental

82 Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, accessed July 2019, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.

83 State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, accessed July 2019, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.

84 City of Needles General Plan, "Safety Element" (February 18, 1986).

85 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Discussion: Residential uses enabled by the City's General Plan are generally not characterized as substantial generators of hazardous materials, nor are they anticipated to result in upset or accident conditions involving the release thereof. Regardless, the 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not directly result in physical changes in the environment. Any future development would be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements concerning the proper handling, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- c) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the emission of hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

Discussion: The City contains a number of school facilities; however, potential hazardous material-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site is known. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to the development review process and any potential impacts identified would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- d) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to location on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Discussion: Potential hazards-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be evaluated in a meaningful way until a project site has been defined. As mentioned previously, the City contains

a number of both closed and ongoing hazardous site cleanup cases^{86,87} typically associated with former industrial or commercial uses, including on or in the vicinity of designated residential areas. Nevertheless, any future development would be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements concerning the proper handling, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- e) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area by being located within an airport land use plan or, where such plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public or public use airport.

Discussion: Needles Municipal Airport is a County-owned public airport, located within the southern portion of the City. Areas surrounding the airport are designated Industrial⁸⁸ and zoned Open Space;⁸⁹ the nearest residential community or area zoned Residential is over 2 miles to the north.⁹⁰ The *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* for Needles Municipal Airport identifies Runway Protection Zones, Safety Zones, and conservative 20-year projections of the noise impact areas near the airport, including 65 Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and 60 CNEL contours.⁹¹ The maximum recommended exterior CNEL for residential development is 60 dB.⁹² The *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* contains land use recommendations for development activities in the Runway Protection Zones and Safety Zones, including limiting densities and prohibiting uses

86 Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, accessed July 2019, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.

87 State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, accessed July 2019, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.

88 City of Needles General Plan Land Use Map, redrawn February 28, 1998.

89 City of Needles Zoning Map, 2012.

90 City of Needles Zoning Map, 2012.

91 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-7, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

92 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-6, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

which may present hazards to aircraft.⁹³ No portion of the Runway Protection Zones, Safety Zones, or noise contour areas are currently designated or zoned for residential development.⁹⁴

Any future potential development near Needles Municipal Airport would be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements concerning development in the vicinity of a public airport. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- f) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the impairment of or physical interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Discussion: Any future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the San Bernardino EOP⁹⁵ during construction and operation. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- g) Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to the exposure of people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Discussion: The City is not located within a moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zone known by CAL FIRE.⁹⁶ The Mohave Valley is sparsely vegetated and consists primarily of low-lying geologic formations.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

93 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 3-7, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

94 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-7, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

95 San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Plan, February 26, 2013, accessed July 2019, http://cms.sbcounty.gov/portals/58/Documents/Emergency_Services/Emergency-Operations-Plan.pdf.

96 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, "Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA," SE San Bernardino County, adopted November 7, 2007, accessed July 2019, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6780/fhszs_map63.pdf.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City is located in the Mohave Valley subregion of the Mojave Desert, an arid region with a desert climate. The Piute wash, which extends from the Sacramento to the Piute Mountains west of the City is the primary watershed for the region; the Needles area receives an annual rainfall of approximately 5.11 inches.

The Mohave Valley is bounded by the Sacramento and Dead Mountains to the west and the Black Mountains to the east. The physical geography of the Mohave Valley has resulted in multiple drainage

patterns that co-exist with urban development in developed areas. Most of the washes, drainage courses, and some of their surrounding floodplains are still undeveloped and can be considered as existing open space and are utilized as water collection channels in a serious storm event. The general course of drainage within the Needles area runs from the west to the east, ultimately leading to the Colorado River. The Colorado River flows for approximately 10 miles along the eastern side of the City and contains a wide floodplain.

The Safety Element of the City's General Plan describes the hydrological conditions present within the Needles area.⁹⁷ The Colorado River floodplain has a maximum width of approximately 5 miles in the Mohave Valley, near the City. Between the floodplain and surrounding mountain ranges are the dissected pediment or alluvial slopes. A pediment is a sloping surface cut across bedrock, adjacent to the base of a highland in an arid climate. Due to the lack of vegetation on these pediment slopes, runoff is great and cause erosion of the bedrock. The loads are deposited in alluvium forming fans at the bases of mountain slopes in the Needles area.

The City of Needles lies within the jurisdiction of the Region 7 – Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Region 7 covers approximately 13,000,000 acres (20,000 square miles) in the southeastern portion of California and includes all of Imperial County and portions of San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego Counties. Water and wastewater services in the City are provided by the Needles Public Utility Authority (NPUA). The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works, Flood Control District maintains an extensive regional system of facilities in the Needles area, including dams, conservation basins, channels, and storm drains, and is responsible for flood protection, water conservation efforts, and storm drain construction in the area.⁹⁸

The Environmental Assessment of the City's General Plan⁹⁹ identifies flood hazards associated with the floodplain bordering the Colorado River and notes that relevant mitigation is contained within the Safety and Land Use Elements. The Safety Element of the City's General Plan addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and people-made hazards, including

97 City of Needles General Plan, "Safety Element" (February 18, 1986).

98 County of San Bernardino, Department of Public Works, Flood Control District, "Flood Control District," <http://cms.sbcounty.gov/dpw/FloodControl.aspx>, accessed August 2019.

99 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

flooding, through a number of goals, policies, implementation programs, principles, and standards.¹⁰⁰ The Land Use Element contains policies addressing the City’s hydrological conditions such as discouraging residential development in officially recognized areas subject to flooding unless appropriate mitigations are developed, and ensuring that land uses are protected against potential erosion.¹⁰¹

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁰²

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact related to violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.

Discussion: Any future development in the City would be required to follow State, regional, and local regulations regarding on-site stormwater retention, so that surface waters and the groundwater aquifer are not contaminated with Project-related pollutants. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- b) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to a substantial decrease in water supplies or substantial interference with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

Discussion: All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Nevertheless, any future development would be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulatory requirements concerning the efficient use and conservation of water resources, including measures identified in the City’s General Plan. Any potential environmental impacts identified

100 City of Needles General Plan, “Safety Element” (February 18, 1986).

101 City of Needles General Plan, “Land Use Element” (February 18, 1986).

102 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

c.i–c.iv) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact related to the substantial alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site; substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or impede or redirect flood flows.

Discussion: Potential impacts related to drainage are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined.

The City’s General Plan Safety¹⁰³ and Land Use Elements¹⁰⁴ contain principles and standards intended to minimize risk posed to residential development from flooding or erosion. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works, Flood Control District would also coordinate departmental review and issue permits for any future development activity, land use permits, and general encroachment within the District’s right-of-way.

All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine consistency with State and local requirements, and that any potential impacts are less than significant. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

d) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact related to risking release of pollutants due to Project inundation in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones.

Discussion: The City’s distance from the ocean and a large water body precludes any risk from tsunamis or seiche conditions. As mentioned previously, a portion of the City adjacent to the

103 City of Needles General Plan, “Safety Element” (February 18, 1986).

104 City of Needles General Plan, “Land Use Element” (February 18, 1986).

Colorado River is located within a historically active floodplain. Additionally, both active and inactive alluvial fans and channels bisect portions of the City as they travel eastward to join with the Colorado River.¹⁰⁵

All future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. Nevertheless, any future development would be subject to all applicable federal, State, and local regulatory requirements concerning flood hazards, including measures identified in the City's General Plan intended to minimize impacts. Any potential environmental impacts identified from future development would be addressed through project-specific mitigation measures identified at the time a specific development project for is considered by the City.

- e) **Finding:** The Project would result in No Impact related to conflict with or obstruction of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

Discussion: The amount of development under the proposed Housing Element is the same or less than amount allowed under the General Plan. Development growth and its associated consumption demands have accordingly been anticipated previously.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

¹⁰⁵ Malmon, Daniel V. et al, United States Geological Survey, "Geologic Map of the Needles 7.5' Quadrangle, California and Arizona," 19, 2009, accessed July 2019, https://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/3062/sim3062_pamphlet.pdf.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the metropolitan planning agency for the Southern California region. SCAG’s 2016–2040 RTP/SCS¹⁰⁶ is its relevant long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals.

As described in the 2019 Housing Element Update, the City’s future housing need is based on population and employment growth projections over the 2013–2021 period developed by SCAG which constitutes its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). As shown in **Table 2**, the City has a total RHNA allocation of 181 houses of which, 19 are extremely low income, 19 are very low income, 29 are low income, 34 are moderate income, and 80 are above moderate income. As of December 31, 2017, as shown in **Table 4: Regional Housing Needs Allocation Progress**, the City had met 32 units of their total RHNA allocation.

The City’s Land Use Element establishes the type and intensity of land uses and the amount and location of development permitted within the City. The anticipated development capacity of the General Plan was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁰⁷

**Table 4
Regional Housing Needs Allocation Progress**

Income Level	RHNA Allocation by Income Level	Total Units to Date (2013-2021)	Total Remaining RHNA by Income Level
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¹⁰⁶ Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Final 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, adopted April 2016, <http://scagrtpscs.net/Documents/2016/final/f2016RTPSCS.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

¹⁰⁷ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Very Low	38	0	38
Low	29	0	29
Moderate	34	17	17
Above Moderate	80	15	65
Total	181	32	149

Source: City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action, Meeting Date August 14, 2018, State of California Housing and Community Development (HCD) Annual Progress Report for Housing Units Completed in Needles.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁰⁸

Analysis:

a) Finding: The Project would result in No Impact related to the physical divide of an established community.

Discussion: Consistent with the City’s General Plan, the 2019 Housing Element Update outlines the current status of housing across the City, progress made since the drafting of the 2005 Housing Element, and projections of needs for the next five years. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies areas to target residential development based on existing land use designations and an inventory of vacant land. Residential uses are targeted for development in areas across the City to establish high quality housing for a range of income levels.

b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact related to conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Discussion: Consistent with the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS’s¹⁰⁹ core land use strategy of increasing housing supply at a variety of affordability levels, the 2019 Housing Element Update provides an overview of the resources and opportunities that assist with the construction of new housing in the City. A number of resources are available that can assist with the development of housing, including vacant sites suitable for housing and financial resources for affordable housing

¹⁰⁸ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

¹⁰⁹ Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), *Final 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, adopted April 2016, <http://scagrtpsc.net/Documents/2016/final/f2016RTPSCS.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

development, rehabilitation, and preservation. The 2019 Housing Element Update includes policies which seek to incentivize housing production and promote a mixture of uses in proximity to transit and other amenities, consistent with SCAG goals.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is consistent with the City's General Plan, including the goals, policies, implementation programs, principles, and standards contained in the Land Use Element.¹¹⁰ Further, the goals, objectives, policies, and programs included in the 2019 Housing Element Update are reflective of measures contained in the Conservation and Historic Preservation Element¹¹¹ related to conservation of resources, including energy.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

110 City of Needles General Plan, "Land Use Element" (February 18, 1986).

111 City of Needles General Plan "Conservation and Historic Preservation Element" (February 18, 1986).

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Mineral deposits are rare geologic occurrences, widespread throughout San Bernardino County, being found in nearly all regions and environments. Past mining activity has involved the extraction of gold and silver from the Sacramento Mountains, and copper and black manganese from the Dead Mountains.¹¹²

To date, the City of Needles has no mineral resources areas classified and designated by the State Mining and Geology Board under the Surface Mining Reclamation Act.¹¹³ However, the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA)¹¹⁴ Plan indicates that the Needles area contains known and potential mineral resources. Known deposits of reserves or resource of strategic and/or imported and/or nationally important minerals lie four miles north of Needles. Potential locatable mineral resources lie about four miles west of Needles. The City of Needles lies in an area that has potential for leasable oil and gas. The Needles area has been determined “prospectively valuable” meaning it has similar geologic conditions to other areas where minerals have been extracted. The CDCA Plan also indicates that there are good supplies of sand and gravel in the Needles area.¹¹⁵

112 City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, Natural, Cultural, and Aesthetic Resources, V-10, February 18, 1986.

113 California Department of Conservation, SAMARA Statutes and Regulations, <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dmr/lawsandregulations>.

114 Bureau of Land Management, The California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980 as amended, https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/66949/82080/96344/CDCA_Plan.pdf.

115 City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, Natural, Cultural, and Aesthetic Resources, V-10, February 18, 1986.

A substantial adverse impact would occur if a project precluded the availability of a known mineral resource or loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. A majority of the City of Needles is classified as MRZ-2a, which is areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicates that significant measured or indicated resources are present. Areas classified MRZ-2a contain discovered mineral deposits that represent either measured or by such evidence as drilling records, sample analysis, surface exposure, and mine information.¹¹⁶

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹¹⁷

Analysis:

a-b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on the availability of any known resources that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State or result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

Discussion: The City of Needles is not designated as having any known resources. Although mineral resources exist, they are outside the City limits, and outside the boundaries of the General Plan.

The 2019 Housing Element is a policy document consistent with the General Plan. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies sites designated for residential development. The anticipated development capacity was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment. Per the General Plan Environmental Assessment, the General Plan provides goals and policies that address implementation procedures that will reduce the potential impacts on the cultural and natural resources in the area and preserve and rejuvenate historic structures and sites within the City.¹¹⁸

116 Department of Conservation, Mineral Land Classification of the Northeast Quarter of the Needles 1-Degree by 2-Degree Sheet, San Bernardino County, California, 1985,
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>.

117 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

118 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

The Project would have No Impact on the availability of any known resources that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State or result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

13. NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The greatest noise impact zones in the City are the railroad and I-40 corridors. These corridor areas have noise levels of 70 dBA and 75 dBA, respectively. Both of these corridors impact the adjacent residential areas. Another local source of noise is power boats on the Colorado River.

An average outboard power boat will produce peak levels of about 79 dBA at a distance of 500 feet.¹¹⁹ An environmental impact would occur from noise levels that exceed 85 dBA.

¹¹⁹ City of Needles General Plan, Technical Background Reports, Hazards VI-31, February 18, 1986.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹²⁰

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact associated with an increase in temporary or ambient noise levels.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update would not generate a temporary or substantial increase in ambient noise levels. All future development would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.

The General Plan Environmental Assessment contains mitigation that sets maximum noise levels for both interior and exterior areas. The Noise Element¹²¹ establishes acceptable outdoor noise level for residential (65 dBA), commercial (70 dBA), and Industrial (75 dBA) developments. Policies, principles, and standards included in the Noise Element address the issues of compatibility of land uses coordination of future developments with other agencies (where applicable) and subjecting new developments to the environmental review process.

Additionally, Section 99.10.01 of the City’s Municipal Zoning Code¹²² established noise standards that all residential projects must meet. These include the following:

- (1) For all dwellings and group quarters, the development shall be designed to achieve:
 - (A) Within each main building, a community noise equivalent level (CNEL) not exceeding forty-five (45) decibels.
 - (B) In outdoor areas, a community noise equivalent level (CNEL) not exceeding sixty-five (65) decibels, except that where it is not reasonably possible to achieve this objective, the development shall be designed to provide the lowest noise level reasonably possible

120 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

121 City of Needles General Plan, “Noise Element” (February 18, 1986).

122 City of Needles, Municipal Zoning Code, 2008.

within private open areas and/or common usable open areas of at least one hundred (100) square feet per unit, with access to such area available to the residents of each unit.

(2) Acoustical design and analysis shall be based upon the projected noise contours as shown in the noise element of the general plan. For all new residential developments, an acoustical analysis shall be submitted to the city as follows:

(A) For any residential development within a sixty (60) decibel CNEL contour, an analysis by a professional architect, engineer or building designer shall demonstrate that the required noise levels will be achieved.

(B) For any residential development within a sixty-five (65) decibel CNEL contour, an analysis by a professional mechanical or acoustical engineer shall demonstrate that the required noise levels will be achieved. Prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy, the building official may require tests by a qualified acoustical technician to confirm that the noise reduction achieved is sufficient to meet the requirements of this section.

All future development would be required to adhere to the policies, principles, standards, and mitigation as outlined in the General Plan Noise Element, the General Plan Environmental Assessment, and the City's Municipal Zoning Code. There would be No Impact associated with an increase in temporary or ambient noise levels.

b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact associated with ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and does not directly enable construction or development, and therefore will not generate any ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.

All future development would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. As previously mentioned, the General Plan Noise Element and General Plan Environmental Assessment contain policies, principles, standards, and mitigation that would ensure any new development would have less than significant impacts. There would be No Impact associated with ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.

c) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on people from noise levels associated with development within 2 miles of an airport.

Discussion: Needles Municipal Airport is a County-owned public airport, located within the southern portion of the City. Areas surrounding the airport are designated Industrial¹²³ and zoned Open Space;¹²⁴ the nearest residential community or area zoned Residential is over 2 miles to the north.¹²⁵ The *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* for Needles Municipal Airport identifies conservative 20-year projections of the noise impact areas near the airport, including 65 Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and 60 CNEL contours.¹²⁶ The maximum recommended exterior CNEL for residential development is 60 dB.¹²⁷ No portion of these noise contour areas is currently designated or zoned for residential development.¹²⁸

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document that would not directly result in the construction of any residential units, nor does it propose any changes to the existing zoning. Therefore, there would be No Impact to people from noise levels associated with development within 2 miles of an airport.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

123 City of Needles General Plan Land Use Map, redrawn February 28, 1998.

124 City of Needles Zoning Map, 2012.

125 City of Needles Zoning Map, 2012.

126 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-7, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

127 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-6, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

128 San Bernardino County Airport Land Use Commission, *Needles Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, page 2-7, February 1991, prepared by Ray A. Vidal, Aviation Planning Consultant, <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Airports/Needles.pdf>, accessed August 2019.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The population of Needles at the 2010 Census was 4,844¹²⁹ and estimated by the Department of Finance at 5,085 in 2019,¹³⁰ an increase of approximately 4.9 percent.

SCAG is currently preparing population growth estimates with the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority. Draft growth projections estimate that Needles could increase its population past 6,000 people sometime between 2020 and 2030. At this rate, the population is expected grow by 1.7 percent per year from 2016 through 2045.¹³¹

As of 2017, there were 2,107 housing units in the City of Needles.¹³² There were similar numbers of owner occupied and renter-occupied units in Needles, though there were slightly more owner-occupied units. As of 2017, the average household size had decreased slightly from 2.41 persons per household to 2.37 persons per household.¹³³

129 United States Census Bureau, City of Needles, Census 2010 Total Population, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk.

130 California Department of Finance, E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, January 1, 2019.

131 SCAG 2020 Regional Transportation Plan, Data/Map Book for the City of Needles.

132 United State Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

133 United State Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

The City’s future housing need to meet the SCAG RHNA requirements is based on population and employment growth projections over the 2013-2021 period. Based on these projections, the State assigns each region in California a RHNA allocation, which requires regions to address housing issues and needs (California Government Code Section 65584).¹³⁴ SCAG developed the RHNA for the Cities within the 6 county metropolitan planning area, and allocates to each jurisdiction its “fair share” of the projected housing need, based on household income groupings over the eight-year planning period. As shown in **Table 2**, the City has a current RHNA allocation of 181 houses of which, 19 are extremely low income, 19 are very low income, 29 are low income, 34 are moderate income, and 80 are above moderate income. As of December 31, 2017, as shown in **Table 4**, the City had met 32 units of their total RHNA allocation which included 17 moderate and 15 above moderate units.

The 2019 Housing Element Update recommends various housing programs to assist in providing housing for all income levels including extremely low-, very low-, low-, moderate-, and above moderate-income households. The 2019 Housing Element Update sets forth programs and policies to facilitate housing conservation, maintenance, and diversity, and no aspect of the Project involves the displacement of existing residents. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹³⁵

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would not induce substantial population growth and there would be No Impact.

Discussion: The Housing Element is one part of the General Plan, which establishes policy to guide the orderly development of the community. The City of Needles is in an urbanized area and does not have any geographic areas where substantial growth-inducing impacts could be caused. As mentioned, population growth is supposed to increase by 1.7 percent each year through 2045, which is not considered a substantial increase that could result in a significant impact. Additionally,

134 California Government Code Section 65584

135 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

the growth contemplated is mitigated through all the General Plan policies identified in the 2013–2021 Housing Element Update. Applicable General Plan Housing Element¹³⁶ policies include the following:

- Policy 2.1** Requiring that the current residentially zoned areas remain residential, and that the development within those zones be built to the density set forth for such zones.

- Policy 2.2** Promote a mixture of housing and commercial land-uses in downtown Needles to provide housing with access to commercial services for special needs households particularly elderly households and small business owners. Rezone the downtown area to allow for mixed uses and taller buildings. Specifically require that the new construction in the downtown area supply shops for commercial uses and/or office spaces on the ground floor with residential uses on the upper floors.

- Policy 2.3** Encourage development of those areas to coincide with public services. Specifically require by ordinance that development be built only in areas with adequate public services.

- Policy 2.4** Encourage the development of larger unit sizes in multifamily rental projects and second units on single-family lots in order to alleviate overcrowding. Encouragement of larger units will be accomplished by only allowing density bonuses to projects that build at least half of their units as larger 3-bedroom units.

- Policy 2.5** Minimize housing construction in environmentally sensitive areas.

Accordingly, the Project would not induce substantial population growth and there would be No Impact.

b) Finding: There would be No Impact from displacement to existing housing or resident from adoption of the Project.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies almost 4,000 acres of residentially zoned vacant land where approximately 65,181 units could realistically be built. The 2019 Housing Element Update in and of itself would not result in construction or development, however, since there is only

136 2013-2021 Housing Element Update

149 units needed to meet the current (2013 to 2021) RHNA allocation, demolition of existing housing or displacement of existing people would not be necessary. There would be No Impact to existing housing or residents.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v. Other public services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Fire Protection

Fire protection in the City of Needles is provided by the County of San Bernardino Fire Department which consists of 681 fire suppression personnel, which includes 25 battalion chiefs. The City of Needles is located within Division 4, South Desert of the County which had a total of 11,862 fire and medical incidents from 2017-2018.¹³⁷ San Bernardino County Fire Station #32 serves the City of Needles and is located at 1113 East Broadway Street.¹³⁸

Law Enforcement

The City of Needles is contracted with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department of law enforcement services. The Needles Patrol Station services the City and is located at 1111 Bailey Avenue. As part of the

¹³⁷ San Bernardino County Annual Report June 2017- June 2018.

¹³⁸ San Bernardino County Fire, Fire Stations, <https://www.sbcfire.org/FireStations.aspx>.

Sheriff's contract, the station, its personnel and the community have access to a range of resources offered by the Sheriff's Department; these include: Narcotics, SWAT, Arson-Bomb, Crimes Against Children, Homicide, Scientific Investigations/Crime Lab, Aviation, Volunteer Forces, and more.¹³⁹

Schools

The City of Needles is served by Needles Unified School District (NUSD). There are five schools within the City which include Vista Colorado Elementary School Grades, K-5; Needles Middle School, Grades 6-8; Needles High School, Grades 9-12; ETC Continuation School, 16-years and older; and Needles Community Day School, Grades 7-12.¹⁴⁰

The NUSD assess fees to assist in offsetting costs for new facilities resulting from development. The current fees that the NUSD charges as of March 12, 2019 are the following:

- \$3.48 per square foot for all new residential construction;
- \$0.56 per square foot for new commercial/industrial construction;
- \$0.02 per square foot for rental self-storage;
- \$0.52 per square foot for community shopping centers;
- \$0.45 per square foot for industrial parks/warehousing;
- \$0.56 per square foot for hospitality/lodging; and
- \$0.56 per square foot for senior housing projects.

Parks

The City of Needles has a total of 14 parks which include the following: River's Edge Golf Course, Rotary Roadside Rest, Cemetery, Duke Watkins Park, 3-Pete's Memorial Field, Needles Dog Park, Needles Skate Park, Ed Parry Ballpark, Franz Flower Ballpark, Nikki Bunch Ballpark, Jack Smith Park & Launching Facility, Rodeo Grounds, Santa Fe Park & El Garces Depot, and Manny Morris Beach Side Park. The parks account

139 San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Needles Patrol Station, <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/patrol-stations/needles/>.

140 Needles Unified School District, https://www.needlesusd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=232294&type=d&pREC_ID=531622.

for 162.82 acres within the City. The City's General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element¹⁴¹ has goals, policies, and principles that set standards for the existing and future open space areas within the City. Principle 8 states that Parks space in the community should be based upon four (4) acres of park area per 1,000 persons.¹⁴²

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁴³

Analysis:

a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact on Fire Protection services.

Discussion: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update would not impact fire protection services in a way that would require the construction or modification of public facilities. In 2018 the City modified its Development Impact Fee (DIF)¹⁴⁴ for both North and South Needles for residential housing development; the City also initiated an economic development incentive program, which pays for fire protection fees and off-site infrastructure for homebuilders.

The purpose of the DIF are to fund the design and construction of any additional fire facilities or fire fighters required to mitigate the impact of new development. At the present time, impact fees are applied to circulation system improvements, water source storage and distribution facilities, wastewater collection system facilities, and park and open space land acquisition and parkland development.

141 General Plan, "Open Space and Recreation Element", February 18, 1986.

142 General Plan, "Open Space and Recreation Element", February 18, 1986, Principles and Standards, Page IV-6.

143 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

144 Development Impact Fee Ordinance No. 607-AC, Adopted by City Council September 25, 2018.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development. Future developers would be required to pay development impact fees. There would be No Impact to Fire Protection services.

b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on Police Protection services.

Discussion: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update would not impact police protection services in a way that would require the construction or modification of public facilities. In 2018, the City reduced its Development Impact Fee (DIF)¹⁴⁵ for both North and South Needles for residential housing development.

The purpose of DIF are to fund the design and construction of any additional police facilities or officers required to mitigate the impact of new development. At the present time, impact fees are applied to circulation system improvements, water source storage and distribution facilities, wastewater collection system facilities, and park and open space land acquisition and parkland development.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development. Future developers would be required to pay development impact fees, however those associated with Police Protection would be paid for by the City. Payment of these fees by the City would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact on Police Protection services. There would be No Impact to Police Protection services.

c) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on NUSD or schools.

Discussion: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update would not impact NUSD in a way that would require the construction or modification of public facilities. School-related impacts depend upon the location and intensity of a project, by students generated per household, and the capacity of facilities in a given attendance area.

Legislative requirements for school development fees ensure that new development will provide necessary facilities to meet projected needs. However, State law does not require developers to provide for school sites within their developments.

145 Development Impact Fee Ordinance No. 607-AC, Adopted by City Council September 25, 2018.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development; future developers would be required to pay development impact fees.

The current development impact fees for NUSD are \$3.48 per square foot for residential and \$0.56 per square foot for commercial. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact on NUSD or schools. There would be No Impact to NUSD or schools.

d) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on parks.

Discussion: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update, would not impact park facilities in a way that would require the construction or modification of public facilities. Park-related impacts also depend upon the location and intensity of a project. The purpose of park fees is to fund the design and construction of parks and park improvements required to mitigate the impact of new development. At the present time, impact fees are applied to circulation system improvements, water source storage and distribution facilities, wastewater collection system facilities, and park and open space land acquisition and parkland development.

The City's General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element¹⁴⁶ has goals, policies, and principles that set standards for the existing and future open space areas within the City. Principle 8 states that Parks space in the community should be based upon four (4) acres of park area per 1,000 persons.¹⁴⁷

Any future residential development will be subject to applicable park improvement fees in effect at the time of building permit issuance. The current development impact fees for parkland facilities is \$549 per attached dwelling unit and \$726 per detached dwelling unit. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact on parks. There would be No Impact to parks.

e) Finding: The Project would have No Impact on any other public services.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development and would therefore not have any impacts on other public services.

¹⁴⁶ City of Needles General Plan, "Open Space and Recreation Element", February 18, 1986.

¹⁴⁷ City of Needles General Plan, "Open Space and Recreation Element", February 18, 1986, Principles and Standards, Page IV-6.

Future development would be required to assess their impact against any and all public services.
There would be No Impact to public services.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

16. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City of Needles has a total of 14 parks which include: River’s Edge Golf Course, Rotary Roadside Rest, Cemetery, Duke Watkins Park, 3-Pete’s Memorial Field, Needles Dog Park, Needles Skate Park, Ed Parry Ballpark, Franz Flower Ballpark, Nikki Bunch Ballpark, Jack Smith Park & Launching Facility, Rodeo Grounds, Santa Fe Park & El Garces Depot, and Manny Morris Beach Side Park. The parks account for 162.82 acres within the City.

The City’s General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element¹⁴⁸ has goals, policies, and principles that set standards for the existing and future open space areas within the City. Principle 8 states that Parks space in the community should be based upon four (4) acres of park area per 1,000 persons.¹⁴⁹ The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁵⁰

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact on parks or recreational facilities.

¹⁴⁸ City of Needles General Plan, “Open Space and Recreation Element”, February 18, 1986.

¹⁴⁹ City of Needles General Plan, “Open Space and Recreation Element”, February 18, 1986, Principles and Standards, Page IV-6.

¹⁵⁰ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Discussion: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update would not impact park or recreational facilities in a way that would require the construction or modification of public facilities. Park-related impacts also depend upon the location and intensity of a project.

Any future residential development will be subject to applicable park improvement fees in effect at the time of building permit issuance. The current development impact fees for parkland facilities is \$549 per attached dwelling unit and \$726 per detached dwelling unit. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact on parks or recreational facilities. There would be No Impact to parks or recreational facilities. At the present time, impact fees are applied to circulation system improvements, water source storage and distribution facilities, wastewater collection system facilities, and park and open space land acquisition and parkland development.

The City's General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element has goals, policies, and principles that set standards for the existing and future open space areas within the City. Principle 8 states that Parks space in the community should be based upon four (4) acres of park area per 1,000 persons.¹⁵¹

b) Finding: There would be No Impact to or from recreational facilities as a result of the Project.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document that would not result in direct development or construction and would therefore not construct any recreational facilities or require the expansion of any recreational facilities. There would be No Impact to or from recreational facilities.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

151 City of Needles General Plan "Open Space and Recreation Element", February 18, 1986, Principles and Standards, Page IV-6.

17. TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Interstate 40 (I-40) is the major highway that travels through Needles, connecting Barstow to the west and Arizona to the east. Local transit service to and within the Needles area is provided by Needles Area Transit. Amtrak provides daily service to Needles station, on the Southwest Chief route operating between Chicago and Los Angeles.

The City of Needles administers the Needles Area Transit (NAT) and a dial-a-ride program for seniors and persons with disabilities; the NAT system transports approximately 34,000 riders each year. NAT provides deviated fixed route service on a single route within Needles. The service operates hourly, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday and for 4 hours on Saturday.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁵²

¹⁵² City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Analysis:

a–b) Finding: The 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact to transportation.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the General Plan. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies sites designated for residential development. The anticipated development capacity was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁵³ The 2019 Housing Element Update does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Any future development would be required to adhere to all programs, ordinances, and policies that address circulation.

The goal of the General Plan Circulation, Transportation, and Scenic Highways Element is to provide a complete and efficient circulation systems which takes into account convenience of access and safety while minimizing disruptive unnecessary traffic within residential neighborhoods.¹⁵⁴ This goal is met through policies and principles in the General Plan Circulation, Transportation, and Scenic Highways Element.

The General Plan Circulation, Transportation, and Scenic Highways Element includes the following applicable policies:

- Policy 2 improves the appearance of existing transportations rights-of-way and incorporates high standards of design when considering new transportation corridors, including streets, activity trails, walkways, and other related rights-of- way
- Policy 3 ensures that sidewalks, activity trails and walking facilities are extended throughout the City to allow for more convenient and safer pedestrian movement.

These policies are implemented by payment of the development impact fess which are \$888 per unit for detached and \$593 per unit for attached in north Needles and \$106 per unit for detached and \$71 per unit for attached units in south Needles. Payment of these fees and adherence to the goals, policies, and principles as outlined in the General Plan, would ensure that there would be No Impact to transportation.

153 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

154 City of Needles General Plan, "Circulation, Transportations, and Scenic Highways Element," 1986.

- c) **Finding:** The 2019 Housing Element Update would result in No Impact from roadways that would be considered hazardous.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the General Plan. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies sites designated for residential development. The anticipated development capacity was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁵⁵

The 2019 Housing Element Update does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Any future development would be required to adhere to all programs, ordinances, and policies that address circulation. This includes Policy 5 of General Plan Circulation, Transportation, and Scenic Highways Element which notes that projects within the City should improve and upgrade existing street systems to provide safe vehicular movements throughout the City and accommodate future developments. This would ensure that roadways would not be designed hazardously and there would be No Impact.

- d) **Finding:** The 2019 Housing Element Update would result in No Impact to emergency access.

Discussion: Any future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the San Bernardino EOP¹⁵⁶ during construction and operation.

Any potential impacts identified during the environmental review process would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact which would ensure that there would be No Impact to emergency access.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

¹⁵⁵ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

¹⁵⁶ San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Plan, February 26, 2013, accessed July 2019, http://cms.sbcounty.gov/portals/58/Documents/Emergency_Services/Emergency-Operations-Plan.pdf.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with the cultural value to a California Native American Tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (d) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

According to the California PRC Section 21084, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if the project “may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.” Assembly Bill 52 (AB52) specifies that a project with the potential for adverse effects on tribal cultural resources may be considered a significant effect on the environment.

The City of Needles, as the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA and as required by AB52, has consulted with the local Native American Tribes in the Project Area. Tribes that are located regionally include the Fort Mojave Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribe, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, and the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. Letters sent to these Tribes can be found in **Appendix A: Tribal Consultation and Responses**.

Consultation with these Tribes was initiated by the City on August 2, 2019. As of the release of this document, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians were

the only Tribes to respond; both Tribes noted that they had no comments or concerns and no additional information to provide as shown in **Appendix A**.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁵⁷

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact to any Tribal Cultural Resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k).¹⁵⁸

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document that would not result in direct development or construction. As noted, both Tribes that responded during the consultation process, did not have any comments or concerns. Similar to the Project, future projects would be required comply with AB 52 which requires consultation with any Tribes that request consultation.

The 2019 Housing Element Update would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in the local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k). There would be No Impact to Tribal Cultural Resources.

- b) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact to any Tribal Cultural Resource determined by the Lead Agency.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document that would not result in any ground disturbance. The Project is unlikely to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1.

157 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

158 California PRC, Section 5020.1, <http://www.search-california-law.com/research/ca/PRC/5020.1./Cal-Pub-Res-Code-Section-5020.1/text.html>.

The City has not determined that any local resources are of Tribal significance, however, if a Project were to result in ground disturbance, the City, as Lead Agency, and/or Tribe would require appropriate mitigation. Additionally, as noted, both Tribes that responded during the consultation process, did not have any comments or concerns. Since the 2019 Housing Element Update does not result in ground disturbance, there would be No Impact to Tribal Cultural Resources.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

Water

Water service is provided by the City of Needles to the residents within the City and a portion of unincorporated area along the Colorado River which is surrounded by the City of Needles.

All water delivered to the City's customers is pumped from wells. Approximately 781 million gallons per year is pumped from four wells. There are approximately 66 miles of water distribution lines varying in diameter from 2-inch to 16-inches. Water storage capacity for the Needles water supply is provided by

two 1.5-million-gallon tanks for the lower pressure zone next to the Rodeo Grounds and one 1.5-million-gallon tank and one 100,000-gallon tank on Parkway Street for the upper pressure zone.¹⁵⁹

The current development impact fees for water source storage, and distribution system is \$2,625 per unit for detached units and \$1,423 per unit for attached units for north Needles and \$2,087 per unit for detached units and \$1,132 per unit for attached units in south Needles. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact to water source storage, and distribution system.

Wastewater

The City's Wastewater Department operates 19.25 miles of sewer line, 3.6 miles of force main, 4 lift stations, and 390 manholes in Needles. However, the system does not extend throughout the entire city; it runs from Victory Drive and Cherry Drive in South Needles up to Pashard Avenue in North Needles.

Many current residences in North Needles use septic systems due to the lack of nearby sewer connections. Reliance upon septic systems places some limits on potential North Needles development ;under Ordinance 542-AC, residential parcels in North Needles are required to be a minimum of one acre if both a well and septic system are required. However, the City of Needles Wastewater Department is able to connect all future housing sites to its wastewater system; as such, none of the sites in the land inventory are subject to this septic ordinance. The City has a 1.12 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant.¹⁶⁰

The current development impact fees for wastewater collection is \$1,542 per unit for detached units and \$803 per unit for attached units for north Needles and \$1,208 per unit for detached units and \$629 per unit for attached units for south Needles. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact to wastewater collection.

Electric

The City of Needles purchased the Electric Company in 1991 from CP National. The Needles Public Utility Authority (NPUA) is the agency that manages the utilities for the City and provides recommendations to

159 City of Needles, Water Department, <http://000nx6m.rxportalhosting.com/services/water-department/>.

160 City of Needles, Waste Water Department, <http://000nx6m.rxportalhosting.com/services/waste-water/>

the City Council through the Utility Board. City Council Members constitute the managing body of the NPUA. Natural gas services are provided by Southwest Gas.¹⁶¹

Since the City purchased their own Electric Company, it can decide if there are available resources to provide new development with electric services.

Natural Gas

From August 1, 2019 through August 7, 2019, the total supply for Natural Gas Production was 95.9 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d). Total demand for this week was 86.9 Bcf/d. Currently there is excess availability of natural gas to meet future development.¹⁶²

Telecommunications

Telecommunications are provided by Frontier Communications, and Golden Valley Cable and Communications.

Solid Waste

Solid waste services are provided by Republic Services which provides solid waste, recycling, yard waste, hazardous waste, and organic waste.¹⁶³ Republic Services transfers solid waste to the Mohave County Landfill, located at 7300 Mineral Park Road in Golden Valley, Arizona.¹⁶⁴

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City's General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn't previously evaluated in the City's General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁶⁵

161 City of Needles, Other Utilities Available, <http://000nx6m.rxportalhosting.com/other-utilities/>.

162 United States Energy Information Administration (EIA), Natural Gas, Natural Gas Weekly Update, <https://www.eia.gov/naturalgas/weekly/#tabs-supply-2>.

163 City of Needles, Other Utilities Available, <http://000nx6m.rxportalhosting.com/other-utilities/>.

164 Republic Services, Our Facility Locations, <https://www.republicservices.com/customer-support/facilities>.

165 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact due to the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update would not develop or construct any housing. The 2019 Housing Element Update identifies vacant land within the City that is available for residential development. All of the vacant sites identified have access to water and sewer, as well as the availability of electrical and internet service. None of the sites have slope constraints.¹⁶⁶

The purpose of development impacts fees is to fund the design and construction of infrastructure improvements required to mitigate the impact of new development. At the present time, impact fees are applied to circulation system improvements, water source storage and distribution facilities, wastewater collection system facilities, and park and open space land acquisition and parkland development.

The 2019 Housing Element Update contains policies that would ensure development would occur in areas where public services can be reached, including:

Policy 2.3 Encourages development of residential areas to coincide with public services and specifically require by ordinance, that development be built only in areas with adequate public services.

Additionally, the City recently implemented a “Water Efficient Landscape” ordinance to ensure the use of water-efficient plants and trees for areas requiring landscaping and providing a streamlined permitting process with reduced fees. This ordinance will help future housing utilize even less water.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development. Any future residential development will be subject to applicable water source storage, and distribution system improvement fees and the wastewater collection system improvement fees at the time of building permit issuance.

166 2013-2021 Housing Element Update.

The 2019 Housing Element Update would not directly result in relocation or construction of new electrical connections, natural gas connections, or telecommunications infrastructure, however, housing built under the 2019 Housing Element Update would likely need additional infrastructure. Future development projects and associated infrastructure would be required to comply with the CEQA Guidelines which would ensure that there would no impacts from new or expanded infrastructure.

The 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact due to the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

b) Finding: The Project would have No Impact to water supply.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update would not result in an increase in intensity and would therefore not result in an increase to consumption of water.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development. Any future residential development will be subject to applicable water source storage, and distribution system improvement fees and the wastewater collection system improvement fees at the time of building permit issuance.

Payment of development fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact to water supply.

c) Finding: The Project would have No Impact to wastewater collection systems.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update would not result in an increase in intensity and would therefore not result in an increase of wastewater generation.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development. Any future development would be required to adhere to the policies addressed in the City of Needles Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) for On-site Wastewater Treatment

Systems (OWTS) which addresses wastewater issues, City requirements, and scope of coverage for OWTS installation and maintenance.¹⁶⁷

Future residential development will be subject to applicable wastewater collection system improvement fees at the time of building permit issuance. Payment of these fees would ensure that future development would not have a significant impact to wastewater collection.

d–e) Finding: The Project would have No Impact in regard to an increase in solid waste generation or complying with applicable regulations related to solid waste.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not result in construction or development and would therefore not result in an increase to solid waste.

All future development projects would be required to comply with the State and local standards, and the federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. The 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact in regard to an increase in solid waste generation or complying with applicable regulations related to solid waste.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

¹⁶⁷ City of Needles Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) For On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), August 2, 2018, Department of Building and Safety, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_decisions/adopted_orders/orders/2018/0033lamp_attach.pdf.

20. WILDFIRES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near State responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

The City is not located within a moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zone known by CAL FIRE.¹⁶⁸ The Mohave Valley is sparsely vegetated and consists primarily of low-lying geologic formations.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁶⁹

Analysis:

- a) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact to any emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans.

¹⁶⁸ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, “Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA,” SE San Bernardino County, adopted November 7, 2007, accessed July 2019, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6780/fhszs_map63.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Discussion: The City does not have its own adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; however, San Bernardino County Fire Department runs and operates the Office of Emergency Services (OES). OES is a division of the San Bernardino County Fire Department that is responsible for countywide emergency planning, mitigation, and response and recovery activities. The OES works with all county departments and 24 cities, and many non-government organizations.¹⁷⁰

OES maintains the San Bernardino County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) which is an all-hazard plan consistent with State and regional laws, regulations, plans, and policies related to hazard mitigation and planning, and describes how the County will organize and respond to incidents.¹⁷¹ The EOP describes how various agencies and organizations in the County will coordinate resources and activities with other Federal, State, County, local, and private-sector partners.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document that would not construct any buildings and would therefore not interfere with the OES or the EOP. All future projects would be required to comply with all City and County requirements including OES and the EOP. There would be No Impact to any emergency response plans.

- b) Finding:** There would be No Impact due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors that would exacerbate fire risks as a result of the Project.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update would not construct any buildings and therefore would not expose any occupants to the risk of wildfire. However, it is unlikely that any future projects would expose any occupants to the risk of wildfire due to slope or winds.

The City of Needles is sparsely landscaped with desert vegetation and is generally flat, with an elevation of around 500 feet above mean sea level. The City also does not experience high winds, with the average from 2010 to the present being 8.6 miles per hour (mph).¹⁷² These factors would not contribute to any wildfires in the area. There would be No Impact due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors that would exacerbate wildfire risks.

170 San Bernardino County Fire Department, About OES, <https://www.sbcfire.org/oes/about.aspx>.

171 San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Plan, February 26, 2013, accessed July 2019, http://cms.sbcounty.gov/portals/58/Documents/Emergency_Services/Emergency-Operations-Plan.pdf.

172 Willy Weather, Needles, CA Wind Forecast, <https://wind.willyweather.com/ca/san-bernardino-county/needles.html>.

- c) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact from exacerbating fire risk or resulting in impacts to the environment.

Discussion: The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document and would not construct any buildings, therefore there would be no installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure. Future housing development would require infrastructure and maintenance. However, these developments and associated infrastructure, would be required to comply with the requirements of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines which would ensure that the Project would not exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact from exacerbating fire risk or resulting in impacts to the environment.

- d) **Finding:** The Project would have No Impact from downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff from post-fire slope instability.

Discussion: The City is sparsely landscaped with desert vegetation and is generally flat, with an elevation of around 500 feet above mean sea level. There would be No Impact from adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff from post-fire slope instability.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number, or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting:

As demonstrated, the 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact to Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfires.

The 2019 Housing Element Update is a policy document consistent with the City’s General Plan and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The 2019 Housing Element Update is a City-wide policy document and does not, in and of itself, enable future development that wasn’t previously evaluated in the City’s General Plan Environmental Assessment.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986.

Analysis:

a-c) Finding: The 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact on any environmental effects on a project-level or cumulatively considerable basis.

Discussion: Implementation of the 2019 Housing Element Update will not create any significant or adverse impacts and would therefore not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impacts. Potential site-specific impacts that cannot be known at this time will be addressed in conjunction with any development proposal submitted for the individual project sites.

The 2019 Housing Element is a policy document consistent with the General Plan. The 2019 Housing Element identifies sites designated for residential development. The anticipated development capacity was previously evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the General Plan Environmental Assessment. The 2019 Housing Element Update does not include any changes to land use designations, zoning, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Therefore, the 2019 Housing Element Update would have No Impact on any environmental effects on a project-level or cumulatively considerable basis.

Mitigation:

No mitigation measures are required.

G. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The 2019 Housing Element Update provides substantial benefits, including environmental benefits, to the community.

Environmental Benefits: Adoption of the 2019 Housing Element Update is part of the ongoing planning process for orderly, rational development of the community. As such, the 2019 Housing Element Update does not have specific environmental benefits, but will result in beneficial effects of contributing to environmentally beneficial aspects of the General Plan, such as establishing policy and programs to “achieve(s) a balance based upon expressed community values between what will be los(t) and what will be preserved or enhanced.”¹⁷⁴ The General Plan will also “preserve Needles’ rural recreational character even though some development will occur.”¹⁷⁵

Potential Adverse Impacts: The 2019 Housing Element Update will not have any potentially significant adverse impacts. The 2019 Housing Element Update does not control density or location of development. As discussed in the Project description, the 2019 Housing Element Update must be consistent with the other General Plan elements.

As required by State law, the 2019 Housing Element Update addresses internal consistency of the General Plan. The 2013-2021 RHNA, prepared by SCAG, assigns City of Needles 181 houses of which, 19 are extremely low income, 19 are very low income, 29 are low income, 34 are moderate income, and 80 are above moderate income. As of December 31, 2017, as shown in **Table 4**, the City had met 32 units of their total RHNA allocation which included 17 moderate and 15 above moderate units. The City has ample capacity to accommodate these units as demonstrated by the vacant land inventory found in Table 31 of the 2019 Housing Element Update. Vacant sites can accommodate an additional 65,181 units.

As a policy and action document, the 2019 Housing Element Update is consistent with the rest of the General Plan adopted in 1986. The General Plan Environmental Assessment is relied upon for its identification of mitigation measures applicable to the General Plan as a whole, including the 2019 Housing Element Update.

174 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986, Page 13.

175 City of Needles General Plan Environmental Assessment, prepared by Urban Futures, Inc., January 1986, Page 13.

H. POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

There are no potentially significant impacts as a result of the 2019 Housing Element Update.

I. MITIGATION OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

No mitigation measures are proposed to be adopted with the Negative Declaration for the City of Needles 2019 Housing Element Update.

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