APPENDIX D

Visual Impact Assessment
CV Link Transportation Project
(Moderate Level VIA)

Prepared by

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September 14, 2016

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
CV Link Transportation Project
(Moderate Level VIA)

September 14, 2016

California Department of Transportation
District 8, Riverside County
Segment: State Highway 111
Federal Project No. ATPL 6164 (022)

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Statement of Compliance: Produced in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, as applicable, to meet the level of analysis and documentation that has been determined necessary for this project.

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
CV Link Transportation Project
(Moderate Level VIA)

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CV LINK
CORE PROJECT FROM PALM SPRINGS TO COACHELLA

I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this visual impact assessment (VIA) is to document the potential visual impacts that may result from development of the CV Link Conceptual Master Plan project, and to propose measures to lessen any detrimental impacts that are identified. Visual impacts are demonstrated by identifying visual resources in the project area, measuring the amount of change that would occur as a result of the project for potential viewers, and predicting how the affected public would respond to or perceive those changes.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Description

The proposed CV Link core alignment project is a 49±-mile multi-modal transportation path comprised of a total of approximately 74.47± miles of possible alignment. The CV Link path will extend from Palm Springs to Coachella, in the Coachella Valley of central Riverside County. CV Link is a non-motorized, multi-modal transportation path network that passes through some of the most developed and populated portions of the Coachella Valley, providing access and connectivity between residential, commercial, recreational, institutional, and other land uses throughout the region, and providing recreational opportunities for pathway users. The project will provide a dedicated path that provides sweeping and intimate views of some of the most dramatic and iconic vistas in the Coachella Valley. It

will also pass through a range of open space, including the diverse vegetation and wildlife that can be viewed along the CV Link channel alignments.

The CV Link pathway route largely follows and will mostly be built upon the service and maintenance roads located atop the embankments and levees of local major drainages, including Chino Wash and the Whitewater River flood plain in the northwestern portion of the planning area, Tahquitz Creek in central Palm Springs, and the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel through the valley to the southern portion of Coachella. In areas where these major drainage corridors are inaccessible, on-street routes are proposed. Grade-separated crossings (bridges or under-crossings) of major roadways are proposed, as are other improvements described below.

CV Link is a multi-jurisdictional project being planned and coordinated by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG). The core alignment analysed in this VIA could extend across 12 jurisdictions, including eight incorporated cities and Riverside County, and Reservation lands of three Native American tribes. This VIA evaluates potential impacts associated with construction of CV Link's improvements, including planned overcrossings and other structures that have the potential to change or affect visual resources.

CV Link Design

The design of the CV Link cross-section will vary based on the width of available rights-of-way, variations in channel service road widths, public street configurations, and other local conditions. Generally, it will feature a broad paved path for Low Speed Electric Vehicles (LSEVs) and bicycles, and softer-surface narrower paths for pedestrians. Shade structures, drinking fountains, wayfinding, EV chargers and safety features will enhance the user experience. The CV Link is planned within and along existing flood control and transportation infrastructure, and nearly all permanent impacts will occur on previously graded flood control maintenance roads or paved public roadways.

The CV Link on-street experience is intended to remain as safe, comfortable and rewarding as the Link's off-street segments. On-street segments are designed to provide a higher level of protection than conventional LSEV/bike lanes. Wherever possible, routes are to be separated from roadways via curbs and planted buffers, similar to cycle track designs.

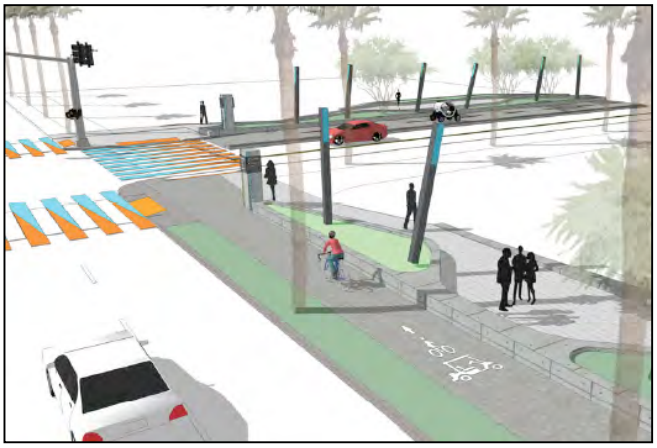
The design is intended to be distinctly recognizable as CV Link. Materials, forms, and color palette have been selected to be consistent with off-street segments. Patterns and colors in the pathway surface are also designed to be consistent as well as distinct from adjacent sidewalks, resulting in an intuitive navigational experience. Wayfinding signs are planned to further clarify the route where directional changes occur.

CV Link users traveling on-street lanes will utilize existing signal displays via dedicated through-lanes, two-stage turn boxes, and other innovations. CV Link users traveling on a pathway alongside the road may utilize independent phases in an adaptation of the Federal Highway Administration MUTCD

Interim Approval for Optional Use of a Bicycle Signal Face (IA-16), subject to engineering feasibility study and relevant agency approvals (See CV Link Master Plan Volume 1).

Blue and orange colored, high visibility "ladder style" crosswalks are proposed to unify the overall design along the entire route and help with wayfinding. The use of non-standard crosswalk colors is subject to approval by the California Traffic Control Devices Committee. Should approval not be granted, standard transverse white lines will be used with a more muted pattern between the white lines.

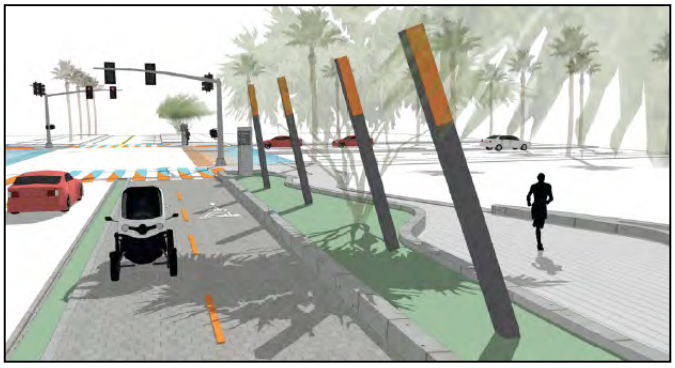
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (a regulatory signal also known as a HAWK) are Caltrans- and FHWA-approved devices that are planned at locations where no traffic signal currently exists and where traffic volumes warrant. CVAG is working with each city and the county to determine where signals and other traffic control and warning devices may be appropriate.



As noted above, CV Link is a dual-path system that includes a hard-surface path for faster modes of travel, such as bicycles and neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs), and a separate soft-surface path for slower modes, including pedestrians. The pathway(s) will be largely constructed on top flood control channel maintenance roads; however, in some locations, the project will share the public right-of-way with existing roads and trails, for instance the Tahquitz Creek Trail and the Jenkins Trail. Approximately 50 access points will be provided at key locations along the route, including parks, institutional facilities (library, visitor center), commercial centers, and residential neighborhoods. The estimated footprint of permanent impacts, including paths alignments and access point improvements, is 144± acres.

Three distinct channel configurations are envisioned based on existing levee and right-of-way conditions along the length of the pathway:

- West Valley: embankment and free-standing levees, wide right-of-way
- Central Valley: right-of-way adjacent levee
- East Valley: free-standing levee, constrained right-of-way



These configurations are illustrated below.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY

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CV Link Project
Regional Location Map
Coachella Valley
Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit

1

Source: Google Earth, 2016

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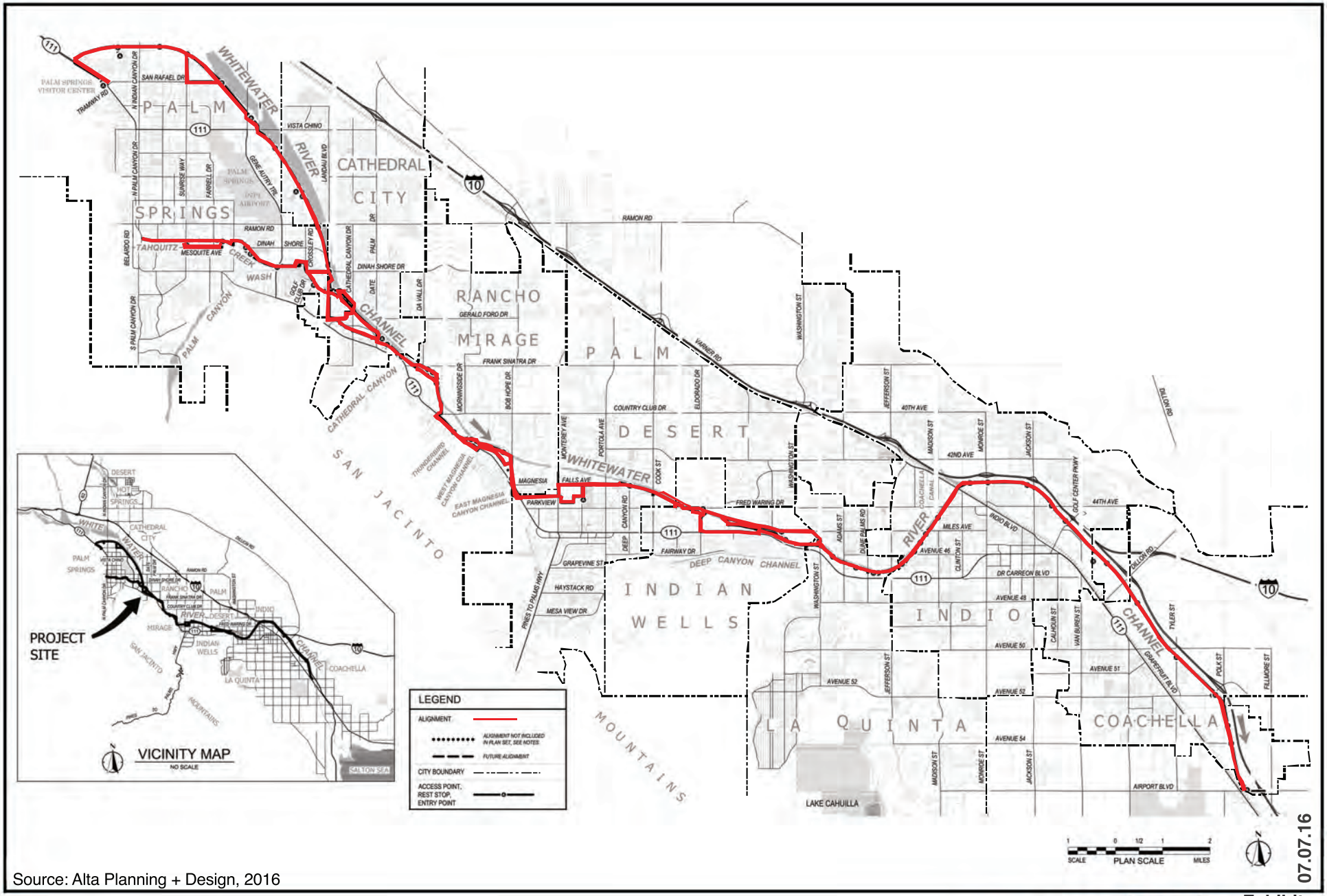
CV Link Project
Project Vicinity Map
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

EXHIBIT
2



Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

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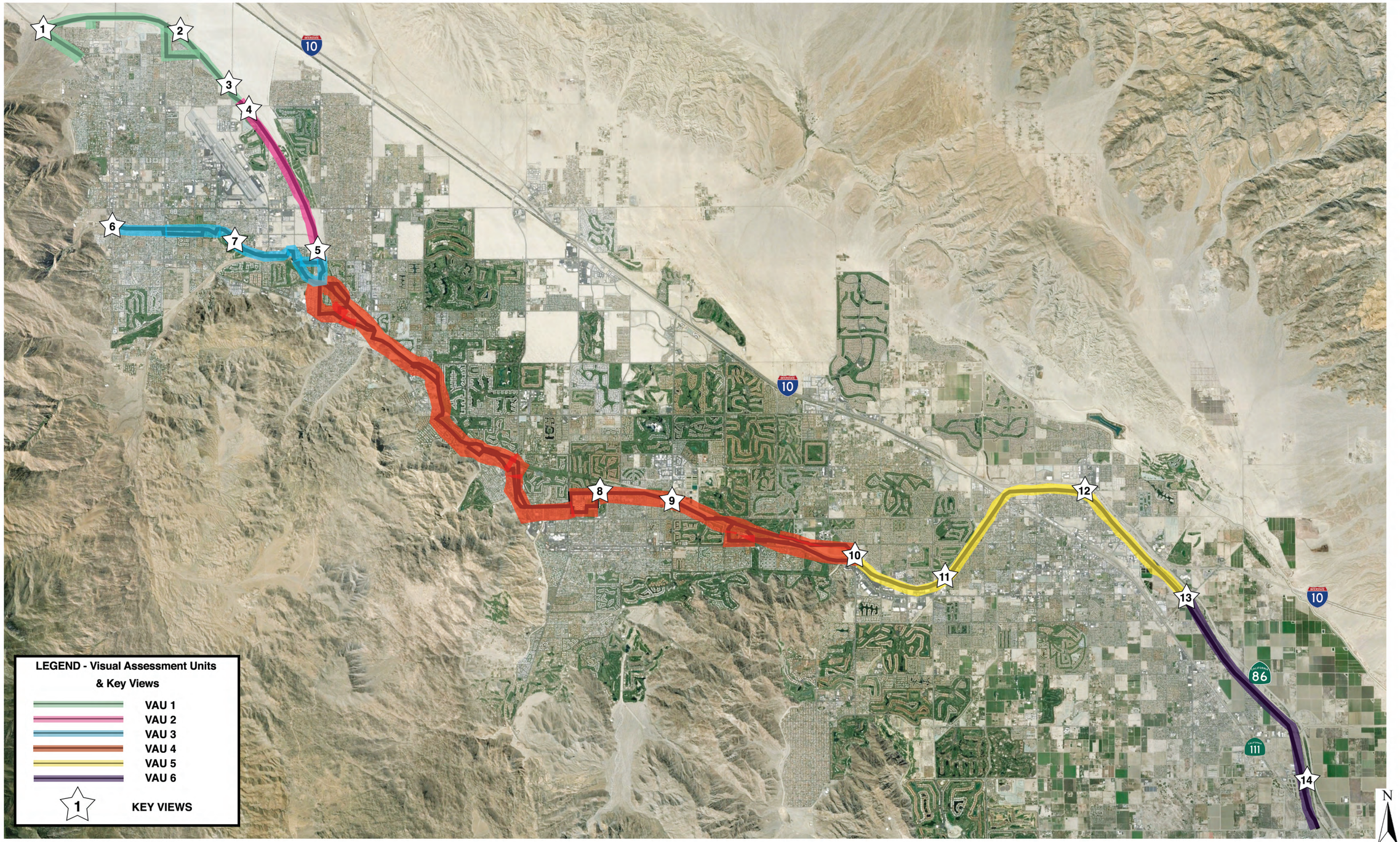
CV Link Project
CV Link Overview Map
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
3



Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

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CV Link Project
Visual Assessment Units and Key Views Map
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
4

The project will require the development of several at-grade roadway crossings, grade-separated bridges, and undercrossings. A variety of ancillary features will be built along the pathway, many of which will impact vertical space, such as shade structures, electric vehicle charging stations, directional and interpretive signage, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks), informational kiosks, restrooms, and public art. Other features will be horizontal or "flatwork", including surface materials and pavement markings, and are expected to result in fewer visual impacts. The various illustrations provided herein include design elements set forth in the CV Link Master Plan document.

Improvements are designed to create a unique and distinct visual identity for CV Link, while still maintaining functionality. For example, orange and blue pavement markings are proposed to differentiate CV Link from other paths and roadways, and shade structures will have a modular design to enable easy installation and maintenance. Where the CV Link pathway shares right-of-way with existing streets, patterns and colors in the pathway surface will be consistent with off-street pathway segments to assist with navigational way finding.

Security measures, including fencing, barriers, guardrails, lighting, and emergency access, will be integrated into the project, where necessary. The project will also address the privacy concerns of adjacent property owners through the use of fencing, vegetative screening, and semi-permeable privacy treatments that discourage undesirable and/or criminal activity. The project's landscape concept and design palette has been developed to assure landscaping is appropriate for the desert environment, supports the overall CV Link design concept, and serves a functional purpose, such as slope protection, privacy barrier, or windbreak, where necessary.

Several design features of CV Link, including pathway design and other elements of the project, are illustrated in this section and in the following exhibits. Also please see Volume 1 of the CV Link Conceptual Master Plan.

Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

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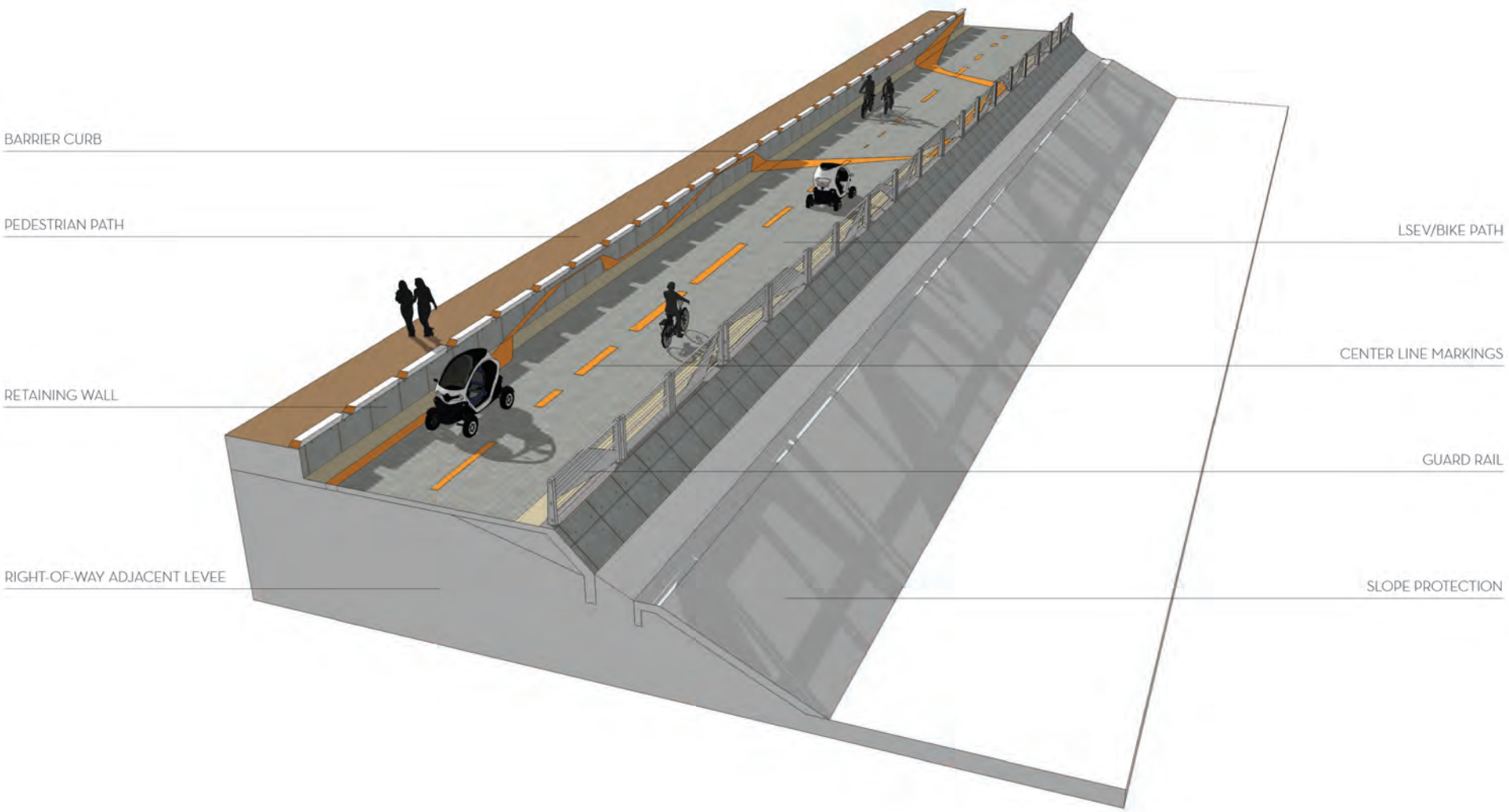
CV Link Project
West Valley Configuration
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit **5**



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Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

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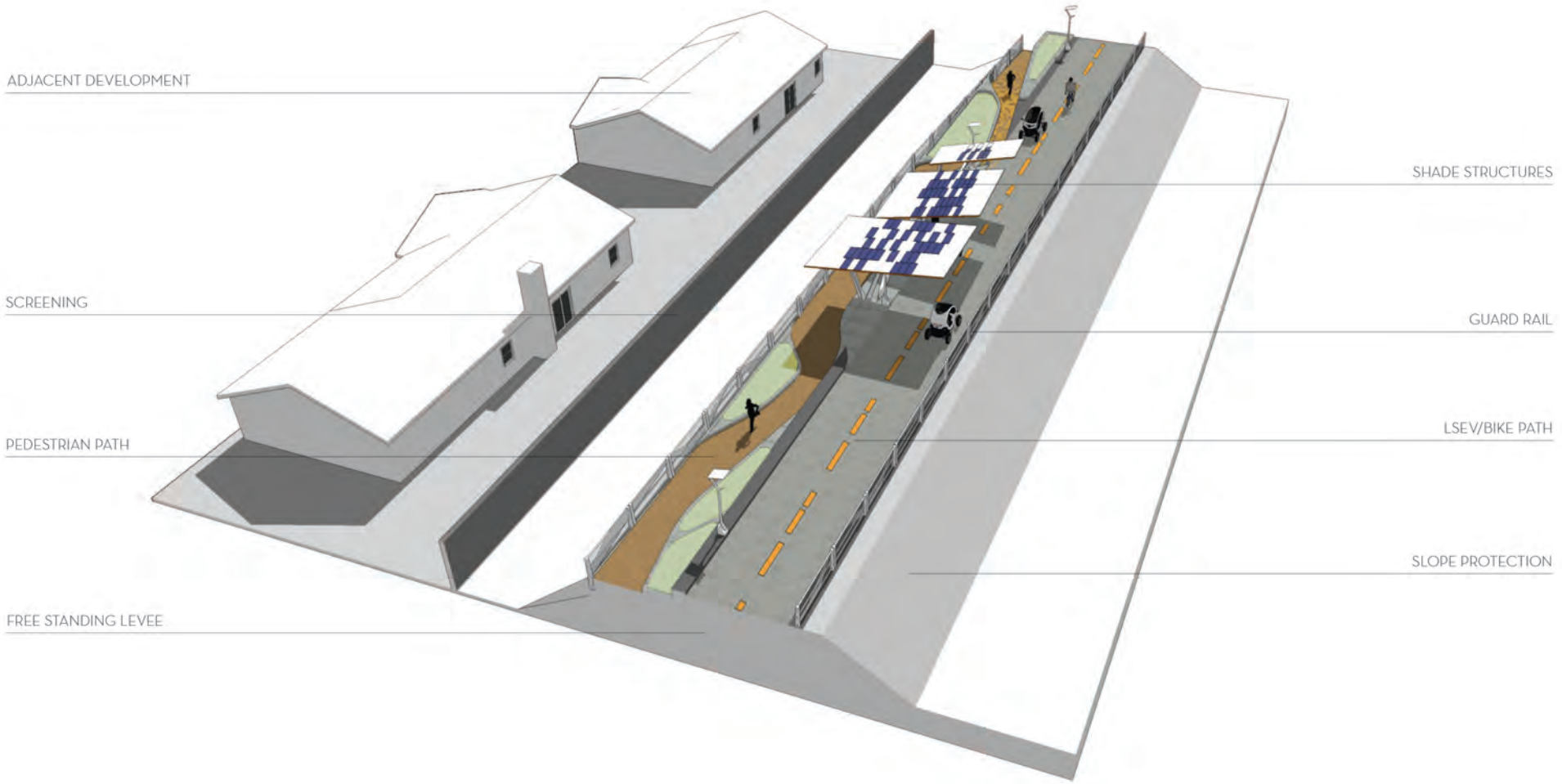
CV Link Project
Central Valley Configuration
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit
6



Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

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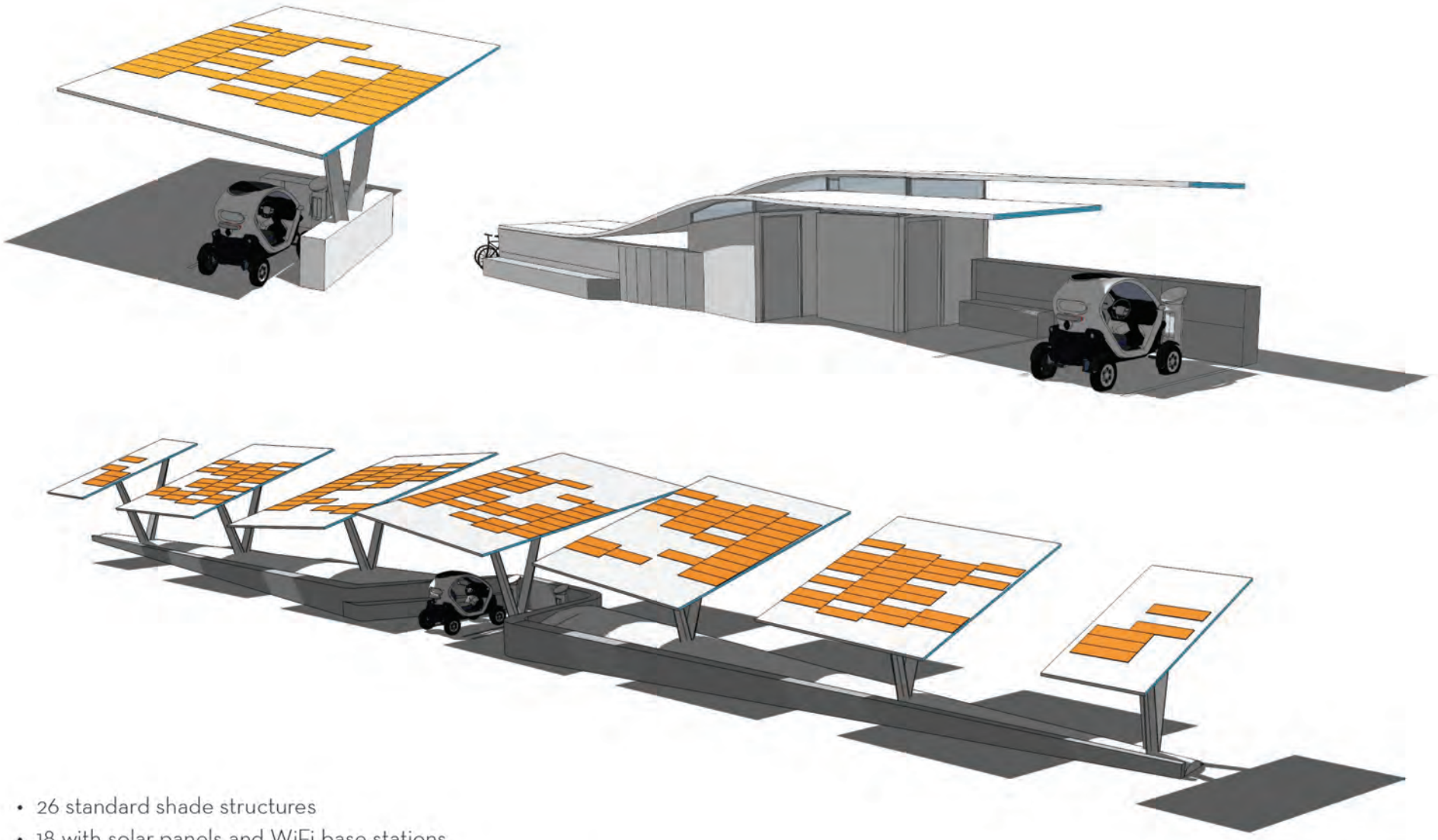
CV Link Project
East Valley Configuration
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit
7



- 26 standard shade structures
- 18 with solar panels and WiFi base stations
- 24 with solar, WiFi, and dual voltage electric vehicle charging facilities.

Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

07.11.16

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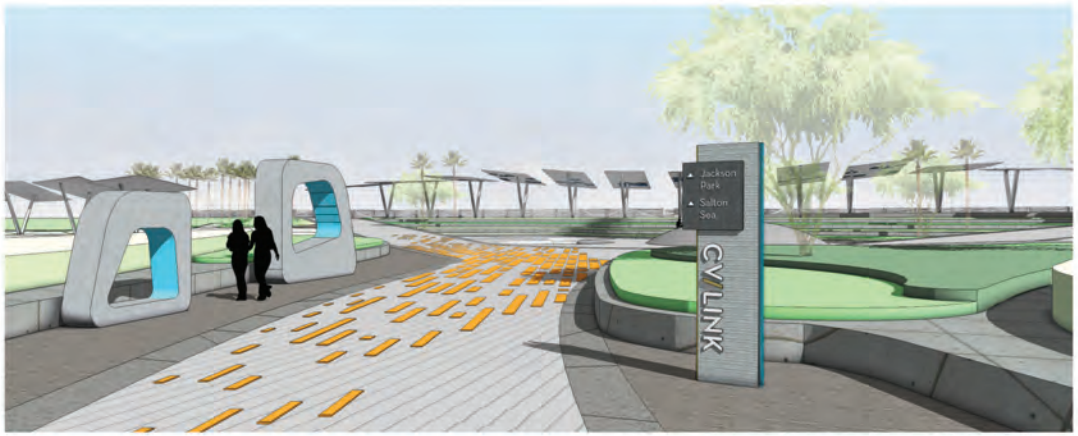
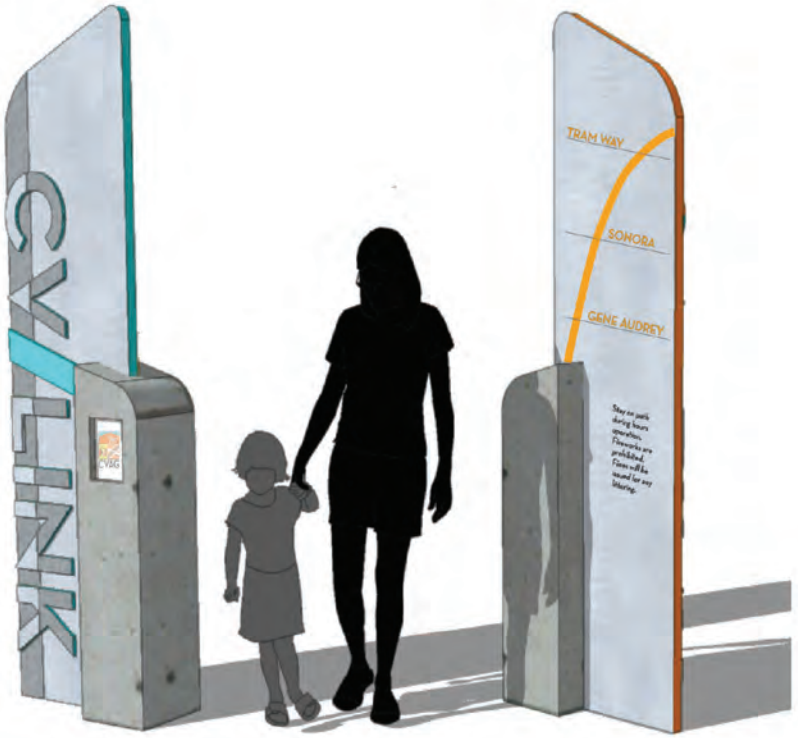
CV Link Project
Conceptual Shade Structure Design
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit **8**





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Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

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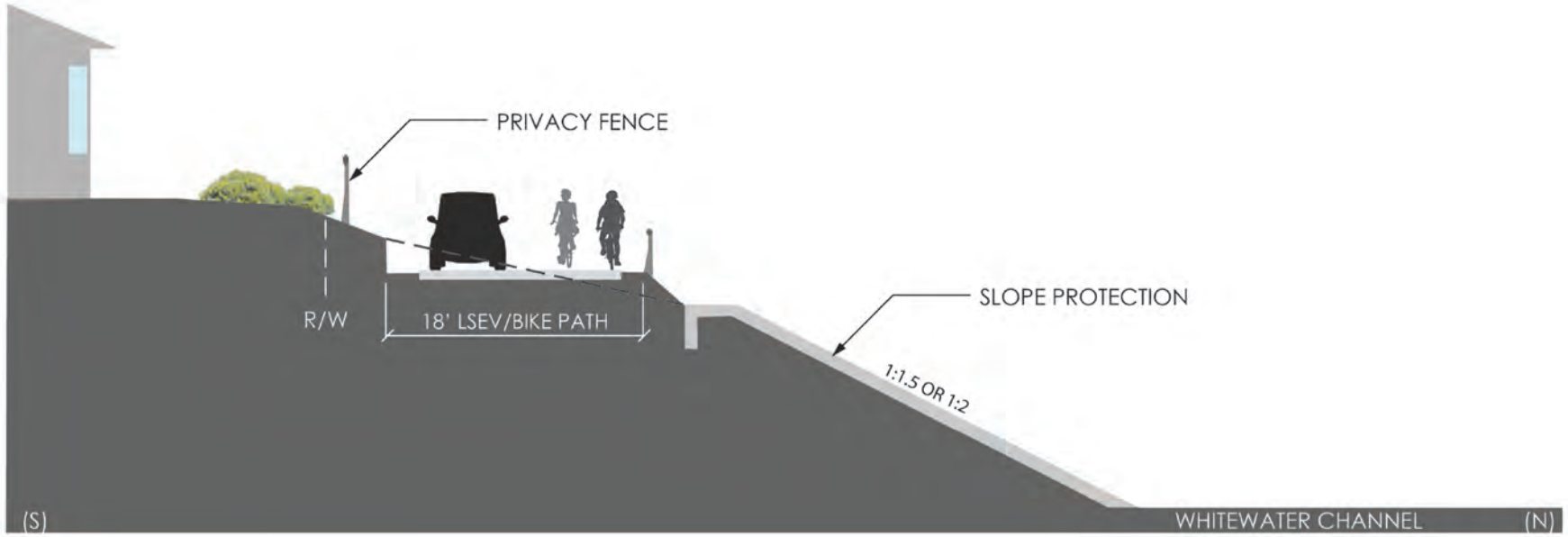
CV Link Project
Conceptual Wayfinding Kiosk
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
9



Source: CV Link Master Plan, January 2016

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TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Conceptual Privacy Screening Treatments
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit **10**

Project Alternatives

The various alignments that make up CV Link provide multiple options for a robust multi-modal network backbone that other jurisdictions can build from. The overall plan calls for a continuous network from Palm Springs to Coachella. All of the various design components, including bridges and underpasses, are part of the overall master plan.

In addition to the full core alignment buildout (Alternative 1: Project With All Eight Cities), two other "build" alternatives are being considered, which evaluate the effects of the deleting Rancho Mirage alignments from the plan (Proposed Project) and deleting both Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells (Alternative 2) from the overall plan. The removal of CV Link improvements in these two alternatives will result in the elimination of Link components in those communities and any Link-associated impacts will not occur. The effects of these other two "build" alternatives are analysed below.

III. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The project location and setting provides the context for determining the type and severity of changes to the existing visual environment. The terms *visual character* and *visual quality* are defined below and are used to further describe the visual environment. The project setting is also referred to as the corridor or project corridor, which is defined as the area of land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside the CV Link right-of-way, and is determined by topography, vegetation, structures, and viewing distance.

Project Location

The proposed project is located in the Coachella Valley region of central Riverside County, California. CV Link is a multi-jurisdictional project that could traverse 12 jurisdictions, including eight incorporated cities, unincorporated county lands, and Reservation lands of three Native American Tribes. The full core alignment of the conceptual master plan provides for the CV Link route to extend from the City of Palm Springs on the west to the City of Coachella on the east. The two western termini of CV Link are located at: 1) the intersection of State Highway 111 (North Palm Canyon Drive) and Tramway Road in northern Palm Springs at the site of the Palm Springs Visitor Center; and 2) South Palm Canyon Drive at Tahquitz Creek in central Palm Springs. The eastern terminus is the intersection of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel at Airport Boulevard (Avenue 56) in Coachella.

Regional Setting

The Coachella Valley is located in the northwestern extension of the Salton Trough, a tectonic (fault-created) depression that began forming approximately 5 million years ago and is a geological extension of the Gulf of California. It is characterized by extreme elevation variations and a unique arrangement of low-lying desert landscape surrounded by high terrain of the San Jacinto, San Bernardino, Little San Bernardino, and Santa Rosa Mountains. Peak elevations on the surrounding mountains range from 9,600 to 11,502 above sea level. The highest point on the valley floor, approximately 1,000 feet above sea

level, occurs at Windy Point near the San Gorgonio Pass in the northwestern valley. The lowest point, approximately 228 feet below sea level, occurs at the Salton Sea in the southeastern valley.

The mountains that surround the valley are comprised of highly differential rock formations, large expanses of light gray granite, and a diversity of vegetation. Numerous alluvial fans and cones, which form at the mouths of many canyons draining the mountains, constitute an important and visually interesting transition between the mountains, foothills, and valley floor. The valley floor is comprised of a mix of sand dunes and fields, and more limited areas of desert pavement swept clear of sand, which also offer high visual resource values in many locations.

The valley's principal drainage feature is the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, which channels runoff from surrounding mountains through the valley and southeast to the Salton Sea. Much of the channel has been improved with a concrete lining. West of Washington Street in the City of La Quinta, the channel is referred to as the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel; east of Washington Street it is known as the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.

Urban development in the Coachella Valley largely occurs in a northwest-southeast trending pattern, roughly parallel to State Highway 111. The western and central portions of the valley are generally characterized by medium-density residential, service commercial, and golf course and resort development. The eastern valley includes agricultural and equestrian land and lower density residential development. CV Link traverses some of the most developed portions of the valley and is designed to facilitate connections between a variety of land uses. Adjacent land uses generally include low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods, retail and service commercial development, resort hotels and golf courses, institutional facilities (libraries, schools, and sports venues), public parks, public facilities, agricultural lands and open space.

State Scenic Highways

No portion of the proposed project is located within a designated State Scenic Highway and, therefore, no Scenic Resource Evaluation has been prepared for the project. Portions of the project are located along State Highway 111, which is an "Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated"; the highway has not been officially designated by Caltrans as a State Scenic Highway.

Project location is shown in Exhibit 3.

IV. ASSESSMENT METHOD

The Caltrans VIA Questionnaire and the approved Preliminary Environmental Study (PES) were used to determine the appropriate level of VIA document for project analysis. Based on the responses contained therein, it was determined that a fully developed Moderate VIA was appropriate to assess the potential visual impacts of the project.

This visual impact assessment generally follows the guidance outlined in the publication *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in March 1981.

The following steps were followed to assess the potential visual impacts of the proposed project:

A. Define the project location and setting.
B. Identify visual assessment units and key views.
C. Analyze existing visual resources, resource change, and viewer response.
D. Depict (*or describe*) the visual appearance of project alternatives.
E. Assess the visual impacts of project alternatives.
F. Propose measures to offset visual impacts.

V. VISUAL ASSESSMENT UNITS AND KEY VIEWS

The project corridor was divided into a series of "outdoor corridors" or *visual assessment units* (VAUs). Each VAU has its own visual character and visual quality. For this project, VAUs were defined according to shared visual characteristics, including near and distant viewsheds, and land uses in the immediate project vicinity.

For this project, the following six visual assessment units and their associated key views have been identified and respective locations shown on Exhibit 4. Photos and visual simulations of the key views represent each VAU and include those embedded in their respective discussions, and those for which detailed visual simulations were prepared.

VAU-1: NORTH PALM SPRINGS
VAU-2: PALM SPRINGS/CATHEDRAL CITY
VAU-3: TAHQUITZ CREEK
VAU-4: CENTRAL VALLEY
VAU-5: LA QUINTA/INDIO
VAU-6: COACHELLA

- **VAU-1: NORTH PALM SPRINGS**
  VAU-1 begins at the western terminus of CV Link in northern Palm Springs. Specifically, it begins at the Palm Springs Visitor Center on North Palm Canyon Drive and extends north and east along the Whitewater River flood plain levee to Vista Chino.

Viewsheds to the west, north, and east are characterized by undeveloped land and natural landforms. On the west, the steep, rocky slopes of the San Jacinto Mountains are as close as ½ mile to the west providing an imposing and dramatic view of this impressive mountain scape that dominates all westerly views. Mt. San Jacinto rises approximately 10,800 feet over the valley floor, and has one of the largest gains in elevation over horizontal distance in the United States.
To the north is open desert land of the Whitewater River flood plain in the foreground, hundreds of wind energy turbines in the middle ground, and the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains approximately 9 miles in the distance. Views to the south along this unit include residences, community parkland, and vacant residential lands. Most of the adjoining and nearby residential development is surrounded by perimeter walls and vegetation.

VAU-1 KEY VIEWS

1. *North Palm Canyon Drive Overcrossing*
   This view was selected to illustrate how the proposed highway overcrossing will affect currently unobstructed views of open desert space and mountain vistas, heading northbound along North Palm Canyon Drive/Highway 111, where the potential impacts to visual assets viewed by the traveling public will be greatest. (Also see Exhibit 11)

2. *Four Seasons*
   This view shows the expansive viewshed that will be enjoyed by CV Link users, and how the project will impact views or affect privacy where the CV Link occurs in proximity to adjoining residential properties. Distances vary and the CV Link Conceptual Master Plan provides for three possible alignments, the in-channel alternative being identified as proposed. See Exhibit 12 that provides the existing view and a visual simulation of the built condition.

3. *Gene Autry Trail Overcrossing*
   This view illustrates how the proposed overcrossing of Gene Autry Trail will affect the most sensitive southbound views of the distant San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains.

- **VAU-2: PALM SPRINGS/CATHEDRAL CITY**

VAU-2 begins at the intersection of CV Link and Vista Chino, and extends southeast along the west (right) bank of the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel to Dinah Shore Drive. Compared to VAU-1, urban development is denser along this portion of the CV Link route. Nonetheless, large expanses of the broad river channel, portions of which are improved with golf courses, comprise a major part of the viewshed in this area. Foreground and middle ground views of adjoin and nearby urban development generally include medium density residential development, golf courses, limited commercial development, domestic water wells, other drainage facilities, and pockets of undeveloped land. Distant views include the San Jacinto

Mountains to the west, San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north, and Santa Rosa Mountains to the south.

VAU-2 KEY VIEWS

4. *Vista Chino at the Whitewater River Channel*
The two following views are typical of the expansive panorama that CV Link users will enjoy along this portion of the route located atop the stormwater channel service roads.


VAU-2: Southeast View to Santa Rosa Foothills


VAU-2: West View

5. *Whitewater River and Dinah Shore Drive*
This view looks due south toward the Santa Rosa Mountains in the distance and the vegetated channel, levee and related lands in the foreground. CV Link will travel atop the channel service road and pass under the Dinah Shore bridge. See Exhibit 14 that provides the existing view and a visual simulation of the built condition.

- **VAU-3: TAHQUITZ CREEK**

VAU-3 begins at the western terminus of CV Link in central Palm Springs at South Palm Canyon Drive, and continues east along Tahquitz Creek to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. Foreground views on all sides include long established development, including light industrial, residential and recreational (golf course, municipal park, water park) uses. Distant views include the San Jacinto Mountains to the west, which are as close as ¼-mile to the westerly CV Link terminus, and the Santa Rosa Mountains approximately 1 mile to the south.

VAU-3 KEY VIEWS

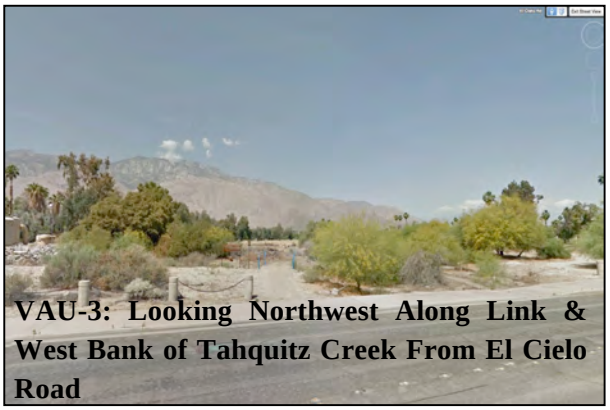
6. *Tahquitz Creek Trail* at *South Palm Canyon Drive, Sunrise Way and El Cielo Road*
These views show the existing development along important portions of this proposed CV Link alignment and existing Tahquitz Creek improvements. Photos also show existing conditions at the western terminus, including commercial development and

Tahquitz Creek just east of South Palm Canyon Drive. Also include are views of the route at Sunrise Way and looking back west from El Cielo Road.

VAU-3: Tahquitz Creek Looking East From West Terminus

VAU-3: West Terminus Commercial Services

VAU-3: Sunrise Way @ Tahquitz Creek Looking Southeast



VAU-3: Looking Northwest Along Link & West Bank of Tahquitz Creek From El Cielo Road

7. *Demuth Park*

This view is looking northwest from within Demuth Park in Palm Springs with Tahquitz Creek golf course on the left. Foreground views are dominated by park and golf course improvements, including fencing and gates, with the rising terrain of the San Jacinto Mountains in the distance on the left and the San Bernardino Mountains just visible in the central distance through trees. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 13)

- **VAU-4: CENTRAL VALLEY**

VAU-4 roughly parallels the State Highway 111 corridor through the central portion of the valley, and extends from Dinah Shore Drive and the Whitewater River on the west to Washington Street on the east. This section of the project route passes through the Coachella Valley's urban core and is characterized by residential and retail/service commercial development, arterial roadways, golf courses, resort hotels, and recreational and institutional facilities.

Foreground and middle ground views are dominated by urban development, roads, infrastructure, and landscaping. The bottom of the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel is typically dry and consists of sandy soils and sparse desert vegetation, although it can become inundated during larger major flood events. In some portions of the channel, including in Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and Indian Wells, lushly landscaped golf courses are developed within the channel bottom and constitute key components of the foreground landscape.

The dominant scenic vista within VAU-4 is the Santa Rosa Mountains, which are south of and roughly parallel to this stretch of CV Link. The distance between the proposed pathway and mountain slopes is roughly ½ mile in most locations, but ranges from 0 feet (immediately adjacent) at Paxton Road in Rancho Mirage and Point Happy in La Quinta, to 3± miles in Palm Desert. Urban development dominates both sides of the channel.

VAU-4 KEY VIEWS

8. *Magnesia Falls Drive*
   This view and visual simulation (see Exhibit 16) show how the proposed bike track and at-grade crossing will appear to viewers looking west from the access drive to the Palm Desert Aquatic Center. Foreground landscape and mountain views are most prominent, and CV Link striping and color help define the multi-modal travelway. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 16)

9. *Cook Street Pylon Supported Overcrossing*
   This view and visual simulation (see Exhibit 17) illustrate potential visual impacts of a proposed overcrossing on southbound Cook Street travelers. The shown southerly view takes in the high value mountain viewshed of the Santa Rosa Mountains.

10. *Pylon Supported Structure at Point Happy*
    This view and visual simulation shows the engineering and design features proposed to circumnavigate Point Happy (a rocky spur of the Santa Rosa Mountains) that juts into the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. The view is looking southwest looking from the Washington Street bridge over the stormwater channel. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 18)

- **VAU-5: LA QUINTA/INDIO**

VAU-5 extends from Point Happy at Washington Street in La Quinta and eastward to Dillon Road in Indio. At Jefferson Street near the La Quinta/Indio city limits, VAU-5 follows the channel and turns northeast, away from the mountains and into the central portion of the east valley. It then proceeds due east and again turns southeast along the channel. West to east, prevailing views at each turn are to the northeast, east, and finally southeast along the long axis of the valley.

East of Golf Center Parkway views to the east begin to include more farmland and open views of the valley floor and mountains beyond. Proceeding east to west, views are predominantly northwest and west along the valley's long axis with the Indio Hills and beyond the Little San Bernardino Mountains in the distance, and turning southwest and then west the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains, of which Point Happy is the most extended outlier.

As with VAU-4, foreground and middle ground views along VAU-5 are dominated by adjacent residential and commercial development, as well as the La Quinta High School and farther east the Indian Springs Golf Course driving range. Along the northeast leg of this unit, adjoining and nearby development includes predominantly single-family and scattered multi-family neighborhoods, a wholesale nursery, and the historic Coachella Branch of the All-American Canal.

Northeast of Indio Boulevard and along the channel alignment adjoining land uses change to business park and then single-family homes backing onto the flood control channel and CV Link alignment. Land uses along the southeast leg of this unit include the Coachella Valley Wild Bird Center and the Valley Sanitary District wastewater treatment plant. Excepting the aforementioned driving range just east of Jefferson Street the channel bottom is undeveloped and consists of sandy soils and a mix of desert scrub and riparian vegetation throughout the VAU.

VAU-5 KEY VIEWS

11. *Typical Levee Condition*
    This view shows the proposed channel crossing as seen from the westernmost cul-de-sac of Windsong Way (a residential neighborhood in immediate proximity of CV Link). See the associated visual simulation prepared for this location. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 19)

12. *Jackson Park Access Point*
    This view shows a proposed at-grade connection between CV Link, Jackson Park, and an adjacent residential neighborhood. See the associated visual simulation prepared for this location. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 20)

- **VAU-6: COACHELLA**

VAU-6 is the most rural segment of CV Link and extends from Dillon Road on the west to the easterly terminus of the core alignment at Airport Boulevard (Avenue 56) at the city limits of Coachella. The route continues along the channel service road in a direct southeast direction. This reach has some of the most scenic and iconic vistas of the Coachella Valley with rich farmland in various stages of cultivation and all ringed by multicolored hills and mountains to the north, east and west.

Views are largely panoramic and unobstructed. Foreground and middle ground views include undeveloped desert land, agricultural fields, and scattered residential neighborhoods and industrial yards. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is unimproved and, along much of this segment, and supports a moderately dense riparian habitat that is used by a variety of native and migratory birds and other wildlife.

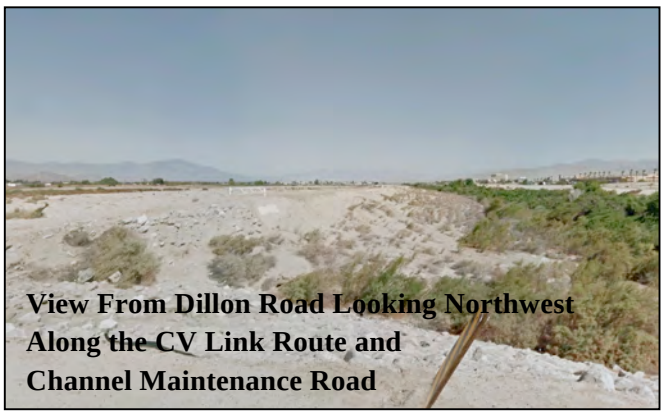
VAU-6 KEY VIEWS

13. *Dillon Road*

This view highlights the typical conditions along the westernmost portion of the proposed route within VAU-6. The channel and its vegetation, Rt 83 Expressway improvements, and agricultural landscape views dominate the fore and mid-ground. Distant views of the Santa Rosa Mountains looking south and southeast are evident on the horizon, as are views of the San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountains looking west and northwest.

with distant views that include the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north, Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and southwest, and San Jacinto Mountains to the west. Near and midfield views are dominated by the channel and its vegetation, as well as the US I-10 embankment and Dillon Road interchange, with entertainment commercial uses visible to the north.

VAU-6: View From Dillon Road Looking Southeast Along the CV Link Route and Channel Maintenance Road



View From Dillon Road Looking Northwest Along the CV Link Route and Channel Maintenance Road

14. *Southeast Coachella Near Airport Boulevard*

This view highlights the typical conditions along the easternmost portion of the proposed route. Mainly channel and agricultural landscape views with distant views that include the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north, Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and southwest, and San Jacinto Mountains to the west. Near and midfield views are dominated by the channel and its vegetation, as well as the US I-10 embankment and Dillon Road interchange, with entertainment commercial uses visible to the north.

VAU-6: View of CV Link Route Looking South To Airport Boulevard

VI. VISUAL RESOURCES AND RESOURCE CHANGE

Resource change is assessed by evaluating the visual character and the visual quality of the visual resources that comprise the project corridor before and after the construction of the proposed project. Resource change is one of the two major variables in the equation that determine visual impacts (the other *viewer response,* is discussed below in *Section VII: Viewers and Viewer Response*).

Numerous site reconnaissance surveys were conducted to identify visual resources along the CV Link corridor. The existing visual character of the project area is defined using a variety of visual attributes, such as form, dominance, scale, continuity, color, and texture. The existing visual quality of the project area is evaluated using the attributes of vividness, intactness, and unity. Existing visual character and quality are compared against proposed project attributes to determine visual resource changes. These changes, combined with anticipated viewer responses to the project, determine the visual impacts of the project (also see Section VIII, Visual Impact).

A. Visual Resources

Visual resources of the project setting are defined and identified below by assessing visual character and visual quality in the project corridor.

1. Visual Character

Visual character includes attributes such as form, line, color, and texture, and is used to describe, not evaluate; that is, these attributes are neither considered good nor bad. However, a change in visual character can be evaluated when it is compared with the viewer response to that change. Changes in visual character can be identified by how visually compatible a proposed project would be with the existing condition by using visual character attributes as an indicator. For this project, the following attributes were considered:

Dominance is position, size, or contrast;
Scale is apparent size as it related to the surroundings;
Form is visual mass or shape;
Color is reflective brightness (light, dark) and hue (red, green); and
Continuity is uninterrupted flow of form, line, color, or textural pattern.

Existing Visual Character

The visual character of the CV Link corridor includes a combination of natural and manmade forms, including flood control channels that remain in a sandy bottom condition, native state in some locations and contain highly manicured golf courses in others. Rugged foothills and high elevation mountains dominate background viewsheds, especially in the western and central portions of the core alignment.

Relatively low-profile structures, roadways, signage, and other urban improvements are evident in the foreground and middle ground of most stretches of the alignment. In some locations, sandy, pale gray colored wash soils contrast sharply with lush, green landscaping of golf courses and country clubs, and warm earth tones of the surrounding rocky mountains. Seasonal changes in color, texture, and the continuity of form are rare in the desert environment, other than the occasional inundation of stormwater channels during flooding events, which typically occur in winter and late summer. Although nighttime lighting is present in adjacent urban development and street corridors, lighting along most of the channel alignment is limited to security lighting.

Along the on-street CV Link alignments, the visual character is strongly dominated by the paved roadway, traffic control devices and adjoining residences, business and other development. Views to foothills and mountains from the public thoroughfares are limited by intervening structures with commercial buildings built closer to the street dominating the visual character of the street.

The visual character of the eastern most portions of the CV Link route differ substantially from those to the west, being dominated by panoramic vistas of farmland on the valley floor in various stages of cultivation, as well as the highly textured and brightly colored Indio Hills, Mecca Hills and the Cottonwood Mountains to the east.

Proposed Project

The visual character of CV Link will be largely compatible with the existing visual character of the project area and in many locations will improve visual character. The essential component of CV Link will be a flat pathway designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and low-speed electric vehicles (LSEVs), primarily along existing maintenance and service roads atop stormwater channel embankments and levees. On-street alignments will connect residential and commercial lands, parks and open space areas, schools and other institutions. The design of both channel and on-street alignments will be consistent with the existing form, width, linear shape, and location of these easements and rights-of-way.

The pathway will not obstruct or compete with highly valued mountain or open space vistas. However, in some locations, its vertical features, including three major and several minor overcrossings, will interrupt existing viewsheds and lines of sight. Other vertical Link components with the potential to affect existing viewsheds include the distribution of 68± shade structures and four set of restrooms along the core alignment. CV Link will also introduce new colors and textures to the horizontal landscape through iconic pavement treatments, materials and markings, and new low-level lighting sources in some places where limited light currently exists.

2. Visual Quality

Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness, and unity present in the project corridor. Public attitudes validate the assessed level of quality and predict how changes to the project corridor can affect these attitudes. This process helps identify specific methods for addressing each impact that may occur as a result of the project. The three criteria for evaluating visual quality are defined below:

Vividness is the extent to which the landscape is memorable and is associated with distinctive, contrasting, and diverse visual elements.

Intactness is the integrity of visual features in the landscape and the extent to which the existing landscape is free from non-typical visual intrusions.

Unity is the extent to which all visual elements combine to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern.

Existing Visual Quality

The visual quality of the project corridor varies substantially along it length, but is overall highly memorable and iconic in some locations, particularly in the westerly portions of the project area where the imposing San Jacinto Mountains are as close as ½-mile mile from the pathway and provide a dramatic and distinctive contrast to the low-lying valley and urban improvements below. Portions of the central valley are also memorable where the rocky outcroppings of the Santa Rosa Mountains and lushly landscaped golf courses and resort properties are adjacent or in proximity to the CV Link corridor.

Visual quality is less memorable where mountain views are distant, channels and washes have been disturbed and native vegetation removed, and where adjacent or near “rear of house” facilities of commercial and light industrial development, and urban infrastructure, such as wells, power lines, maintenance yards, that interrupt the intactness and unity of the natural and urban landscape.

Proposed Project

In most locations, the visual quality of the project corridor will not be substantially altered by the project. Horizontal components of the pathway, including pavement texture and markings, and low profile street furniture and signage, will not alter distinctive viewsheds or the visual unity of adjacent

urban development. Newly introduced colors and textures intended to enhance a unified CV Link identity will contrast with existing colors and textures of existing embankments and levees, roadways, and trails. Some vertical project components, including overcrossings, shade structures, and restrooms, may visually disrupt and intrude upon the harmony of existing landscapes.

VII. VIEWERS AND VIEWER RESPONSE

The population affected by the project is composed of *viewers*. Viewers are people whose views of the landscape may be altered by the proposed project – either because the landscape itself has changed or their perception of the landscape has changed.

Viewers, or more specifically the response viewers have to change in their visual environment, are one of two variables that determine the extent of visual impacts that will be caused by the construction and operation of the proposed project. The other variable is the change to visual resources discussed earlier in *Section VII: Visual Resources and Resource Change*.

A. Types of Viewers

There are two major types of viewer groups for highway projects: highway neighbors and highway users. Each viewer group has its own particular level of *viewer exposure* and *viewer sensitivity*, resulting in distinct and predictable visual concerns for each group, which help to predict their responses to visual changes.

1. CV Link Neighbors (Views *to* CV Link)

CV Link neighbors are people who have views *to* CV Link. They can be subdivided into different viewer groups in two different ways – by mode of travel or by reason for travel. For example, subdividing CV Link neighbors by mode of travel may yield motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus riders. Dividing CV Link users or viewer groups by reason for travel creates categories like tourists and commuters. It is also possible to use both mode and reason for travel simultaneously, creating a category like *bicycling tourists*, for example. For this project, the following CV Link neighbors were considered:

- Roadway Travelers;
- Residents;
- Commercial and Industrial Users; and
- Recreational Area Users.

2. CV Link Users (Views *from* CV Link)

CV Link users are people who have views *from* CV Link. They can be subdivided into different viewer groups in two different ways – by mode of travel or by reason for travel. For example, subdividing CV Link users by mode of travel may yield pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, golf cart

users, and NEV users. Dividing CV Link users or viewer groups by reason for travel creates categories like tourists, recreational users, and commuters. It is also possible to use both mode and reason for travel simultaneously, creating a category like *bicycling tourists*, for example. For this project, the following highway users were considered:

- CV Link Users

B. Viewer Response

Viewer response is a measure or prediction of the viewer's reaction to changes in the visual environment and has two dimensions as previously mentioned: viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity.

1. Viewer Exposure

Viewer exposure is a measure of the viewer's ability to see a particular object. Viewer exposure has three attributes: location, quantity, and duration. *Location* relates to the position of the viewer in relationship to the object being viewed. The closer the viewer is to the object, the more exposure. *Quantity* refers to how many people see the object. The more people who can see an object or the greater frequency an object is seen, the more exposure the object has to viewers. *Duration* refers to how long a viewer is able to keep an object in view. The longer an object can be kept in view, the more exposure. High viewer exposure helps predict that viewers will have a response to a visual change.

- *Roadway Travelers*
  CV Link intersects, shares right-of-way with, and is in proximity to numerous arterials, thoroughfares, and local connectors that carry thousands of vehicles per day and also facilitate bicyclists and pedestrians on adjacent bike lanes and sidewalks. These roads accommodate a broad mix of users, including residents, commuters, tourists, students, bus riders, and truck drivers.

  Viewer exposure to CV Link occurs in varying degrees, ranging from travelers on high-speed and/or high-capacity roads who are focusing on roadway traffic and have little to no opportunity to appreciate views of CV Link, to slower travelers (particularly pedestrians) who have ample time and opportunity to appreciate views of CV Link. Where CV Link is located on top of existing stormwater levees, views from roadways may be completely obscured by buildings, fencing, walls, utilities, or vegetation. Where CV Link shares right-of-way with a roadway, motorists will have more immediate views of the pathway, and interaction with CV Link facilities and users may occur at at-grade crossings. Where CV Link includes an overpass, roadway travelers will have a clear view of the overpass, but interaction with CV Link users will be minimal or non-existent at these locations.
- *Residents*
  Numerous CV Link segments are immediately adjacent to residential properties. In many instances, CV Link is adjacent to low- to medium-density, single-family residential developments and planned communities that back onto the stormwater channels. In these

cases, CV Link typically runs behind the rear residential property line but also could occur adjacent to several higher-density apartment/condominium developments and several major resort hotels.

Although many residential structures occur at elevations equal to existing embankment and levees service roads that would be shared with CV Link, others occur at elevations higher or lower than the channel service road, and their ability to see the embankments and the CV Link corridor varies based on site-specific elevation and topography. Many residences are separated from channel embankments and levees by fencing, walls or vegetation, and views of the levees are currently partially or completely obscured depending on barrier height, materials, and density. For residents who are able to view CV Link from their homes, visual exposure is frequent and of an extended duration due to their stationary nature.

- *Commercial and Industrial Users*
  Some CV Link segments are immediately adjacent to commercial and industrial land uses, and potentially hundreds of viewers each day could have views the pathway. In most locations throughout the valley, however, the CV Link corridor is located at the rear of commercial and industrial properties, where parking and activity is typically limited to employees and deliveries. Many of these "back-of-house" areas are screened by fencing, walls, vegetation, buildings, and other onsite improvements. Viewer exposure to the channel embankments and levees depends upon barrier height, materials, density, as well as elevation and terrain characteristics, proximity of onsite buildings to levees, orientation of onsite buildings and activity centers, the frequency of use of the site, and the duration of time employees and patrons spend observing their surroundings onsite. The duration of viewers can be fleeting while walking to and from a building, where visual changes go unnoticed, or lengthy while working in an office that overlooks the CV Link corridor. Considering that the primary activity of the commercial and industrial uses along the CV Link pathway occurs indoors and the employee's or patron's focus is inward facing, overall viewer exposure is considered low.

- *Recreational Area Users*
  The CV Link route was selected, in part, because it connects a wide range of recreational facilities and open space areas throughout the Coachella Valley. The CV Link corridor traverses, or is in proximity to, approximately eight (8) public and private golf courses, municipal parks, public schools and ball fields, a golf driving range, a water park, and a championship tennis venue. Recreational area users include tourists and residents who typically have ample time to observe their surroundings and appreciate the substantial visual resources surrounding the Coachella Valley. Views of mountain vistas, palm trees, and other landscape features are a key component of the region's reputation as a world-class resort destination.

CV Link will be visible from many recreational sites, particularly those built within the stormwater channels, and the pathway is intended to become an important part of the region's recreational fabric. Given its location and the number of potential observers, CV Link will be moderately to highly visible by recreational users.

- *CV Link Users*
  CV Link users will include pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, NEV users, golf cart users, skateboarders, electric mobility scooters, and others. CV Link will be used for recreational purposes, and well as an alternative transportation route for traveling to work, school, stores, recreational facilities, and other activity centers. CV Link users will directly interact with the pathway and its improvements, and will have first-hand visual exposure to the project. Given that the pathway is continuous over 49± miles, with approximately 50 access points, it is expected to attract a large volume of users, some of whom will have a long duration of visual exposure to the project.

2. Viewer Sensitivity

Viewer sensitivity is a measure of the viewer's recognition of a particular object. It has three attributes: activity, awareness, and local values. *Activity* relates to the preoccupation of viewers – are they preoccupied, thinking of something else, or are they truly engaged in observing their surroundings. The more they are actually observing their surroundings, the more sensitivity viewer will have of changes to visual resources. *Awareness* relates to the focus of the view – the focus is wide and the view is general, or the focus is narrow and the view specific.

The more specific the awareness, the more sensitive a viewer is to change. *Local values* and attitudes also affect viewer sensitivity. If the viewer group values aesthetics in general or if a specific visual resource has been protected by local, state, or national designation, it is likely that viewers will be more sensitive to changes. High viewer sensitivity helps predict that viewers will have a high concern for any visual change.

- *Roadway Travelers*
  Vehicle drivers are typically focused on the roadway corridor and negotiating traffic, but are also able to view their surroundings through lateral vision. Daily commuters are familiar with their surroundings and are, therefore, more sensitive to visual changes, while tourists and infrequent travelers are less familiar and typically have a lower sensitivity. Given that the Coachella Valley population is a mixture of permanent residents, seasonal residents, and tourists, the combined viewer sensitivity is considered moderate.

  Pedestrians and bicyclists traveling on roads in the CV Link vicinity are generally considered to be engaged in their visual surroundings because they move at slower speeds than motorists. However, on busier roads, their attention is focused on safely

navigating intersections, vehicles, and other potential barriers. Therefore, their combined viewer sensitivity is considered moderate.

- *Residents*
  The viewer sensitivity of residential users is considered high because they are typically engaged in and highly aware of their surrounding visual environments, particularly in their yards or outdoor spaces. In the Coachella Valley, views of open space and surrounding mountains are highly valued, and viewer awareness of views from their property is high. Sensitivity to the CV Link project will vary based on the ability to see the pathway from homes and yards and the value of the existing viewshed. For those residences located behind an opaque barrier (wall, fence, hedge or embankment), viewer sensitivity may be low. For those with views of the pathway, its improvements, or any scenic vistas that will be interrupted by the pathway, viewer sensitivity can be expected to be quite high.

- *Commercial and Industrial Users*
  Employees and patrons at commercial, industrial, and professional establishments within the project corridor are typically engaged in their work or activities rather than their surrounding outdoor visual environments. Therefore, these viewers are considered to have a low visual sensitivity or awareness.

- *Recreational Area Users*
  Recreational area users have an increased awareness of their visual surroundings due to the nature of the activities in which they are engaged. In the Coachella Valley, viewer sensitivity to visual changes can be quite high because of the importance of views of the surrounding mountains and open spaces. Background views of the mountains and desert open spaces are local values that increase the level of sensitivity for these viewers. Considering the region's strong reputation as a resort destination and the importance of and scenic vistas in the Coachella Valley, recreational viewers are considered to have a high sensitivity to visual change.

- *CV Link Users*
  CV Link users are a subset of Recreational Area Users described above, and they are considered to have a high sensitivity to visual change. CV Link users will include local residents who are familiar with their surroundings, but are likely to be highly aware of their visual surroundings. CV Link users will also include tourists who are unfamiliar with their surroundings and using the pathway as a way to enjoy the scenery for which the valley is known. Pathway users will be actively engaged in physical activity and directly interacting with their immediate environment. Viewer sensitivity is considered high.

Regulatory Framework

Federal, state, local policies require that potential impacts to visual resources be evaluated and considered in the design of a proposed project. This section provides an overview of the applicable federal, state, and local policies governing aesthetics.

Federal

As directed by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, it is the responsibility of the federal government to "ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings … and to attain the widest range of beneficial uses in the environment with degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences."[1] The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in its implementation of NEPA[2] dictates that final decisions regarding projects are to be implemented according to the best overall public interest, taking into consideration the adverse environmental impacts, including the destruction of disruption of aesthetic values that would be create as result of the proposed project.

FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to Section 6005 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for User (SAFETEA-LU), codified at 23 United States Code (USC) 327(a)(2)(A). Effective July 1, 2007, FHWA has assigned and Caltrans has assumed, all of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) secretary's responsibilities under NEPA.

State

The California Environmental Policy Act established that it is the state to take all action necessary to provide the public "with enjoyment of aesthetic, natural scenic, and historical environmental qualities."[3] Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines stipulates that a proposed project will have a significant impact on the environment if it would (a) have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; (b) substantially damage scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; (c) substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or (d) create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is the Lead Agency under CEQA.

1 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Section 101 42 USC Section 4331 [b] [2])
2 Ibid. (USC Section 109 [h])
3 California Public Resources Code Section 21001 [b]

Local Applicable Plans and Policies

The open space provided by Tahquitz Creek, the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel, and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel are high-value assets that also constitute important parts of the regional economic base. Local cities have prepared General Plans that set forth long-range goals and policies to guide future growth and demonstrate that visual resources are of primary importance. The following goals and policies are taken from local General Plans.

Palm Springs General Plan

The City of Palm Springs General Plan is the primary local plan and policy document. The Land Use Element and Circulation Element polices related to aesthetics and that are most pertinent to the proposed project include the following:

Land Use Element Policies

LU1.12 Ensure that land uses maintain and expand parks, recreational trails, bikeways, and pedestrian corridors and linkages throughout the City and between Palm Springs and adjacent municipalities

LU7.8 Provide and maintain a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and venues and encourage the development of ecotourism.

LU8.5: Provide pedestrian links from the commercial, office, and retail uses within mixed/multi-use areas to minimize vehicular traffic.

LU9.11 Promote recreational use through the development of a system of trails. Pursue easements or other mechanisms to ensure long-term viability and access to existing trails and trailheads.

Circulation Element Policies

CR6.1 Adopt a program of nonmotorized transportation facilities, including those for bicycles and pedestrians.

CR6.8 Encourage proper design and maintenance of facilities and appropriate signing to ensure the safe uses of bikeway and trail systems.

CR6.13 Establish and maintain design standards for the development of various types of bikeways and related improvements – e.g., parkways, bridges, rest stops – that may be necessary to implement the City's bikeway network.

Cathedral City General Plan

In the City of Cathedral City the General is the principal local plan and policy. The Circulation Element of the document directs the completion.

Circulation Element Policies

Goal 2 Policy 1 The City circulation system shall be planned and developed to assure the provision of safe and efficient vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to

all parts of the community, effectively linking residents and visitors to the full range of residential, employment, shopping, an recreational land uses.

Goal 2 Policy 2 Transit stops and pedestrian and bicycle paths should be sited in the a manner which encourages the use of alternatives modes of transportation and provides safe, convenient access to commercial and employment centers, as well as institutional and recreational uses.

Goal 3 Policy 7 The City shall develop and maintain a master trails plan that guides the securing of right-of-way, improvements and development fees and provides a comprehensive trails systems that interconnects with trails of adjoining jurisdictions and regional trail systems.

Rancho Mirage General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of Rancho Mirage is the Rancho Mirage General Plan.

Circulation Element Polices

Goal 1 A safe, efficient, attractive, and economical circulation network meeting current and future demands in a manner consistent with the resort residential character of the community.

Policy 6 The City shall actively participate in a wide range of regional transportation planning and programs to improve the capacity, efficiency, and safety of the shared circulation system.

Policy6.A Regularly coordinate with other local agencies regarding their plans, programs, and services that affect the quality and safety of the Rancho roadway system.

Policy 7 The City shall develop a system of continuous and convenient bicycle routes and multi-use trails to places of employment, shopping centers, schools and other high activity areas; as well as a golf cart transportation program.

Program7.A Incorporate design standards and guidelines for bicycle routes and associated facilities such as bike racks and route signs.

Program7.B Maintain and expand a golf cart transportation program that will provide a safe and convenient means of golf cart access to golf course and neighboring uses within the City of Rancho Mirage.

Community Design Element Polices

Goal 1 Scenic roadways that impart a sense of place and are attractively landscaped, provide visual continuity along adjacent uses, preserve views, and create focused intersection landscaping.

Policy 2

The City shall ensure the development of well-designed, richly landscaped intersections that are attractive to drivers and pedestrians alike. View corridors shall be preserved through streetscape improvements and specialized design standards.

Palm Desert General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of Palm Desert is the City's General Plan.

Land Use Element Policy

Goal 1 A sustainable and environmentally responsible transportation and circulation system that provides a wide range of facilities and transportation options that move people, vehicles and goods in an efficient, safe and economical manner.

Circulation Element Policy

Policy 8 The City shall continue its efforts to develop and facilitate the use of continuous and convenient bicycle routes and multi-use trails to places of employment, recreation, shopping, schools, and other.

Parks and Recreation Element Policy

Policy 11 The City shall provide open space trails that provide City residents and visitors access to undisturbed desert and mountain environments, while preserving these resources, including sensitive plant and animal species, in their natural environments.

Program 11.A The City shall explore and pursue opportunities to develop an expanded trails system and to obtain trail corridors where possible and feasible.

Program 11.B The City shall review development proposals for opportunities to integrate parks, plazas, squares, and other open spaces areas that allow and facilitate public use and social interaction.

Program 11.C The City shall participate in and encourage regional trail planning efforts and cooperate with agencies and cites.

Indian Wells General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of Indian Wells is the City's General Plan.

Circulation Element Policies

Goal IIC2 Travel Modes: Provide Indian Wells' residents with a choice of travel modes

IIC2.4 Encourage new development to provide internal bike paths and pedestrian ways where feasible and where natural features make paths desirable. Require that such paths link with the citywide path system.

IIC2.5 Work with neighboring jurisdictions to provide an interconnected system of pedestrian ways, bikeways, and golf paths.

IIC3.4 Encourage the use of alternatives modes of transportation including public transit, ride sharing, golf carts, and walking.

IIC3.S Improve pedestrian, golf cart and bicycle connections from residential neighborhoods to retail centers, hotels, and schools.

La Quinta General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of La Quinta is the City's General Plan.

Land Use Element Policy

Policy LU3.3a Provides incentives in the Zoning Ordinance for creative and high quality development; projects that reduce the dependence on automobiles; projects that incorporate trails and paths for pedestrians and bicycles; projects that incorporate transit and alternative transportation facilities into their designs.

Circulation Element Polices

Goal CIR2 A circulation system that promotes and enhances transit alternative vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian networks.

Policy CIR2.2 Encourage reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by reducing vehicles miles traveled and vehicle hours of delay by increasing or encouraging the use of alternatives modes of transportation technologies, and implement and manage a hierarchy of Complete Street multimodal transportation infrastructure and programs to deliver improved mobility and reduce GHG emissions.

Policy CIR2.3 Develop and encourage the use of continuous and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes and multi-use paths to places of employment, recreation, shopping, schools, and other high activity areas with potential for increased pedestrian, bicycle, golf cart/NEV modes of travel.

Indio General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of Indio is the City General Plan.

Land Use Element Policies

LU 1.1 Provide opportunities to develop and retain housing near jobs, schools, shopping, and recreational areas in a manner that supports multi-modal transportation.

LU 1.22 Where possible, connect public and private parks and recreational areas to existing and planned trails, bikeways, pedestrian corridors, and other open space networks.

LU 2.2 Where practical, link development and surrounding uses via safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle connections. When walls are necessary, encourage designs that provide for pedestrian and access.

Mobility Element Policies

ME 1.2 Require new development to link existing and future transportation facilities, such as key roadways, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and multi-purpose trails into a continuous regional network, where possible.

ME 2.1 Develop and maintain an interconnected grid- or modified grid-based transportation system that sustains a variety of multi-modal transportation facilities, such as pedestrian crossings, bicycle and pedestrian paths, an bicycle networks, as well as sidewalks.

ME 2.2 Enhance connectivity by eliminating gaps and barriers in roadway and bicycle networks, as well as sidewalks.

ME 2.5 Reserve and protect adequate right-of-way, where feasible, to accommodate future multi-modal transportation improvement projects, such as new or improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities or transit stops.

ME 3.3 Support development of the CV Link through City jurisdiction by providing connecting facilities and amenities for pedestrian, bicycles, and alternative-fuel vehicles.

ME 9.8 Plan bicycle facilities with neighboring jurisdictions and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments to create a continuous network.

Coachella General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for the City of Coachella is the City General Plan.

Circulation Element Polices

Goals 3 Pedestrian Network. A safe pedestrian network that provides direct connections between residences, employment, shopping and civic uses.

Policy 3.6 Pedestrian only areas. Promote the closure of streets on a recurring basis to create temporary pedestrian zones for Community Events, such as farmers markets, community events, ciclovías (bicycle and pedestrian events), and other events consistent with the walking and biking environment policies of the Mobility Element. Leverage the momentum of other regional bike events, such as Tour de Palm Springs, to create events locally.

Policy 3.7 Neighborhood connectivity. Create bicycle and pedestrian connections through existing residential neighborhoods, providing access to adjacent neighborhoods and external bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Goals 4. Bicycle Trail Network. A bicycle and multi-use trail network that facilitates bicycling for commuting, schools, and shopping and recreational trips.

Riverside County General Plan

The main local plan and policy document for Riverside County is the County General Plan, including the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan.

Land Use Element Polices

LU 4.1 Require that new developments be located and designed to visually enhance, not degrade the character of the surrounding area through consideration of the following concepts.

LU 14.1 Preserve and protect outstanding scenic vistas and visual features for the enjoyment of the traveling public.

LU 14.2 Incorporate riding, hiking, and bicycle trails and other compatible public recreational facilities within scenic corridors.

LU 31.5 Require that public facilities be designed to consider their surroundings and visually enhance, not degrade, the character of the surrounding area.

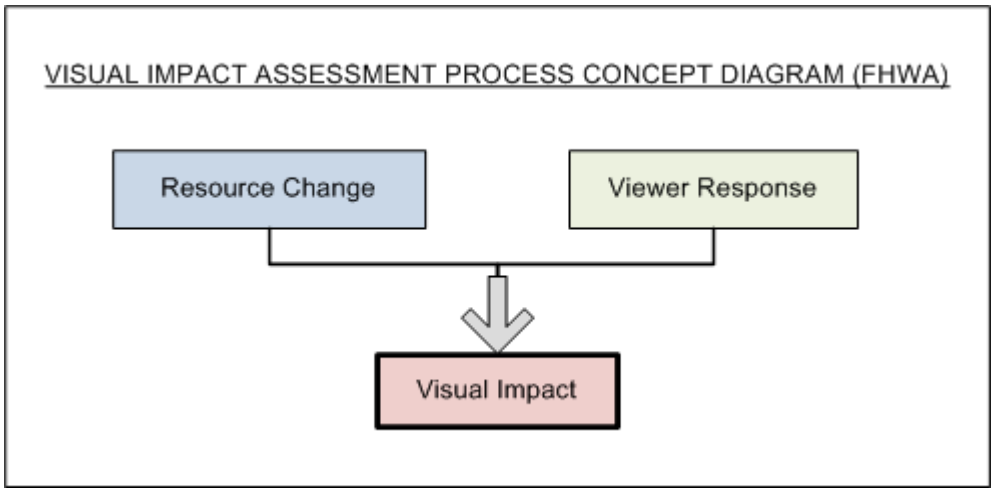
Riverside County Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan

ECVAP 15.1 Protect the scenic highways in the Eastern Coachella Valley from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of adjacent properties in accordance with the Scenic Corridors section of the General Plan Land Use, Multipurpose Open Space, and Circulation Elements.

ECVAP 16.1 Protect visual and biological resources in the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan through adherence to General Plan policies found in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Preservation section of the Multipurpose Open Space Element, as well as policies contained in the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan,

VIII. VISUAL IMPACT

Visual impacts are determined by assessing changes to the visual resources and predicting viewer response to those changes. These impacts can be beneficial or detrimental. Cumulative impacts and temporary impacts due to the contractor's operations are also considered. A generalized visual impact assessment process is illustrated in the following diagram:



The following table provides a reference for determining levels of visual impact by combining resource change and viewer response.

TABLE 1
Visual Impact Ratings Using Viewer Response and Resource Change

		Viewer Response (VR)				
Resource Change (RC)		Low (L)	Moderate-Low (ML)	Moderate (M)	Moderate-High (MH)	High (H)
	Low (L)	L	ML	ML	M	M
	Moderate-Low (ML)	ML	ML	M	M	MH
	Moderate (M)	ML	M	M	MH	MH
	Moderate-High (MH)	M	M	MH	MH	H
	High (H)	M	MH	MH	H	H

A. Visual Impacts by Visual Assessment Units

Because it is not feasible to analyze all the views in which the proposed project would be seen, it is necessary to select a number of key views associated with visual assessment units that would most clearly demonstrate the change in the project's visual resources. Key views also represent the viewer groups that have the highest potential to be affected by the project considering exposure and sensitivity. This VIA also considers the potential impacts of a No-Build Alternative. The following section describes and illustrates visual impacts by visual assessment unit, through visual simulations compares existing conditions to the proposed project, and includes the predicted viewer response.

Analysis of Key Views

Key views along the proposed project from thirteen vantage points were selected that display the visual effects of the proposed project. Ten visual simulations were prepared for the project to demonstrate the potential level of impact of the proposed project.

Key view locations are shown in Exhibit 4: Visual Assessment Units and Key Views.

1. Visual Assessment Units

a. Visual Assessment Unit 1 – North Palm Springs

Key View # 1 North Palm Canyon Drive Bridge/Overcrossing (Exhibit 11)

Existing Condition

The CV Link Master Plan calls for an overcrossing of North Palm Canyon Drive/Highway 111 just south of the Chino Wash in Phase I. Views were assessed and the view north was selected for detailed analysis. Key View 1 is located at one of the primary gateway locations of Palm Springs and the western Coachella Valley. It is comprised of views of Chino Cone and the San Jacinto Mountains on the west and north, and residential development on the east. The viewshed is distinguished by its high visual quality associated with the dramatic shift from desert floor to expansive alluvial cone to the steep rocky mountains.

Viewer Response

Northbound traveling public enjoys the most characteristic and dramatic mountain and desert views that will be impact as a result of the overcrossing. As determined by the visual simulation of the proposed overcrossing depicted below, potential of the project to result in an adverse change to the existing visual resource is considered to be low, with low viewer response to change in the existing visual environment. A positive viewer response may be expected from some viewers who may see a connection between Palm Springs architectural heritage and the iconic design of the proposed bridge the dynamic design of which complements the architecturally important Palm Springs Visitor Center, which is the northwest terminus of CV Link.

Proposed Condition

The proposed suspension bridge overcrossing will be seen as an arch spanning across the two-tier divided four-lane roadway at this location of North Palm Canyon Drive. The bridge will be comprised of two landings, which will be located on either sides of Highway 111/North Palm Canyon Drive. The visual impact of the proposed bridge is shown on Exhibit 11. Its open design and thin profile will still be evident against the mountain and desert background but will not detract from or significantly obscure the mountain and desert vistas.

Resource Change

The proposed overcrossing will occupy a portion of the subject viewshed that is currently composed of open desert and mountain views. As designed, the proposed overcrossing will result in minor but complementary change to the visual resources of the area. In addition, the designs of the overcrossing will a dramatic architectural design that complements the iconic views and the architectural heritage of the community.

BEFORE

AFTER

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

07.25.16

TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 1
N. Palm Canyon Drive Overcrossing (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
11

Key View #2 Four Seasons Channel Levee Segment (Exhibit 12)

Existing Condition

This view is taken from the proposed alignment of CV Link in the channel bottom and adjacent to the channel levee, and at a location nearest to single-family residences in the Four Seasons gated community in Palm Springs. The visual quality of the key view is composed of sweeping panoramas of mountains and open desert landscape with windmills in the distance and native desert vegetation and wildlife in the foreground. This segment gives CV Link users an intimate relationship to an untouched portion of the valley floor.

Viewer Response

Given the public feedback and the viewshed assessment, community sensitivity would be high if the path was located on the levee as shown on one of the CV Link alignments. To minimize this impact the path is now proposed in the wash with the levee providing an effective visual barrier between the residences and the path.

Proposed Condition

As shown on Exhibit 12, the path is proposed in the channel along the toe of the concrete-lined levee. The proposed concrete and DG path will be below the line of sight of the nearby residential development. Only the very top of nearby homes will be visible from this Link segment.

Resource Change

The view is taken from a location that is facing northwest along the proposed future route, with the San Bernardino Mountains and the windmills as the north backdrop. The concrete portions of the path will be similar in color to the sands and gravels of the adjacent flood plain. There appears to be no need to further design refinements or mitigation.

BEFORE

AFTER

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

07.25.16

TERRA NOVA®
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 2
Four Seasons Channel Levee (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
12

Key View # 3 Gene Autry Trail Bridge/Overcrossing (Exhibit 13)

Existing Condition

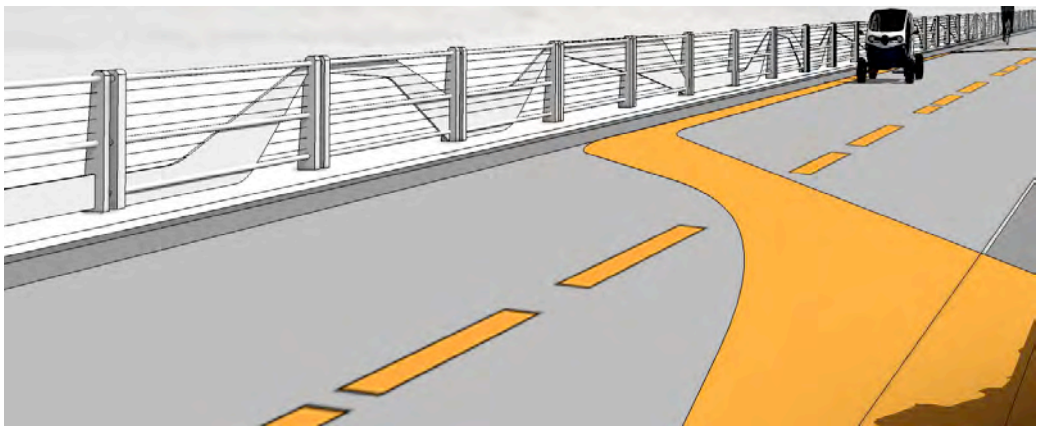
Looking south from within the Whitewater River food plain, this key view's visual resources are somewhat dominated by the channel and roadway foreground, but also with broad views of the San Jacinto Mountains on the west and the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and southeast. A vacant developable parcel designated Light Industrial is located on the left just above the levee; however, no additional development beyond this site is expected that could affect this viewshed. Large power poles, a billboard and traffic signal warning beacons also are a part of the existing viewshed.

Viewer Response

Gene Autry Trail is another gateway roadway that connects US I-10 with the communities of Palm Springs and Cathedral City to the south and southeast. It is also a major commuting route for travelers working south of I-10. Southbound viewers will be traveling at moderate speed having traveled unimpeded across the two-mile wide flood plain. As travelers approach the bridge they will be in proximity to the Via Escuela and Vista Chino signalized intersections and they will be focused on negotiating traffic and controls. Nonetheless, viewers will most notice and respond primarily to the raised embankments that will carry CV Link over Gene Autry Trail. Residential development is located some distance to the southwest in an area that occurs below the Gene Autry roadway grade, with primary views to the west and south, views to the northeast are limited because of the homes' locations below the road elevation, but extend over the floodplain and valley floor to the distant Little San Bernardino Mountains.

Proposed Condition

As shown in the visual simulation, the overcrossing will be facilitated through the construction of two elevated earthen embankments that will provide adequate clearance between the overcrossing and traffic below. As shown here, the bridge will consist of a single span concrete slab approximately 25 feet in width, with decorative fencing and handrails. Because of the relatively narrow span, there will not be a need for supportive columns, wing walls or girders. The bridge will present a narrow, ribbon-like profile that



will have a limited impact on the mountain backdrop beyond. Embankments will be landscaped with the CV Link landscaping theme of desert tolerant plants in angular, orderly patterns, which will provide both aesthetic value and slope stabilization. See Exhibit 13, below.

Resource Change

The greatest change in the visual resources in this area will be from the substantial height and mass of the planned embankments to carry the route over Gene Autry Trail. While existing visual clutter and the potential for future development could also affect these views, the bridge embankments and to a much lesser degree the bridge span, will reduce mountain views for southbound travelers. While the effects of the bridge have not been modeled for northbound travelers on Gene Autry Trail, it would appear that the broad and expansive views to the northwest, north and northeast will be only minimally diminished. As noted, the southbound traveling public will experience a change of the existing visual resources. The change for southbound travelers will be moderate as illustrated by Exhibit 13.

Residences located to the southwest are largely oriented east/west and have limited views in the direction of the proposed bridge. Views from these homes to the northeast are of the flood control levee and Gene Autry Trail in the foreground, the floodplain and I-10 in the mid-ground and vacant desert and the low profile of the Little San Bernardino Mountains across the valley. The proposed bridge also will occupy a small portion of the surrounding viewshed. The most visible component of the bridge – the embankments on either side – will be aesthetically treated with the distinctive landscaping theme for CV Link, which features clearly defined geometrics created by plantings. The landscaping plan is also consistent with the palette of the surrounding floodplain, which consists of native desert plants. As shown in Exhibit 13, the landscaped embankment will blend into the viewshed for both residents and travelers. The potential impacts of the bridge to nearby residences will be less than significant.

BEFORE

AFTER

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

09.14.16

TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 3
Gene Autry Trail Overcrossing (Phase II)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit

13

b. Visual Assessment Unit 2 - Palm Springs/Cathedral City

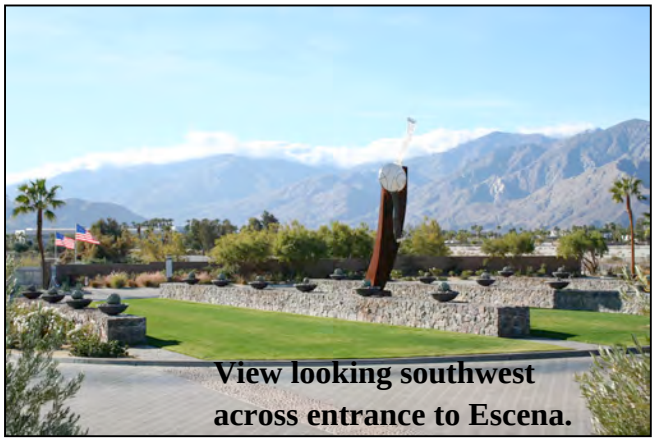
Key View # 4 Vista Chino and Whitewater River

Existing Condition

The views provided below are at and in the vicinity of the CV Link crossing at Vista Chino and adjacent to the Whitewater River Channel. This location is at the northwest end of VAU-2 and represents the somewhat cluttered conditions at this location, including cell towers, gates and fences, and service commercial and light industrial development on the north side of Vista Chino. The visual resources of the area are also affected by extensive flood control facilities but also benefit from the enhanced landscaped entry into Escena and sweeping views.

View looking north to Vista Chino and future at-grade crossing.

View looking north to future CV Link Vista Chino at-grade crossing.



View looking southwest across entrance to Escena.

View south along the west bank levee.

Viewer Response

Viewers at this location are largely limited to vehicle travelers, although there are an increasing number of walkers and joggers on the channel levee. Three of the four corners at the proposed CV Link Vista Chino crossing are dominated by flood control facilities, piles of fill, intersection traffic control devices and the dip into and out of the Whitewater River channel on Vista Chino. Exposure time for most viewers is short as drivers attend to negotiating traffic and signals.

Proposed Condition

CV Link improvements will, in the near-term, include an at-grade crossing of Vista Chino at the signalized Escena entry with corresponding facilities at the corners and special crosswalk striping and iconic colored concrete. A rest area with benches and a shade structure are planned at this intersection, which will also include information/directional signage, trashcans and landscaping.

Resource Change

The noticeable change to the visual resources in this part of VAU-2 will be limited to rest area enhancements described above. CV Link improvements may be particularly noticeable to those entering and leaving the Escena community. Both east and west travelers on Vista Chino will only notice a change in the visual character of the area if stopped at the signal. For many viewers the visual resource will be enhanced by the project improvements. The overall change to visual resources in this area will be low and will be less than significant. Positive visual impacts may result with the provision of more visual coherence from CV Link elements at this location.

Key View # 5 Dinah Shore Drive Bridge at Whitewater River (Exhibit 14)

Existing Condition

Looking south along the right bank of the Whitewater River Channel, this key view's visual resources are somewhat dominated by the channel, levee and service road in the foreground, but also with broad views of the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and southeast. The Dinah Shore Bridge is evident in the foreground and the bridge approach and associated landscaping, which blocks some of the central mountain views, are evident on the right.

Viewer Response

There is very little foot or bicycle use of the levee at this location dure to fencing and signage to discourage its use. However, viewer response can be gauged along the alignment, which offers exceptional views of the surrounding mountains. This route segment and representative key view includes the broad, sandy and naturally vegetated channel bottom, which also supports a variety of birds and wildlife. Although not evident from the view assessed, views to the west are partially impacted by a series of large billboards.

Proposed Condition

Key View # 5 is representative of how much of the CV Link path will appear throughout the Coachella Valley, building upon the channel service roads that extend along most of the CV Link route. Path colors, railings and other enhancements will be those that brand the CV Link identity along its entire length. This view and visual simulation also shows the typical built condition where CV Link passes beneath bridges, with the underpass ramp evident in the central portion of the simulation. See Exhibit 14, below.

Resource Change

The greatest change in the visual resources in this area will be in the foreground path improvement, which will include concrete paving and DG path, and railing where necessary, with the minor addition of a concrete ramp passing under and in the shadow of the bridge. None of the mountain views along this segment will be impacted and CV Link improvements will provide an inviting path along this scenic part of the route. There will be no adverse change in the visual resources in this area or in comparable areas along the route. The change for southbound travelers is illustrated in Exhibit 14.

BEFORE

AFTER

08.01.16

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

TERRA NOVA®
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 5
Dinah Shore Undercrossing (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

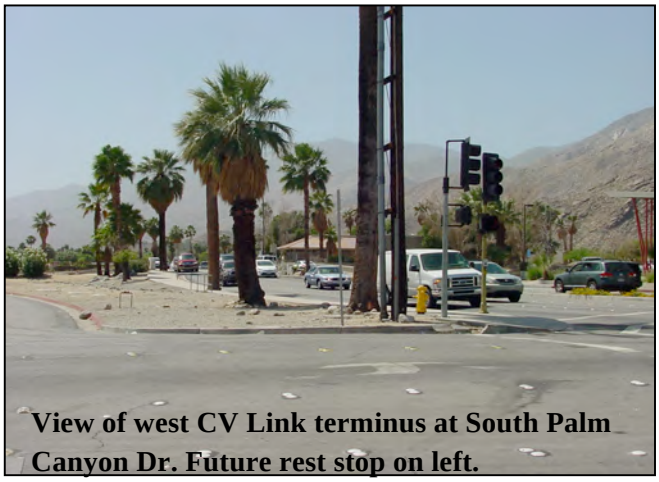
Exhibit
14

c. Visual Assessment Unit 3 - Tahquitz Creek

Key View # 6 South Palm Canyon Drive Bridge and Tahquitz Creek

Existing Condition

VAU-3 begins at this location, which is the western terminus of CV Link in central Palm Springs at Tahquitz Creek and South Palm Canyon Drive. From this key location, CV Link proceeds east along Tahquitz Creek to its confluence with the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. Foreground views along VAU-3 and on all sides include long established development, including light industrial, commercial, residential and recreational (golf course, municipal park, water park) uses. At the CV Link terminus close in views include the San Jacinto Mountains a short distance to the west, and the Santa Rosa Mountains approximately one mile to the south. The future CV Link rest area is currently bare dirt and an asphalt-paved drainage swell.



View of west CV Link terminus at South Palm Canyon Dr. Future rest stop on left.

Close in view looking south to future CV Link rest area and access point.

Viewer Response

Viewer response to the visual resources in this area are mixed and dependent upon the mode of travel for viewers. For instance, northbound and southbound travelers on South Palm Canyon Drive are traveling along a curving roadway way and negotiating a bridge, heavy traffic and constrained travelways. Drivers and passengers have limited opportunities to take in the visual resources of this area. However, there are a fair number of pedestrians in this area, as well as hikers and joggers (and occasional equestrian) on nearby Tahquitz Creek and adjoin streets. The clutter of various roadway and utility infrastructure, and close-in buildings compete for the dramatic mountain vistas to the west and the more diminished but still impressive mountain views to the south.

Proposed Condition

The proposed CV Link improvements in this area will include the planned route along the north (left) bank of Tahquitz Creek and adjacent and within the E. Riverside Drive south parkway. The plan calls for rest stop improvements at the CV Link terminus at the northeast corner of South

Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Creek, which will include a shade structure, benches and wayfinding signage. Trees, shrubs and other landscaping are also planned. The design of the shade structures is reminiscent of mid-century architectural forms found especially in Palm Springs, including a restaurant across the street from the future rest stop.

Resource Change

The change in the visual resources at this location will be substantially improved compared to current conditions. In addition to an iconic shade structure, street furniture and signage/wayfinding, the effects associated with CV Link improvements will be very limited and will be hardly noticeable to travelers in motor vehicles. The western terminus will be reached by the Link segment planned on the north bank of Tahquitz Creek and the E. Riverside Drive parkway, where an existing path already exists. Enjoyment of the visual resources at and in proximity to the planned CV Link west terminus rest area will be greatly improve, and the character and quality of the visual resources in the area will also improve viewer response.

Key View # 7 Demuth Park (Exhibit 15)

Existing Condition

This view is looking northwest from within Demuth Park in Palm Springs with Tahquitz Creek golf course on the left. Foreground views are dominated by park and golf course improvements, including wide unimproved dirt path, fencing and gates, with the rising terrain of the San Jacinto Mountains in the distance on the left and the San Bernardino Mountains just visible in the central distance through trees. There is no signage or wayfinding at or near this location.

Viewer Response

The viewer response at this location is expected to be quite positive with sweeping and expansive views across parkland and golf course in the fore and mid-ground, to the distant views of the Santa Rosa and the San Jacinto Mountains to the south and west, respectively. The location of this segment is within a high value visual corridor and its extended length makes it a user experience of relatively long duration.

Proposed Condition

The proposed CV Link improvements would provide upgraded and widened hard surface for two-way bicycle, LSEVs, pedestrians and other ridden modes of transport allowed on CV Link. In addition, an improved and widened pedestrian path of DG will also be provided. Signage will be limited and other possible vertical elements will be limited to benches, water fountains and low-level lighting near turnoffs and access points. Please see the visual simulation prepared for this key view (Exhibit 15).

Resource Change

As is illustrated in the visual simulation prepared for a typical segment of the Tahquitz Creek VAU, there will be limited changes to the visual resources along this existing trail. CV Link improvements will also serve to de-clutter the foreground dirt path and provide a more structured and user-facilitating improvement scheme. Existing visual elements would be maintained and dual paths would be significantly upgraded to provide a highly functional, aesthetically pleasing multi-modal path thorough this area. There will be no adverse impacts on the visual resources in at this location or comparable areas of VAU-3.

Before

After

08.01.16

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

TERRA NOVA®
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 7
Demuth Park (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
15

c. Visual Assessment Unit 4 – Central Valley

Key View # 8 Magnesia Falls Drive (Exhibit 16)

Existing Condition

This view looks west from the access drive to the Palm Desert Aquatic Center along Magnesia falls Drive and shows existing intersection and pathway improvements in the foreground. Ranks of date palms on the left and extending into the aquatic center lend structure to the view and contrast with the mix of landscaping across Magnesia Falls Drive. The foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains are evident in the left mid-ground, with the ridgeline of the San Jacinto Mountains rising behind in the distance.

Viewer Response

All viewers, including those traveling in motor vehicles, bicycles and walking, will identify the street activity and the foreground landscaping (date grove and parkway landscaping) as the dominant viewshed, contrasting with Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains in the fore and mid-ground. Bicyclists and especially pedestrians will also find the westerly views and to a lesser degree easterly views of interest. The geometry, structure and color of the foreground landscaping contrast with the warm browns and white granite of the mountains, providing visual contrast and continuity along these viewsheds.

Proposed Condition

This key view illustrates how CV Link will build upon and take advantage of existing streets and multi-modal facilities, where use of the primary channel alignments are not feasible. The proposed conditions will be largely limited to flatwork with some resurfacing and use of colored concrete to define the on-street facility at this location. Any future wayfinding signage will be limited in size and dimensions. With the proposed CV Link improvements there will be no adverse impact on the area’s visual resources.

Resource Change

The proposed bike track and at-grade intersection crossing will be evident to viewers looking west from the access drive to the Palm Desert Aquatic Center. Foreground landscape and mountain views are and will continue to be the most prominent, and CV Link striping and color help define the multi-modal travelway. A visual simulation of this view has also been prepared. (Please see Exhibit 16)

Before

After

08.01.16

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 8
Magnesia Falls Drive (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit

16

Key View # 9 Cook Street Bridge/Overcrossing (Exhibit 17)

Existing Condition

The location of the proposed Cook Street overcrossing of CV Link in on the south (right) bank of the Whitewater River Channel and would connect the channel service road separated by this roadway. All four corner of the Cook Street/channel intersection are developed with the Palm Desert High School on the southwest corner, a well site and multi-family residential on the southeast corner, office commercial on the northeast corner, and recreational (driving range) on the northwest corner. The stormwater channel is partially vegetated and vegetation is regularly removed to maintain capacity. Cook Street crosses the channel over a set of existing low-flow culverts.

Primary visual resources are those seen looking south and include the ranks of ridgelines on the Santa Rosa Mountains, including distant views of the ridgeline and peaks over 9,600 feet. Views north are dominated by the rising roadway coming out of the channel and elevated and developed terrain beyond.

Viewer Response

All viewers, including those traveling in motor vehicles, bicycles and walking, will identify the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south as the dominant viewshed, contrasting with urban development in the fore and mid-ground. Bicyclists and especially pedestrians will also find the channel views upstream and to a lesser degree downstream of interest with open views of the partially vegetated channel and distant mountains beyond. The channel provides contrast with the built environment and has a unique form and color, providing visual continuity along these viewsheds.

Proposed Condition

The proposed conditions that will result from development of CV Link at this location will be dominated by the proposed Cook Street overcrossing. Other CV Link facilities in the vicinity will be paved path sections and incidental Link amenities. Approach ramps supported on piers and a suspension span raises and carries the path at an elevation adequate to safely bridge over Cook Street and a planned future bridge at this location. This alignment then continues along the channel service road. All bridge structures will be developed within the channel right-of-way. Please see the following visual simulation (Exhibit 17).

Resource Change

CV Link’s proposed Cook Street bridge introduces an iconic, light weight and open design that complements the surrounding architecture and the viewsheds in which it will be built. The thin, ribbon-like bridge and the arching tubular structural support have no adverse impact on the mountain viewsheds nor will it affect or obstruct views of the stormwater channel or other open areas in the bridge vicinity. Therefore, the change to visual resources in the area will be very limited and less than significant.

Before

After

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

07.25.16

TERRA NOVA®
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 9
Cook Street Overcrossing (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV/LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
17

e. Visual Assessment Unit 5 - La Quinta/Indio Levee Condition

Key View # 10 Point Happy (Exhibit 18)

Existing Condition

As can be seen from the following visual simulation for this viewpoint, the Whitewater River Channel and the foreground foothills and distant Santa Rosa Mountains are important components of the existing conditions at this viewshed. The subject view is taken from the existing Washington Street bridge looking southwest to the proposed bridge. Although not apparent at the time this view was photographed, the channel is periodically cleared of vegetation to maintain capacity. This prominent view will be visible to southbound drives once they are on the bridge and to bicyclists and pedestrians on both sides.

Viewer Response

Viewer response will vary with the type and location/orientation in the area. Views to the Point Happy outcropping are essentially limited to those on the bridge, whether drivers or other mode users. Northbound drivers will not be able to see the bridge without turning to take in a view 90° to the left or greater. Southbound travelers will be focused on negotiating a descending curve and will be at speed, approaching the signal located at the south (right) bank of the channel. Passengers and much less so drivers will be able to see the bridge once they are near or on the bridge but will need to turn at least 45° to take in the subject channel and foothills view.

Proposed Condition

The CV Link project includes the development of a arching plyon-supported cable-suspended bridge, similar in design to the North Palm Canyon and Cook Street bridges, to allow the path to continue along the stormwater channel service road on the south (right) bank. The path would remain at the same elevation as planned along the service road and the arch of tubular steel and cables will suspend the bridge about the channel.

Resource Change

The change to the local visual resources is expected to be quite limited given the light and airy design of the bridge suspension system and the maintenance of the path elevation through this connecting structure. There will be no meaningful obstruction of foothill or mountain views, and views of the channel will not be affected. Therefore, the change to visual resources in the area will be very limited and less than significant.

Before

After

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

07.25.16

TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 10
Point Happy (Phase II)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit

18

Key View # 11 Typical Levee Condition (Exhibit 19)

Existing Condition

The conditions at this location represent the worst-case potential impacts to residential privacy associated with CV Link development. The Indio and Coachella alignments of CV Link are located on the right bank of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel levee service road, with planned future phase undercrossings at some locations. In a few locations single-family residential subdivisions adjacent to the channel levee have resulted in lots whose rear yards back onto the channel right-of-way. In several locations, rear yard and home finished floor elevations are at elevations that range from six to ten feet below the channel maintenance road. Rear view from these homes and yards include decorative block walls and fences, and the slope of the levee.

Viewer Response

Viewer response is divided between adjoining residents and CV Link users. The response of adjoining residents to CV Link improvements vary with the type and location/orientation of viewers in the area. The visual resources accessible to residential viewers are limited to those within their respective rear yards. Beyond walls and fences, the outer slopes of the channel levee rise well above the top of these boundary walls. Viewer response to the largely bare dirt levee slopes is expected to be neutral to negative, with the levee also blocking views of the channel and surrounding desert. Viewer response from the CV Link users will be a new experience for most since access to the levees is currently restricted. The sweeping panoramic views are expected to be those most valued by users of the levee today.

Proposed Condition

As shown on the following visual simulation, the CV Link path will be constructed directly on the existing channel service road, with concrete and DG paths to be provided. The proposed condition will include the existing channel levee and side slopes. Within the intervening area between the levee service road and the block walls and fences at the rear residential property boundaries, the CV Link Master Plan includes a landscape screen. The project's landscape concept and design palette has been developed to assure landscaping is appropriate for the desert environment, supports the overall CV Link design concept, and serves a functional purpose, such as slope protection, privacy barrier, or windbreak, where necessary.

Residents' view of the elevated levee and CV Link users will be screened in a manner comparable to that shown on the following visual simulation. Rather than a bare dirt slope, viewers in the rear yards and with views from within the homes will see vegetation and associated wildlife beyond their rear fences and walls. CV Link users will have somewhat but modestly obstructed views, which will be limited by period landscape maintenance to ensure effective residential screening while minimizing CV Link user views.

Resource Change

The resource change in this area will be limited and for some viewers may constitute an improvement over existing direct and unbuffered exposure to the bare levee side slopes, where in some areas weeds that have grow higher than boundary walls and fences. For CV Link users, the resource change will not be evident due to the current restricted access to the levee and channel. Future users will continue to have largely unobstructed views and a landscape buffer between them and adjacent residences. The perception of both sets of users to the planned CV Link improvements is expected to be neutral to favorable.

Before

After

07.26.16

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

TERRA NOVA® PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.

CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 11
Typical Levee Condition (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY

CVAG

Exhibit

19

Key View # 12 Jackson Park Access Point (Exhibit 20)

Existing Condition

This view is taken from the edge of the easterly ball field within Jackson Park in Indio looking northwest toward the channel levee and future CV Link route. The view captures the rise of the levee approximately eight feet above the park and elementary school to the south and the edge of the Indio Hills in the background. At this location the existing conditions are dominated by the fore and mid-ground ball fields and other park amenities, light standards and the channel levee. Westerly views are of the distant San Jacinto Mountains and of the Santa Rosa Mountains to the southwest.

Viewer Response

Viewer response is divided between parkland users, adjoining elementary school attendees, nearby residences, and CV Link users. The response of adjoining residents to CV Link improvements vary with the type and location/orientation of views. Residences to the west have very limited views of the park and levee that bounds it, being screened by intervening park landscaping. Parkland users are largely focused on the activities within the park, although the surrounding expansive views are readily available for passive enjoyment. Levee users, now and with completion of CV Link, enjoy an elevated position with sweeping panoramic views, which are expected to be those most valued by those who do use the levee today. Park users will continue to have their northerly views blocked by the levee, portions of which are in turf.

Proposed Condition

The proposed condition at the Jackson Park access point will result in the construction of a sloping ramp splitting off of the main route atop the channel levee maintenance road and descending the levee into the park. In addition to the ramp that will lie against the levee background, shade structures, wayfinding and other CV Link amenities are planned at the bottom f the ramp and in the vicinity of park playground facilities.

Resource Change

The resource change in this area will be very limited for parkland users and attendees at the adjoining Andrew Jackson Elementary School, who will note the new ramp, shade structures and other CV Link amenities but which will blend into the existing levee and landscape background. Nearby residents should see no resource change associated with the CV Link park access. For CV Link users, the resource change will be less evident not only due to the current restricted access to the levee (which is disregarded by some) but also due to the elevational separation between the top of levee and surrounding lands, including the stormwater channel. Sweeping views to the east and west will be preserved and planned access point improvements are not expected to significantly impact these views. The perception of all users to the planned CV Link improvements is expected to be neutral to favorable.

Before

After

08.01.16

Source: Alta Planning + Design, 2016

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CV Link Project
Visual Simulation - Key View 13
Jackson Park Access Point (Phase I)
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

CV LINK
CONNECTING THE COACHELLA VALLEY
CVAG

Exhibit
20

f. Visual Assessment Unit 6 - Coachella/Riverside County

Key View # 13 Dillon Road

Existing Condition

The viewsheds accessible from VAU-6 are notably different from those on the other VAUs, with the possible exception of the North Palm Springs alignments overlooking the Whitewater River flood plain. This VAU, which begins in the vicinity of Dillon Road and proceeds southeast to Airport Boulevard, is dominated by the stormwater channel, the SR 86 Expressway, limited adjoining development mostly comprised of ag-industrial and limited single-family residential, and expanses of agricultural lands in various stages of cultivation. This VAU also enjoys panoramic views of the Indio Hills, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains and Mecca Hills beyond. Other mountain views, including the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains to the west and northwest respectively, are more distant but still significant visual resources.

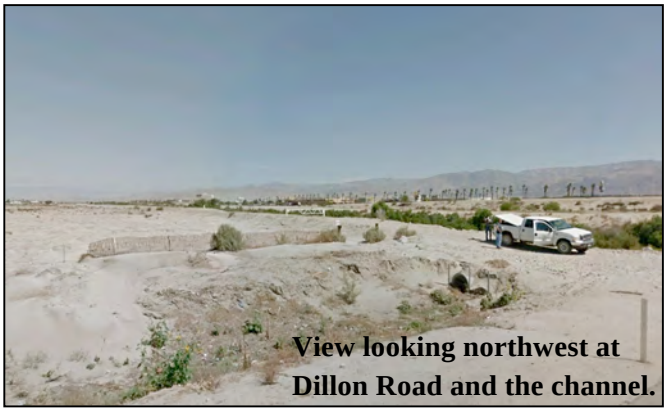
Viewer Response

Viewer response is also expected to differ along this VAU and will provide a more open and unfettered view of and feel for the surrounding lands. The progressively expansive views of agricultural lands and progressively more vegetated channel bottom also provide a calming and positive field of view that is valued by all possible viewers, including and especially multi-modal travelers who travel at a pace that allows the surrounding visual resources to be taken in. While there are areas of ag-industrial use and unscreened outdoor storage, the values of the visual resources along this VAU are considered to be high.

Proposed Condition

The proposed condition is comparable to that planned for other segments in the east valley. The CV Link path will be comprised primarily of flatwork, including concrete and DG paths constructed directly on the existing channel service road. In this instance, as in VAU-5, there are a few areas of limited residential development adjacent to the route. In some instances there are elevational differences between residence rear yards and the channel service road, which will be addressed with landscape screening. Planting materials will be selected from the CVMSHCP-compliant landscape plant lists and will vary in height and density to address the screening needs along the route.

The proposed condition will continue to be dominated by the existing channel and vegetation, SR-86, surrounding agriculture and more distant mountains. Limited vertical elements are expected beyond occasional wayfinding to point users to access points and places of interest. Residents' view of the elevated levee and CV Link users will be screened in a manner comparable to that shown on Exhibit 19. Rather than a bare dirt slope, viewers in the rear yards and with views from within the homes will see vegetation beyond their rear fences and walls. CV Link users could have somewhat but modestly obstructed views, which will be limited by period landscape maintenance to ensure effective screening while minimizing Link user views.


View looking northwest at Dillon Road and the channel.


View at Dillon Road and channel looking west.

View at Avenue 50 and the channel looking east.


View of east terminus at Ave 56 looking northwest.

Resource Change

The visual resources along VAU-6 with CV Link improvement are expected to remain substantially the same as the current condition. In this reach of the Link, the channel and associated service road occur in both channel and levee conditions, which results in adjoining lands at the same approximate elevation as the channel service road in some locations, and in some areas a levee condition of up to approximately six feet. Residential landscape screen is planned at two or three locations to preserve privacy and potentially enhanced landscape views instead of the existing bare earth levee where this condition exists. Therefore, there will be very limited and less than significant changes in the visual resources in VAU-6.

Key View # 14 SE Coachella/Channel @ AP Blvd Brdg

Existing Condition

The viewsheds accessible from VAU-6 are notably different from those on the other VAUs, with the possible exception of the North Palm Springs alignments overlooking the Whitewater River flood plain. This VAU, which begins in the vicinity of Dillon Road and proceeds southeast to Airport Boulevard, is dominated by the stormwater channel, the SR 86 Expressway, limited adjoining development mostly comprised of ag-industrial and limited single-family residential, and expanses of agricultural lands in various stages of cultivation. This VAU also enjoys panoramic views of the Indio Hills, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains and Mecca Hills

beyond. Other mountain views, including the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains to the west and northwest respectively, are more distant but still significant visual resources.

View of CV Link Route Looking South
To Airport Boulevard and East Terminus

Viewer Response

Viewer response is also expected to differ along this VAU and will provide a more open and unfettered view of and feel for the surrounding lands. The progressively expansive views of agricultural lands and progressively more vegetated channel bottom also provide a calming and positive field of view that is valued by all possible viewers, including and especially multi-modal travelers who travel at a pace that allows the surrounding visual resources to be taken in. While there are areas of ag-industrial use and unscreened outdoor storage, the values of the visual resources along this VAU are considered to be high.

Proposed Condition

The proposed condition is comparable to that planned for other segments in the east valley. The CV Link path will be comprised primarily of flatwork, including concrete and DG paths constructed directly on the existing channel service road. In this instance, as in VAU-5, there are a few areas of limited residential development adjacent to the route. In some instances there are elevational differences between residence rear yards and the channel service road, which will be addressed with landscape screening. Planting materials will be selected from the CVMSHCP-compliant landscape plant lists and will vary in height and density to address the screening needs along the route.

Resource Change

The visual resources at Key View # 14 and elsewhere along VAU-6 with CV Link improvement are expected to remain substantially the same as the current condition. In this reach of the Link, the channel and associated service road occur in both channel and levee conditions, which results in adjoining lands at the same approximate elevation as the channel service road in some locations, and in some areas a levee condition of up to approximately six feet higher than adjoining residential lands. Residential landscape screening is planned at two or three locations to preserve privacy and potentially enhanced landscape views instead of the existing bare earth levee where this condition exists. Therefore, there will be very limited and less than significant changes in the visual resources in VAU-6.

2. Summary Of Visual Impacts By Visual Assessment Unit

A summary of visual impacts for the following visual assessment units has been prepared for the following visual assessment units:

Visual Assessment Unit 1 – North Palm Springs Segment
Visual Assessment Unit 2 – Central Palm Springs Segment
Visual Assessment Unit 3 – Tahquitz Creek Segment
Visual Assessment Unit 4 – Central Valley Segment
Visual Assessment Unit 5 – La Quinta/Indio Segment
Visual Assessment Unit 6 – Coachella Segment

The following table summarizes and compares the narrative ratings for visual resource change, viewer response, and visual impacts between alternatives for each key view.

TABLE 2
Summary of Key View Narrative Ratings

VISUAL ASSESSMENT UNIT	KEY VIEW	PROPOSED PROJECT		
		Resource Change	**Viewer Response**	**Visual Impact**
1: North Palm Springs	1	**L**	**ML**	**ML**
	2	**L**	**L**	**L**
	3	**ML**	**ML**	**ML**
2: Palm Springs /Cathedral City	4	**L**	**L**	**L**
	5	**L**	**L**	**L**
3: Tahquitz Creek	6	**L**	**L**	**L**
	7	**L**	**L**	**L**
4: Central Valley	8	**L**	**L**	**L**
	9	**ML**	**ML**	**L**
	10	**L**	**L**	**L**
5: La Quinta/Indio	11	**L**	**ML**	**L**
	12	**L**	**L**	**L**
6: Coachella	13	**L**	**ML**	**L**
	14	**L**	**L**	**L**

IX. PROJECT VISUAL IMPACT SUMMARY

A. Methodology

For this visual impact assessment the "study area" refers to the project limits described in Section I and the surrounding sensitive viewer areas. Potential project impacts to visual resources were finalized by utilizing the CEQA guidelines referenced in Section III and the steps set forth in the publication "Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects" Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), March 1981. Six principal steps mandated to analyze visual impacts were executed: 1: define the existing visual resources; 2) identify key views for visual assessment; 3) analyze existing visual resources and viewer response; 4) assess the visual impacts of project alternatives based on the environmental considerations; and 5) proposed methods to mitigate adverse visual impacts.

Views of the roads (CV Link) and views from adjoining property shape the overall visual image of an urban or rural area and tend to form the first impression of a particular viewer. For this reason, the FHWA guidelines analyze the changes to views of and from the road, in this case CV Link. The points of view of the traveling public (from public streets) and of the person with a view to the proposed project area vary but are largely the same. The key views in this analyze are taken not only from the proposed facility but also from surrounding streets and properties.

Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness, and unity in the viewshed. According to the FHWA this method should correlate with public judgment of visual quality to predict those judgments. This approach is useful as it prevents future projects from becoming an eyesore. This level of analysis is further beneficial as it can help identify specific methods for mitigating specific adverse impacts that may happen as a result of the proposed project.

B. Short-term Construction Visual Impacts

A moderate amount of earthwork may be required along some segments of CV Link, including rough and fine grading to provide a level and sound base for path construction. Equipment may be visible on levee service roads or along streets where Link improvements are being installed, and will progressively move along the segment as construction progresses. In addition, sites for construction staging and stockpiling have been identified along the route, which will result in the short-term storage of construction equipment and building materials. Temporary traffic cones and/or barricades would result in minor temporary potential visual impacts to the traveling public. The visible activities would include the installation of the concrete and DG path, wayfinding, shade structures, LSEV charging stations, restrooms and CV Link amenities. In some areas these short-term construction activities could be visible to adjacent and nearby residents. Their sensitivity will be reduced to low levels by incorporating minimization measures, required application of best management practices (BMPs), time of day construction restrictions and other development regulation. In addition, the construction activities will be temporary, spread out geographically, generating limited, short-term impacts during construction.

C. Long-term Construction Visual Impacts

The proposed CV Link project will be developed on lands that have already been disturbed as a part of flood control facilities, and on existing roadways and paths. Most of the project alignment is planned on the service and maintenance roads of the valley's major drainages, including Chino Creek/Whitewater River floodplain, Tahquitz Creek, and the White water River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. project area is located in largely on the existing levees of the Whitewater River Channel/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.

Three "build" alternatives are being analysed, including all project alignments, all alignments excepting those passing through Rancho Mirage, and in another alternative excepting both Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells alignments. A "No Project" alternative is also being analysed. Under none of the project alternatives will changes significantly alter existing visual resources or create an adverse effect to scenic vistas, remove or destroy character-defining features, for instance landscape or hardscapes features along the proposed project area.

Furthermore, the channel service road upon which a majority of the proposed route will be constructed will be further enhanced and upgraded, providing additional visual character through CV Link improvements and landscaping. The project proposes lighting along the route and at the various rest areas, which will enhance evening use but not adversely affect existing conditions. Lighting will consist on low-profile bollards, as well as embedded LED lighting that would be incorporated throughout the route. The lighting will produce a limited and directed level of luminance and will result in little or no spillover effects. It poses no potential to create new shade/shadow impacts for shade/shadow-sensitive viewers. Consequently, adverse effects under NEPA and significant impacts under CEQA due to shade/shadow and other potential CV Link effects will not occur.

X. CUMULATIVE VISUAL IMPACT

Cumulative impacts are those resulting from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential visual impacts of this project. For this project, it has been determined that the following cumulative visual impacts may occur. Cumulative impacts were analyzed using the guidelines set by FHWA. Generally the CV Link route is proposed in areas with existing moderate levels of activity, development, and light. Additionally, given the nature and length of the project, it would be implemented in various stages so that construction schedules would vary greatly among the route but would move quickly from one location to another.

The substantial majority of the proposed CV Link improvements are flat work, including pavement and DG, and associated travel surface improvements. Major vertical elements that could have the greatest visual impacts are limited to the bridge structures analysed in detail in this VIA. Even where these substantial structures are planned, their design greatly reduces the potential adverse visual effect and ensures that impacts to affected viewsheds are less than significant. In other instances, potential impacts are mitigated by the limited exposure to the impact to the resource. The development of the proposed project would be consistent with the overall developed nature of the visual assessment units.

The sensitivity of residents adjacent to and near the proposed CV Link alignments is expected to range from low to moderate. For a certain number of residents who live along the channel where it is in a levee condition, sensitivity would be greatest. Even so, the majority of CV Link construction and use activities will be only minimally visible to residents, whose privacy should also be maintained through the installation of planned landscape screens.

In summation, there will be no adverse cumulative effects to visual resources, light/glare, shade/shadow, or privacy, associated with the construction or operation of the proposed CV Link as assessed under NEPA, or significant cumulative impacts as assessed under CEQA.

XI. AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION, AND/OR MITIGATION MEASURES

Caltrans and the FHWA mandate that a qualitative/aesthetic approach should be taken to address visual quality loss in the project area. This approach fulfills the letter and the spirit of FHWA requirements because it addresses the actual cumulative loss of visual quality due to a project. This approach also results in avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures that can lessen or compensate for a loss in visual quality. The inclusion of aesthetic features in the project design, discussed in *Section II*, can help generate public acceptance of a project.

This section describes additional avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address specific visual impacts. These will be designed and implemented with the concurrence of the District Landscape Architect. Aesthetic details adjacent to the proposed project area, for instance landscaping or pathway paving, have been designed and integrated into the project. Final path, landscape and other design shall be completed in coordination with Caltrans Licensed Landscape Architects to further ensure that visual impacts are avoided or adequately minimized. Examples of minimization measures that are incorporated into the proposed project are depicted in the photo simulations at key views (Exhibits 11 - 20). The locations of specific and practicable measures that avoid and minimize visual impacts of project features have been determined and are described herein. The detailed implementation of the CV Link Master Plan design guidelines, including those that address protection of visual resources for all viewers, shall be directed by the Project Landscape Architect and incorporated into final landscape and maintenance plans.

In addition, it is important to note that the proposed project adheres to local land use and circulation policies regarding aesthetics design. The following project considerations will be incorporated to ensure compatibility with local policies and the surrounding visual environment:

- Design element of the proposed CV Link facility, including but not limited to color, line, texture, and style will be aesthetically pleasing and as unobtrusive as possible. Special attention will be paid to bridges, shade structures, lighting, signage, screening and other vertical design elements and their relationships to all area viewers.

XII. CONCLUSIONS

The identified six visual assessment units and their corresponding key views analyzed in this assessment represent the most sensitive views in the proposed project area. The Coachella Valley is largely defined by its dramatic mountain views and desert and agricultural lands that constitute valuable and valued visual resources to all users and viewers.

The CV Link project, including overcrossing and other associated structures, has been designed to preserve and showcase the area’s visual resources, while also complementing and adding to the visual quality of the area. The proposed bridge designs maximize structural transparency and aesthetic design quality, while minimizing obstruction of valued viewsheds. They will not create significant adverse impacts to or effect on the existing visual resources.

As show in the VIA exhibits, the CV Link elements that will be added to the built environment will not create a significant adverse direct, individual or cumulative effect. These low effects result from thoughtful route selection and facility design that values visual resources at its core and has addressed areas of potential effect through detailed design and analysis

Portions of the proposed route that border residences will be screened by landscaping and other appropriate materials; these minimization measures will avoid and minimize impacts not only to visual resources but also to privacy. Although low-level bollard-type nighttime lighting, as well as path-embedded LED is proposed as part of the project, the impacts on adjoining properties and the appreciation of the night sky will be less than significant.

Therefore, in conclusion the CV Link project will take advantage of and has been designed to enhance the appreciation and enjoyment of the region's significant visual resources. Its alignments and design elements have been carefully designed to complement the surrounding viewsheds and avoid and minimize potential adverse effects on all users and viewers. The project will have less than significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects or impacts on regional and local visual resources.

Nonetheless, CEQA and NEPA environmental documents that rely on this VIA may also incorporate mitigation, avoidance and minimization measures that further ensure that these impacts will be less than significant.

Appendix A List of Preparers

John D. Criste, AICP. Principal Planner, B.A. Architectural History, Pennsylvania State University

Mr. Criste has more than forty years experience in land use, urban and regional planning, landscape design, energy development management and impact analysis, environmental assessment and impact analysis, land use feasibility and market analysis. He also has extensive experience in public policy planning regarding land use and environmental issues on county, state and federal levels. His experience covers all aspects of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and public documents required by it. He has been a CEQA instructor for the Association of Environmental professionals and the American Planning Association, and has provided for credit instruction in land use and environmental planning for the American Bar Association. In addition to extensive experience in urban design, Mr. Criste ahs also conducted and coordinated a wide range of visual impact analyses for CEQA and NEPA projects, including bridge and other transportation projects, major commercial projects and community colleges.

Andrea Randall, Senior Environmental Planner. B.A. Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Ms. Randall has been a practicing professional urban planner since 1993, and has developed a board range of experience and expertise in land use and environmental planning, economic planning and analysis, GIS and databases development and other associate skills and capabilities. She has been actively involved in the preparation of General Plans and associated environmental analysis for the cities of Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, La Quinta and Desert Hot Springs; as well as environmental assessments for planned communities and major recreation projects, including championship golf courses and associated facilities. As a research analyst for Navigation Technologies, Ms. Randall was responsible for developing information and databases for GIS mapping systems, coordinating the resources of more than 100 public and private sector organizations. Her research and analysis involved housing development, transportation systems and networks, traffic regulations, and local planning policies. She was also responsible for tracking and monitoring new development and construction activities on a regional basis.

Pilar Lopez, Assistant Planner. B.S. Environmental Science, University of Redlands

Ms. Lopez is a recent university graduate with nearly two years experience in public and private sector environmental planning. Her work emphasis is on environmental research and analysis, and preparing CEQA and NEPA documents, including initial studies/environmental assessments, negative declarations/FONSIs, EIR/EISs. She has also been able to put her substantial GIS skills to work on the CV Link and other projects.