

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED APPLE VALLEY I-15 TRAVEL CENTER

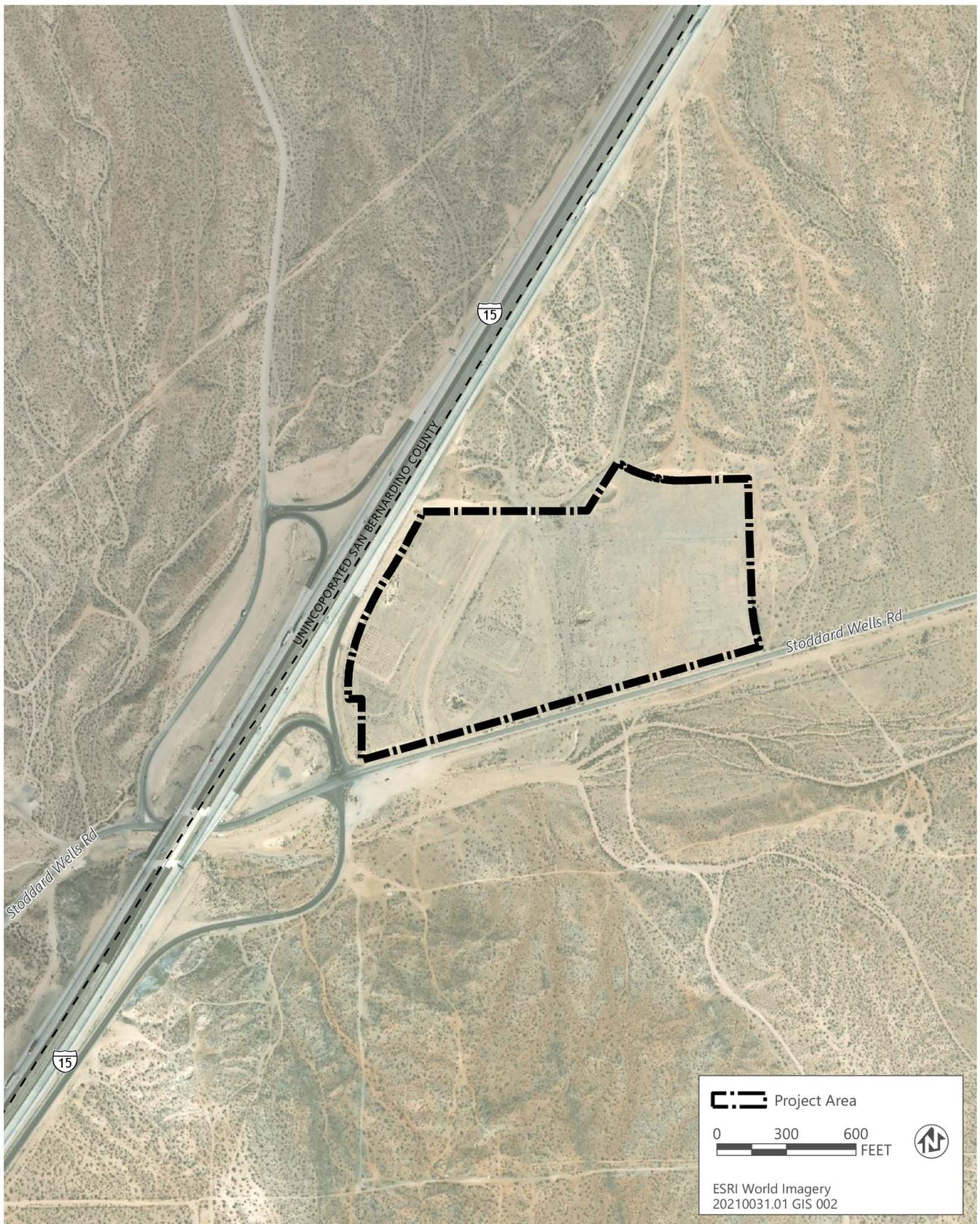
GENERAL INFORMATION

- To:** Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Parties
- Project Title:** Apple Valley I-15 Travel Center
- Review Period:** December 3, 2021 to January 6, 2022
- Lead Agency:** Town of Apple Valley
14955 Dale Evans Parkway
Apple Valley, CA 92307
Contact: Daniel Alcayaga, Planning Manager (760) 240-7000 ext. 7205
- Purpose of Notice:** In accordance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Town of Apple Valley is distributing a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to solicit comments on the scope of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to address the development of a proposed Apple Valley I-15 Travel Center (project). This NOP provides a summary of the proposed project, general background information on the scoping process, the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, and the anticipated uses of the EIR. This NOP is intended to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code, Division 13, Section 21000–21177), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000–15387).
- Project Location:** The project site consists of a 33.52-acre parcel (Assessor’s Parcel Number 0472-222-10-0000), located northeast of the interchange between Interstate 15 (I-15) and Stoddard Wells Road (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the north and east by vacant land, to the west by I-15, and to the south by Stoddard Wells Road.

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to construct and operate a full-service travel center and recreational vehicle (RV) park (project) on approximately 33.52 acres of vacant land in the northwest portion of the Town of Apple Valley (project site). On the western portion of the project site, the travel center would provide professional truck drivers and motorists with 24-hour access to purchase gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, electronics, snacks, travel items, and fast-food restaurant offerings. A truck maintenance building, dog park, RV dump station, stormwater basins, truck and automobile parking areas, and landscaping/lighting are also proposed. The eastern portion of the project site would include an RV park, which would consist of a convenience store, automobile and overnight RV parking with utility hookups, recreational amenities, and landscaping/lighting. Project visitors/customers would include “over-the-road” trucks (i.e., professional long-haul drivers who are on the road for consecutive days or weeks at a time), local residents, and traveling motorists.

Primary site access would be provided via a proposed roadway (Traveler’s Way) connecting to Stoddard Wells Road. Access to the travel center facility would be using three ingress/egress driveways along the proposed Traveler’s Way. The southern driveway (40 feet wide) along Traveler’s Way would be for the exclusive use of automobiles while the two northern driveways (60 feet wide) would be for trucks only. Access to the RV park would be provided via one ingress/egress drive (40 feet wide) along the proposed Traveler’s Way.



Sources: Data downloaded from ESRI in 2021 and adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2021

Figure 1 Project Vicinity

The travel center on the western portion of the project site would include the following characteristics and design features:

- ▶ an 8-position passenger vehicle fueling station;
- ▶ a 10-position truck fueling station;
- ▶ an electric vehicle charging station;
- ▶ a 9,659 square-foot (SF) convenience store;
- ▶ a 3,043 fast food restaurant;
- ▶ a 13,786 SF truck maintenance building (4-bay);
- ▶ a dog park;
- ▶ a truck scale;
- ▶ an RV dump station;
- ▶ one 30,000-gallon below ground gasoline storage tank, including fuel delivery parking;
- ▶ eight 12,000-gallon above-ground and below ground diesel storage tanks, including fuel delivery parking;
- ▶ one two-compartment combined high octane gasoline/diesel tank;
- ▶ one 20,000-gallon diesel exhaust fluid storage tank;
- ▶ truck (102 spaces) and automobile (81 spaces) parking – 183 total parking spaces;
- ▶ onsite lighting, consisting of high-mast LED fixtures and LED canopy lighting;
- ▶ high-rise freeway oriented signage, street signage, and other directional signage;
- ▶ landscaping, hardscaping, pavement, and fencing;
- ▶ a 200,000-gallon fire water supply storage tank; and
- ▶ five stormwater quality basins/features.

The RV park on the eastern portion of the project site would include the following characteristics and design features:

- ▶ a 3,250 SF main building with a convenience store, laundry room, bathrooms, and showers;
- ▶ automobile (8 spaces) and overnight RV (80 spaces) parking with utility hookups – 88 total parking spaces;
- ▶ recreational amenities, including pergolas/gazebos, cornhole courts, pickleball courts, splash pad, horseshoe courts, shuffleboard courts, basketball court, dog park, picnic tables, fire pits, and walking paths;
- ▶ a 1,000-gallon propane tank;
- ▶ an 80,000 SF bioretention area;
- ▶ onsite lighting, consisting of high-mast LED fixtures and LED canopy lighting; and
- ▶ landscaping, hardscaping, pavement, and fencing.

Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed land uses.

Table 1 Summary of Proposed Land Uses

	Floor Area/Square Feet	Parking		
		Auto	Truck	Overnight RV
Travel Center				
Convenience Store	9,659	42	58	--
Fast-Food Restaurant (w/drive-through)	3,043	39	32	--
Truck Maintenance/Tire Building	13,786	--	12	--
Pavement/Parking	350,000	--	--	--
RV Park				
Main Building	3,250	8	--	--
Pavement/Parking	786,000	--	--	80
Total	1,165,738	89	102	80

Source: Information provided by project applicant and compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2021

The proposed travel center and RV park would be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The travel center is designed to accommodate up to 102 trucks and 81 cars onsite at any given time and the RV park is anticipated to accommodate parking of up to 8 cars and 80 RVs onsite at any given time. Overnight truck parking would be available; however, idling of trucks would be limited to no more than five minutes, consistent with California Air Resources Board (CARB) and Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) requirements.

In terms of employment, approximately 39 employees would be located at the project site, spread over three daily shifts. It is anticipated that up to 12 employees would be located at the travel center and 3 employees would be located at the RV park at one time. The travel stop would receive up to six (6) fuel deliveries per day. Up to three (3) small deliveries, such as those delivered by UPS or FedEx are also expected to occur. While the restaurant would likely receive one (1) delivery truck per week, a total of one (1) delivery per day would be the maximum. Diesel fuel, gasoline, and diesel exhaust fluid would be stored onsite in above-ground storage tanks. Total annual fuel throughput for the travel stop is planned to be 14,000,000 gallons (diesel fuel and gasoline).

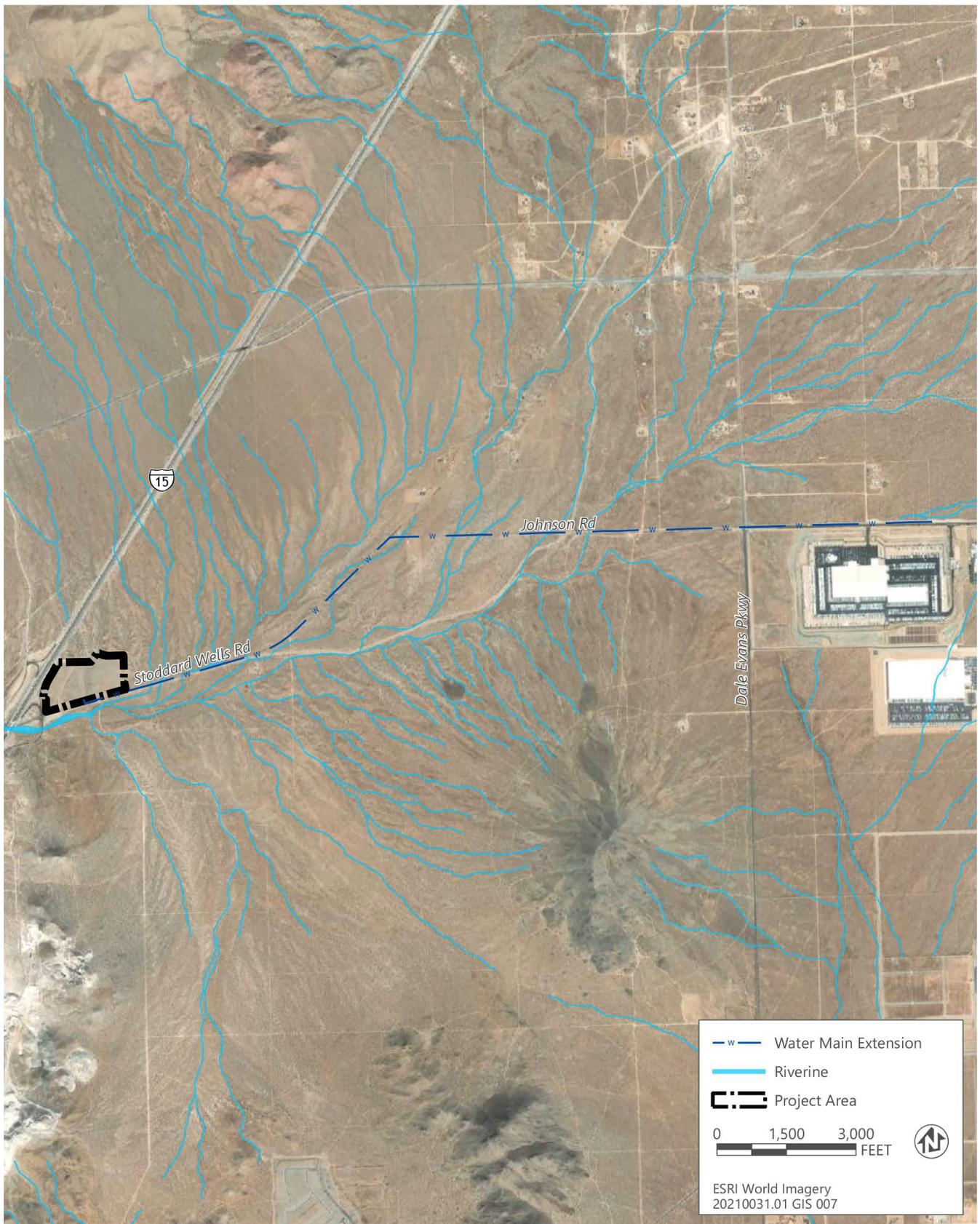
Water and sewer service would be provided by a public utility through connections to existing main lines within and adjacent to the project site. During operation, the travel stop would have an estimated water demand of approximately 27,000 gallons per day (gpd) or 30 acre-feet per year. There are no existing offsite water mains on Stoddard Wells Road fronting the proposed project site. The nearest existing water main connection is approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the project site along Johnson Road, approximately 4,100 feet east of Dale Evans Parkway. The project would require extension of the existing 16-inch diameter pipeline for approximately 19,460 linear feet within existing disturbed areas, such as within the north shoulders or pavement of Johnson Road and Stoddard Wells Road (see Figure 2). In lieu of constructing an offsite water main line, the project may include an onsite domestic water well to supply water to the proposed development.

Stormwater from the travel center would be drained toward five (5) onsite bioretention facilities. From the onsite retention basins, stormwater would flow through a new underground stormwater pipe that would discharge to existing drainage south of the project site. Stormwater from the RV park would be drained toward a bioretention basin along Stoddard Wells Road, just south of the parking area.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

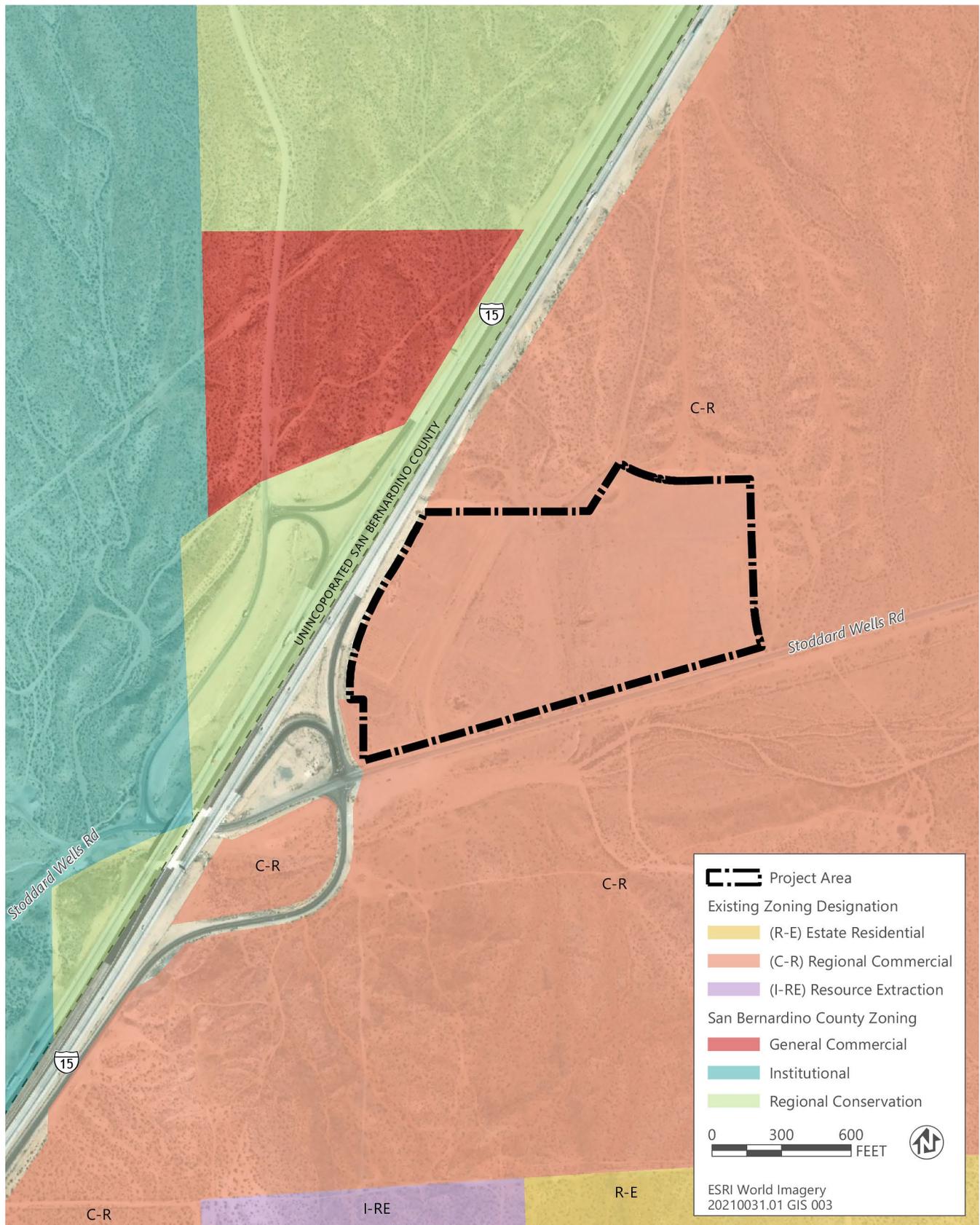
Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b), a clear statement of objectives and the underlying purpose of the project shall be discussed in the Draft EIR. The underlying purpose of the project is to develop a regional travel center and related commercial land uses on Regional Commercial (C-R)-designated land within the Town of Apple Valley that is consistent with Town General Plan policies and zoning (Figure 3). A subdivision map is proposed to create the 33.52-acre project parcel. This underlying purpose, in turn, gives rise to the following project objectives:

- ▶ Create a high-quality travel center commercial development along I-15, a major interstate transportation corridor.
- ▶ Develop a property of sufficient size to create a regional travel center that would accommodate a truck and auto fuel dispensing area, convenience store, fast-food restaurant, truck parking and maintenance services, RV park, and recreational amenities.
- ▶ Construct a travel center facility near a major freeway onramp/offramp to minimize truck and automobile movements, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and associated air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions and traffic noise on local streets.
- ▶ Assist the Town of Apple Valley with meeting its economic development goals, as set forth in its General Plan.
- ▶ Maximize tax revenue to the Town of Apple Valley.
- ▶ Provide employment opportunities for residents of Apple Valley and surrounding areas.
- ▶ Construct a facility with proximal access to adequate existing or anticipated utility infrastructure to support planned operations.



Sources: Data downloaded from NWI in 2020 and adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2021

Figure 2 Water Main Extension



Sources: Data downloaded from Town of Apple Valley and San Bernardino County in 2021 and adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2021

Figure 3 Existing Zoning Designation

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, the discussion of effects on the environment in the EIR shall be focused on those impacts that the Town has determined may be potentially significant. The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Although, at this very early stage of the environmental review process, it is impossible to know with certainty the precise nature and extent of the environmental effects that will be identified as preparation of the Draft EIR gets underway in earnest, it is possible to identify key categories of environmental effects that the proposed project will implicate. The Town has determined that the EIR will evaluate the following environmental impacts:

- ▶ **Aesthetics:** The EIR will describe how the project would change the view of the site from sensitive viewpoints near the project site, such as I-15. The EIR will also describe any light- and glare-related impacts, focusing on sensitive viewsheds, changes to the visual character of the project site, and changes to light and glare associated with the project. Mitigation measures will be recommended to reduce or eliminate any significant project impacts, as necessary.
- ▶ **Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** This project is located within Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) jurisdiction. During construction and operation, the project would emit criteria air pollutants, primarily through vehicular operation. The EIR will quantify the project's construction- and operation-related emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors (e.g., reactive organic gasses [ROG], nitrogen oxides [NO_x], sulfur dioxide [SO₂], carbon monoxide [CO], respirable particulate matter [PM₁₀], and fine particulate matter [PM_{2.5}]). The EIR will compare these estimates to the significant health-based emissions thresholds specified in MDAQMD's 2020 CEQA Guidelines. The EIR will also evaluate the potential for substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants and odors perceived by nearby land uses as a result of project implementation. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly from any additional truck trips, will be assessed in the EIR. The EIR will recommend mitigation measures, if necessary.
- ▶ **Biological Resources:** The EIR will include a description of the special-status plant and wildlife species known to occur within the project site, and a determination of whether suitable habitat exists on-site to support any special-status species. The chapter will be based a survey of the project site and any off-site infrastructure alignments. Mitigation measures to reduce impacts to sensitive resources will be developed and recommended as necessary.
- ▶ **Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources:** The EIR will evaluate potential effects to archaeological resources from implementation of the proposed project, focusing on any unique archaeological resources, historical resources, or tribal cultural resources. These chapters will be based on a site-specific technical report. A records search will be conducted to identify any documented historical or archaeological resources on or immediately adjacent to the project site. In accordance with Assembly Bill 52, Native American tribes that have traditional lands or cultural places located within the project site and vicinity will be consulted. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Energy:** The EIR will discuss the potential impacts of the project's energy usage, emphasizing any inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary energy consumption, including an analysis of any change in vehicle miles traveled. The analysis will be informed by reference to Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Geology and Soils/Mineral Resources:** The EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential effects from soil erosion, earthquakes, liquefaction, and expansive soils, as well as identify any unique geological features within the project site. The chapter will also include an assessment of potential impacts to paleontological resources from project implementation. Mineral resources will also be discussed in this chapter. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The EIR will evaluate the potential for existing or possible hazardous materials within the project site and the potential for on-site hazardous materials usage. No schools are located proximate to the project site. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.

- ▶ **Hydrology and Water Quality:** The EIR will evaluate the potential for on- and off-site drainage and flooding impacts, and any effects of construction and operation of the project on water quality. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Land Use and Planning:** The EIR will evaluate the project's land use relative to the Town's General Plan land use policies and diagram. In addition, the EIR will examine any possible land use conflicts with existing communities or policies implemented to reduce or avoid environmental impacts. The chapter will recommend mitigation measures, if necessary.
- ▶ **Noise and Vibration:** The EIR will evaluate noise increases because of traffic and construction, and ground vibration due to construction and truck movements. The significance of transportation noise impacts will be determined in relation to the Town's General Plan. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Population and Housing/Public Services/Recreation:** The EIR will evaluate the potential for the project to induce direct and indirect population growth. In addition, the EIR will summarize existing information available from local service providers and identify potential new demand for services, including fire protection, police, schools, parks, recreation, and other public facilities. Information from the Town's General Plan, as appropriate, and up-to-date information received from appropriate Town and other agencies will be utilized to address the project's potential to create impacts related to population and housing, public services, and recreation. The EIR will provide mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Transportation/Traffic:** The EIR will include a project-specific technical traffic study that evaluates potential project impacts on traffic and suggests mitigation measures as needed.
- ▶ **Utilities and Service Systems:** The EIR will evaluate and discuss potential impacts related to water, wastewater, and solid waste associated with the project, and provide mitigation measures as needed. The EIR will evaluate the impacts associated with construction of the proposed 19,460-foot water main line extension.

The following topics will not be discussed further in the EIR:

- ▶ **Agriculture and Forestry Resources:** The project site is zoned Regional Commercial and is currently vacant. There are no agricultural lands (including lands classified by the California Resources Agency as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance) or forest lands within or in proximity the project site. Therefore, no impacts on agriculture and forestry resources are anticipated, and this topic will not be discussed further in the EIR.
- ▶ **Wildfire:** The project site and vicinity are within a local responsibility area that is classified as a Non-Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. There are no lands within the Town that are classified as state responsibility areas or VHFHSZs. Therefore, no impacts related to wildfire are anticipated, and this topic will not be discussed further in the EIR.

ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE EIR

In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that are capable of meeting most of the projects' objectives, and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will provide an analysis of the No-Project Alternative and will also identify the environmentally superior alternative.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Agencies and interested parties may provide the Town with written comments on topics to be addressed in the EIR for the project. Because of time limits mandated by State law, comments should be provided no later than 5 p.m. on **January 6, 2022**. Please send all comments to:

Contact: Daniel Alcayaga, Planning Manager
Phone: (760) 240-7000 ext. 7205
Email: dalcayaga@applevalley.org

Agencies that will need to use the EIR when considering permits or other approvals for the project should provide the name of a contact person, phone number, and email address. Comments provided by email should include "**Apple Valley I-15 Travel Center**" in the subject line, and the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the email.

The Town will host a virtual EIR Scoping Meeting to gather additional input on the scope (content and focus) of the EIR analysis. The date, time, and access information for the scoping meeting is listed in the section below.

Copies of current and future environmental documents related to the Apple Valley I-15 Travel Center will be available for review at the following locations:

San Bernardino County Library
14901 Dale Evans Parkway
Apple Valley, CA 92307

Apple Valley Town Hall
14955 Dale Evans Parkway
Apple Valley, CA 92307

Or online at the following website: <https://www.applevalley.org/services/planning-division/environmental>

All comments on environmental issues received during the public comment period will be considered and addressed in the Draft EIR, which is anticipated to be available for public review in summer 2022.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: Daniel Alcayaga

Title: Planning Manager